

Create a Casserole

Create a tasty casserole from simple foods. Just choose an item from each category and follow the directions. Use your imagination! Each casserole serves four adults.

1 Choose one starch

- **Brown Rice:** 1 cup rice, 2 cups water: Combine rice and water. Bring to boil. Turn heat to low and cover pan with lid. Simmer until water is absorbed, about 45 minutes.
- **Whole grain pasta or noodles:** 2 cups pasta or 3 cups noodles, 6 cups water: Heat water until it boils. Stir in pasta or noodles. Cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain. Look on the package for specific instructions.
- **Potatoes:** 3 cups diced potatoes, 6 cups water. Heat water until it boils. Add potatoes and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain.
- **Whole grain tortilla:** Flour or corn.

2 Choose one protein

- 1 (15 oz.) can or 2 cups cooked dried beans or lentils (pinto, black, white, kidney, etc.)
- ½ pound cooked ground beef
- 1½ cups cooked and diced chicken, turkey, ham, beef, fish, or pork
- 2 cups chopped hard-boiled eggs
- 1 (6-8 oz.) can beef, chicken, tuna, salmon, or other fish
- 1 (12-16 oz.) package extra firm tofu, drained

3 Choose one to three vegetables: Broccoli, carrots, corn, green beans, peas, squash, mixed veggies

- 2 cups fresh vegetables, cooked
- 2 cups frozen vegetables, cooked
- 1-2 (15 oz.) canned vegetables

4 Choose one sauce

- 1 (10 oz.) can soup (cream of mushroom, cream of chicken, cream of celery, tomato, cheese, etc.)
- 1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes with juice
- **2 cups gravy:**
 - 2 tablespoons cornstarch OR 4 tablespoons flour
 - ¼ cup COLD water
 - 2 cups HOT chicken, beef, or vegetable stock

Mix cornstarch or flour into cold water with fork. Make sure you have no lumps. Slowly add mixture to boiling stock, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and continue to cook and stir with whisk until thickened.

5 Choose one or more flavors

- ½ cup chopped onion, celery, green pepper, or salsa
- ¼ cup sliced black olives
- 1 - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- Cook onion, garlic, celery, and peppers in small amount of water or broth
- 1 - 2 teaspoons dried herbs (oregano, basil, cumin, chili powder, thyme, rosemary, sage, etc.)
- Salt and pepper to taste

6 Choose one or more topping (optional)

- ¼ cup breadcrumbs, 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese, ¼ cup grated cheddar or mozzarella cheese

Directions

Select a food from each category or use your own favorites. Combine all ingredients except toppings in a 9x13 pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° F until bubbly (30-45 minutes). Add toppings and return to oven for about 10 minutes.

Casserole Recipes

A pantry that is stocked with good whole foods will help you create great tasting casseroles like these.

POTLUCK CHICKEN CASSEROLE

- ½ cup chopped fresh mushrooms
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1¼ cups milk
- 4 cups cooked and cubed chicken
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¾ cup crushed corn flakes or breadcrumbs

Sauté mushrooms, onion, and garlic in canola oil until tender. Stir in flour, then gradually add milk and bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes or until mixture is thickened and bubbling. Remove from heat and add chicken, rice, celery, peas, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Mix well and spoon into 9x13 baking dish. Sprinkle corn flakes or breadcrumbs over casserole. Bake uncovered at 350° F for 30 minutes or until bubbly.

Yield: 8-10 servings

STUFFED PEPPERS

- 4 bell peppers, any color
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups (or 15 oz. can) cooked, drained black beans
- 2 cups fresh or frozen corn
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes
- Juice from one lime
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 400° F. Slice peppers in half lengthwise, remove seeds, and set aside. Sauté onion and garlic in ¼ cup water over medium heat until they are soft. Add remaining ingredients and heat through. Fill pepper halves with bean mixture, piling each pepper high. Place peppers on baking sheet, cover with foil, and bake 30 minutes or until peppers are tender.

Yield: 4-6 servings

You can change the taste of basic ingredients in your dish simply by changing the herbs and spices you use. For instance, use these herbs and spices to get these flavors:

Mexican-use cumin, oregano, chili powder, cilantro, and garlic

Italian-use basil, oregano, parsley, and garlic

Asian-use soy sauce, ginger, garlic, chiles, and turmeric

Savory/Thanksgiving-use rosemary, sage, thyme, and parsley