

7 Steps to Creating a Casserole

“What’s for dinner?” If you sometimes answer the question, “I have no idea!” then check out these creative ideas. This publication includes ways to use ingredients in your cupboard or freezer, or leftovers in your refrigerator. You can make a satisfying and economical meal for your family in seven easy steps.



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1. Choose one starch.

- Rice: Combine 1 cup rice and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil. Turn heat to low and cover pan with lid. Simmer until water is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Or substitute *3 cups leftover cooked rice*.
- Pasta: Heat 6 cups water until it boils. Stir in 1½ cups pasta. Cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain. Or substitute *3 cups leftover cooked pasta*.
- Potatoes: Heat 6 cups water until it boils. Add 3 cups diced potatoes and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain. Or substitute *3 cups leftover cooked, diced potatoes*.

2. Choose one protein.

- 1 pound cooked ground beef
- 1½ cups cooked and diced chicken, turkey, ham, beef or pork
- 1½ cups tofu
- 2 cups chopped hard-cooked eggs
- 1 or 2 (6- to 8-ounce) cans tuna or salmon, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can or 2 cups cooked dry edible beans (pinto, black, white, navy, kidney, etc.). Drain and rinse canned beans to reduce sodium.

3. Choose one or more vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, edamame, green beans, squash or mixed veggies.

- 2 cups fresh vegetables, cooked
- 2 cups frozen vegetables, cooked
- 1 (15-ounce) can vegetables, drained

4. Choose one sauce.

- 1 (10-ounce) can soup (reduced-sodium cream of mushroom, cream of chicken, cream of celery, tomato, cheese, etc.)
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes with juice
- 2 cups white sauce, using recipe provided on the back of this handout

White Sauce

- 1½ Tablespoons fat (butter, margarine or oil)
- 3 Tablespoons flour
- 1½ cups skim milk or soy milk
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper

To make white sauce: Melt fat in saucepan. Mix in flour to make a smooth paste. Slowly add milk. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until thickened. Add salt and pepper. Cook for three to four minutes longer.

5. Choose one or more flavorings.

- ½ cup chopped onion, celery or green pepper
- ¼ cup sliced black olives
- ½ cup salsa
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 to 2 tsp. dried herbs (oregano, basil, cumin, chili powder, thyme, tarragon, sage, etc.)
- Salt and pepper to taste

6. Choose one or more toppings (optional).

If desired, after heating, place any of the following on top:

- 2 Tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup grated cheddar or mozzarella cheese or soy-based cheese
- ¼ cup buttered breadcrumbs

7. Combine all ingredients except toppings, then heat.

Place ingredients in a 9- by 13-inch pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350 F until bubbly * (30 to 45 minutes). Add more liquid (such as water) if it becomes too dry. Add toppings and return to oven about 10 minutes.

* May cook on stovetop in saucepan or skillet for 15 to 20 minutes. Add more liquid if it becomes too dry. Watch closely so it does not burn.

Menu

Macaroni, Beef and Tomato Casserole
Spinach salad
Baked apples
Low-fat or fat-free milk

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