RECIPE

Cheesy Chicken and Rice Casserole

A from-scratch reduced-fat cheddar sauce bakes chicken, brown rice and broccoli together in one dish, a cozy dinner with no canned soup.

MAKES

8 servings US Metric

TOTAL

1 h 40 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 ½ lb boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut in ¾-inch cubes
- [ ] 3 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 medium onion, chopped (about 1 cup, 160 g)
- [ ] ¾ tsp garlic powder
- [ ] ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- [ ] 2 ½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- [ ] 1 cup 1% milk
- [ ] ½ tsp salt
- [ ] ½ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ½ tsp paprika
- [ ] 1 cup shredded reduced-fat cheddar, divided
- [ ] 1 ½ cups long-grain brown rice, uncooked
- [ ] 12 oz frozen chopped broccoli
- [ ] Butter or oil for the baking dish

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350 °F and grease a 9×13-inch baking dish.
2. Warm the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Cook the onion for 5 minutes, until soft. Stir in the garlic powder for 30 seconds.
3. Stir in the flour and cook 1 minute. Whisk in the broth a little at a time, then the 1% milk. Add the salt, pepper and paprika. Bring to a boil, stirring, and cook 2 minutes, until the sauce coats a spoon.
4. Take the pan off the heat. Stir in ¾ cup of the cheese until it melts, then stir in the dry rice and the raw chicken.
5. Pour it into the dish, smooth the top and cover tightly with foil. Bake 60 minutes. Brown rice keeps its bran, so it needs longer than white.

6. Stir well and push the frozen broccoli down into the rice. Cover again and bake 20 to 25 minutes more, until the rice is tender and a cut piece of chicken reads 165 °F. At 5,300 ft covered, liquid cooking runs about a quarter longer than at sea level; if the rice is still firm, stir in ¼ cup hot water, cover, and give it 10 more minutes.

7. Uncover, scatter on the last ¼ cup cheese and bake 5 minutes, until it melts and the edges bubble. Let it rest 10 minutes; it firms up as it sits.

8. Cool leftovers within 2 hours, no more than that, then refrigerate. Reheat each portion to 165 °F.