

Food for Thought

January 2024

Healthy Winter Casseroles

Cold winter months are a great time to try some warm winter casseroles. Casseroles are often easy to prepare as they are made in one single baking dish. However, many casserole recipes can be high in fat and sodium, so keeping health in mind is important when choosing and preparing your casserole.



When choosing a specific casserole recipe look for healthier versions:

- Look for lean cuts of meat, poultry or fish: chicken, turkey, at least 90% lean ground turkey or beef are all good choices.
- Beans and lentils are great protein options.
- Add lots of vegetables.
- Look for brown rice or whole wheat bread or pasta for a grain.
- Use lower-fat cheese, such as part-skim mozzarella, or use a strong cheese, like feta, and add less of it.

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters has a quick and easy guide for preparing a casserole. Choose one of each of the following:

Protein 1 cup fully cooked	Vegetable 1 ½ to 2 cups chopped	Sauce choose one	Whole Grain 1 ½ cups cooked	Toppings ½ cup
Beans or lentils	Greens (kale, spinach, chard)	Low-fat or nonfat cream soup, such as mushroom, celery, or tomato (10 ounce can) + ¼ cup nonfat milk	Brown rice	Grated low-fat cheese
Chicken or turkey (boneless; skin removed), ground or cubed	Mixed vegetables (such as carrots, peas, and corn)	Low sodium diced tomatoes (14.5oz can, drained — approx. 1 cup) + ½ cup low-fat plain yogurt (optional)	Whole wheat pasta	Bread crumbs
Beef (lean cuts) cubed or ground	Zucchini		Barley	Crushed corn flakes
Ham, diced	Mushrooms		Quinoa	Crushed tortilla chips
Canned tuna or salmon	Broccoli		Cubed whole wheat bread	

To cook, season with your favorite herbs and spices. Bake at 350°F for 40-60 minutes or until top is brown and bubbly.

Cheesy Broccoli & Rice Casserole

- 1 cup instant brown rice
- 2 (10 oz) packages chopped frozen broccoli, thawed & drained
- 1 (10.75 oz) can condensed 98% fat-free cream of mushroom soup
- 1 small onion, diced
- ¼ cup fat-free milk
- 2 cups shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese, divided



1. Wash hands with soap and water. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Prepare rice according to package directions.
3. In a large glass baking dish combine rice, broccoli, soup, onion, milk & half of cheese. Mix well, spread out evenly in dish & top with remaining cheese.
4. Bake uncovered 45 minutes or until cheese is melted & casserole is bubbling.

6 Layer Beef & Veggie Casserole

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 2 potatoes (medium, sliced) | 2 cups carrot (sliced) |
| 1/4 teaspoon black pepper | 1/2 cup onion (sliced) |
| 1 pound ground beef, 90% lean (browned and drained) | 1 1/2 cups green beans |
| 1 can tomato soup, low-sodium | Cooking spray |

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Spray baking dish with cooking spray.
3. Layer ingredients in order given. Cover.
4. Bake for 45 minutes or until tender and thoroughly heated.
5. Uncover and bake 15 more minutes.

You can substitute other favorite vegetables.

Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes & educational events that can help limited resource individuals & families learn how to eat well for less! Ask for Eat Smart Idaho in your County.

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai &
Shoshone Counties 208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, &
Nez Perce Counties 208-883-2267



To contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator: Kali Gardiner, RDN, LD
Phone: 208-292-2525
E-mail – kalig@uidaho.edu
Web: www.eatsmartidaho.org

Sources: https://bkc-od-media.vhost.psu.edu/documents/HO_CM_Casseroles.pdf; <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/simple-nutritious-quick-and-delicious/2022-10-14-healthier-ways-enjoy-comforts-casserole>; <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/sensational-six-layer-dinner>; https://oniproject.org/recipes?_sf_s=casserole&_sfm_time=0+90 retrieved 01/02/24

This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.