



WHY ARE THE CASSEROLES ALWAYS TUNA?

Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CHT, CT, GMS

Why are the casseroles always tuna? Within hours of our son's death, our kitchen counters were overflowing with food. There were platters of sandwiches (could I freeze those for school lunches?), pots of soup, several pans of brownies, and, by actual count, nine casseroles--eight of which were TUNA.

People came to our door laden with food and advice. Along with the tuna, there were suggestions to "move immediately; don't touch a thing, deary; call the insurance company; trust in God's will."

Tucked in with the cookies were words of 'wisdom' that somehow left me cold and hungry for chocolate--that universal comfort food. We even got some rolls wrapped in a cloth napkin that had the Lord's Prayer stitched on it. (To tell the truth, all I wanted to do right then was tell God what He could do with HIS buns! Fortunately, that feeling passed rather quickly, and I kept my mouth shut!)

We had tuna with mushrooms, tuna with chips, tuna with noodles, tuna with black olives and tuna with PEAS (the little pale, canned ones). GADS! Did we have to be bereaved at meal time too!!!



enough--without TUNA!

Of course, we all know that tuna casserole is the ALL-TIME, NUMBER-ONE CHOICE OF THE "LET'S TAKE SOMETHING OVER TO THAT POOR, GRIEF-STRICKEN FAMILY - THEY'LL APPRECIATE IT AT A TIME LIKE THIS" folks. We ought to be grateful, but grieving is difficult

Tuna, however, is versatile and can be disguised in many ways. It can be used as an exotic hor d'oeuvre for your next cocktail party. You can stash it in the back of the fridge and hope it will turn into something else, or that someone will think it IS something else and eat it for a midnight snack. Or, you can freeze it and be the first one on your block to appear at the kitchen door of a friend in need (some of the casseroles that sat on my kitchen counter had obviously been around a looooooong time!...)

Bringing food is a universal symbol of caring and concern; but bring peanut butter, Oreos (second only to chocolate as comfort food), cheese and crackers, or soup. Deliver dessert, a pitcher of orange juice, a basket of fruit or paper goods. (Napkins, paper plates and toilet paper are always welcome and needed, and a continuous roll of TP is much more practical for a grieving mother than a pop-up box of tissues.)



So, dash to your kitchen and prepare something special to take to the family who is hurting, but leave the tuna on the kitchen shelf where it belongs. Take something warm and comfortable - like chocolate chip cookies, or pheasant under glass (grief isn't ordinary, why should food be?) Wrap your gift with caring and courage. Bring it with simple silence and a gentle hug--leave the tuna, and the words of advice, at home--all we really need is something to eat and someone to listen.

And don't forget us three months from now. By then, both the cupboards and the heart are empty, and a knock at the kitchen door would sound lovely. Come six months later, too. Maybe then even TUNA would look good!