

Making a Casserole - SNAP4CT

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Winter is a great time for casseroles! Casseroles make a delicious meal or **side dish**, especially for holiday parties and gatherings with family and friends. They are portable, easy to prepare, and you can customize them any way you like. Just follow these simple instructions and you'll have a nutritious, balanced meal that won't break the bank.

How to Make Your Casserole

1. Grease a 13 x 9 or 2 quart baking dish with cooking spray, vegetable oil, or butter.
 2. Choose ingredients from the groups below and mix together in your baking dish. Cover with a heat-resistant lid or aluminum foil.
 3. If you are ready to bake, preheat oven to 350°F and bake for 20-50 minutes until the casserole is heated through. Add any extra toppings like cheese in the last 10 minutes so they do not burn.
 4. If you are not ready to bake, place the covered dish in the refrigerator for up to 3 days before baking. You can also freeze a casserole for up to 2-3 months. Just thaw in the refrigerator 1-2 days before you are ready to bake.
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Casserole Ingredients

Whole Grains / Starch



*2 cups of cooked pasta, rice, quinoa, other **whole grain**, or potatoes*

- Whole Wheat Pasta
- Brown Rice
- Quinoa
- Sliced/Diced Potatoes

Protein



2 cups cooked meat, beans, or approximately 2 cans of fish

- Beans / Legumes (Chickpeas, Black Beans, Lentils)
- Diced Chicken or Ham
- Ground Turkey
- Lean Ground Beef
- Sliced Chicken Sausage
- Canned Tuna or Salmon

Vegetables



2 cups of chopped fresh, frozen (thawed and drained), or canned (drained) veggies

- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Spinach
- Green Beans
- Peppers
- Corn
- Peas
- Mushrooms
- Squash or Zucchini

Sauce



2 cups of sauce (or enough to cover the other ingredients)

- Canned Tomatoes or Tomato Sauce
- Basic White Sauce (*Made with Butter, Flour, and Milk*)
- 1 Can Low Sodium Cream Soup (*Cream of Mushroom, Chicken, Potato, Tomato, etc. Thinned with Nonfat Milk*)
- Salsa

Seasonings



1-2 teaspoons of dried spices, 2-4 teaspoons of fresh herbs
*[Learn more about **using herbs** or **seasoning blends**.]*

- ¼ Cup Chopped Onions or Scallions
- ¼ Sliced Black Olives
- ½ Cup Chopped Celery
- 1-2 Cloves Chopped Garlic
- Onion, Garlic, or Curry Powder
- Herbs like Oregano, Basil, Cilantro, Thyme, Marjoram, or Tarragon
- Salt and Pepper (*To Your Liking*)

Toppings (Optional)



- ¼ Cup Shredded Low Fat Cheese
 - 2-4 Tbsp Parmesan Cheese
 - ¼ Cup Chopped Nuts
 - ¼ Cup Bread Crumbs
 - Nonfat Sour Cream or Plain Yogurt (*Add After Baking*)
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Classic Casserole Ideas

Rice & Beans Casserole

Brown Rice + Black Beans + Green Onions + Corn + Salsa + Garlic + Low Fat Monterey Jack Cheese + Nonfat Sour Cream

Baked Italian Pasta

Whole Wheat Pasta (Rotini or Elbows) + Lean Ground Beef + Spinach + Tomato Sauce + Garlic + Parmesan Cheese

Green Bean Casserole (No Grains or Protein)

Green Beans + Cream of Mushroom Soup + Onion Powder + Bread Crumbs



Healthy Casserole Tips

- Use cheese sparingly. Cheese is delicious! But, it can add lots of calories, fat, and sodium to your dish.
- Look for lower sodium and reduced fat canned soups and sauces, and rinse and drain canned vegetables to remove extra salt.
- Casseroles are a great way to use leftovers! If you make extra grains and pasta, save them in the fridge. You will be able to assemble them into a casserole in minutes.
- You can make casseroles in the microwave. In a glass dish using the 50% power setting, microwave the casserole for 10-30 minutes checking frequently to see if it is warm throughout.

Casserole Recipes

Would you rather just use a recipe? We've got loads of casserole **recipes**. Here are a few favorites: