Cauliflower and Cheese Bake

- 1 large head of cauliflower, about 1 1/2 to 2 pounds, cut into florets
- **Sauce**
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 cups (6 ounces) Cheddar cheese, mild or sharp
- **Topping**
- 1 cup soft fresh bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley, optional
- 1/2 teaspoon ground paprika
- 2 tablespoons melted butter

Boil or steam cauliflower in a small amount of water until just tender, about 6 to 8 minutes. Drain thoroughly and set aside.

Heat the oven to 350 F.

Grease a 2-quart baking dish.

Put the 4 tablespoons of butter in a large saucepan. Place the saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring, until the butter has melted. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Add salt and pepper.

Gradually add the milk to the flour and butter mixture while stirring. Continue cooking the sauce, stirring, until thickened and bubbly. Add the mustard and cheese and continue cooking, stirring, until the cheese has melted.

Add the drained cauliflower to the sauce and stir gently to blend. Spoon the cauliflower and cheese mixture into the prepared baking dish.

Combine the soft bread crumbs with the parsley, paprika, and 2 tablespoons melted butter; toss to blend thoroughly. Sprinkle the crumbs over the cauliflower mixture.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the casserole is bubbly and topping is lightly browned.