

Casserole Cooking Tips and Ideas

What's For Dinner? How About A Delicious Casserole!



By The Hillbilly Housewife

www.HillbillyHousewife.com

Casseroles Made Simple:

<http://www.hillbillyhousewife.com/ebooks/casserole.htm>

How To Cook A Casserole

Every casserole recipe has its own distinctive ingredients and flavors but, for each, the basic cooking process is the same. Here are the four key steps for a perfectly cooked and delicious meat casserole.

Step 1: Place flour on a plate. Season with salt and pepper. Add the meat and toss to coat. Shake off excess. Alternatively, place seasoned flour in a sealable plastic bag. Add the meat and shake to coat. By coating the meat in this way, the flour thickens the liquid in the casserole.

Step 2: Heat oil in an ovenproof casserole dish or large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add one batch of meat and cook for 2-3 minutes or until brown. Transfer to a plate. Repeat with remaining meat, reheating the pan between batches.

Step 3: Add a little extra oil to the dish or pan. Add the vegetables, such as onion, carrot and celery, and any extra ingredients, such as bacon. Cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, for 2-3 minutes or until the vegetables are soft and slightly golden.

Step 4: Return the meat to the dish. If using a frying pan, transfer the meat and vegetables to an ovenproof dish. Stir in the liquid ingredients, such as stock, wine and canned tomatoes, and herbs or spices, if desired. Cover tightly and bake in the oven according to your recipe.

Make it ahead

One of the advantages of casseroles is that you can cook them in advance. If possible, make your casserole one day ahead and store in the fridge. To freeze ahead, cool the cooked casserole, then freeze in an airtight container for up to three months. Don't add dairy products, such as cream, to the casserole before freezing, or the mixture will curdle.

Follow these easy 1-2-3 steps for the best tasting casserole you have ever had and for more Casserole cooking tips and ideas get a copy of [Casseroles Made Simple](#).

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Choosing the Right Casserole Bakeware for Your Meal

Casserole bakeware is essential for every day meals and holiday baking. However, choosing the wrong size can mean the difference between a delicious meal or a very dry casserole dish! Here's how you can make sure that the next time you are making a delicious meal, you **choose the right casserole bakeware for your family dinner**.

Size Matters

For one to two servings, use one cup ramekins to create single serving casseroles. These work great for date nights, taking a meal to a single lady, or just having dinner at home with your sweetheart.

8X8 pans can be used as well for recipes that have been halved. If the food is right to the top of the pan, you will want to change pans. Food often overflows in casserole dishes.

Consider buying a couple of oval au gratin baking dishes. I find these handy for gratins, and things like baked spaghetti or stuffed shells.

Lasagna pans are named that for a reason! They are built to hold the many layers of a lasagna without having a messy dish.

What are the Best Brands?

Some of my favorite brands of casserole bakeware are:

- Le Cueset—This one is a little on the pricey side, but it is well worth the money spent. The pieces that I own hold up well and help distribute the heat and cooking evenly.
- Corningware—This old tried and true casserole bakeware has been around for ages. It goes over well with holds heat well and cooks the food to perfection.
- Pyrex Bakeware-While I love Pyrex, it can sometimes be hard to cook with. Be sure to follow the directions on how to use this type of bakeware when cooking.

By assuring that you start out with the correct bakeware , your [casserole recipe](#) will come out right almost every single time!

Keeping Casserole Ingredients On Hand

If you want to throw together the perfect meal, you need to make sure that you keep all of your casserole pantry staples on hand. Here is a list that you can print to check your inventory against. By keeping these **casserole ingredients on hand**, you will be able to create a beautiful meal in no time!

Freezer Items

- Flash Frozen Chicken Breasts
- 4lbs of ground hamburger
- 2lbs of ground turkey
- 2 1lb packages of smoked sausage links
- Tater Tots
- Hash Browns
- Mixed Vegetables, and several types of other frozen veggies: peas, corn, and broccoli and artichoke hearts.
- Chopped Onions

Canned Items

- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Cream of Chicken Soup
- Assorted cream soups, celery, etc.
- cheddar cheese soup
- Rotel
- Chopped green chilies
- Assorted canned vegetables: peas, corn, creamed corn
- chicken broth
- beef broth
- green enchilada sauce
- sliced olives
- marinara sauce
- diced tomatoes
- tomato sauce
- tomato paste
- jars of gravy

On Your Shelf

- Dried pasta
- Macaroni and cheese
- Quick cooking rice
- Quick cooking barley
- Jiffy corn muffin mix
- Stuffing mix
- Breadcrumbs
- Taco seasoning
- Chicken bouillon cubes
- Velveeta

In the Refrigerator:

- Cheeses: Jack, Mozzarella, and Cheddar, Ricotta and Cottage Cheese.
- Sour Cream
- Corn Tortillas
- Biscuits in tubes
- Crescent rolls in tubes

Fresh Vegetables to Have on Hand:

- Onions
- Green Onions
- Garlic
- Bell Peppers
- few hot to mild chili peppers
- Celery
- Apples

If you keep most of these ingredients on hand, you will have your choice not only of many casseroles, but lots of other dinners too. Ready to get started? Get a copy of the [Casserole Made Simple](#) ebook today!

How to Make a Quick and Delicious Casserole in Your Crockpot

Most casserole dishes are made in the oven in a piece of bakeware made for creating casseroles. But did you know you can also make casseroles in your crockpot? Here is a simple and delicious recipe that I have been using for years! **Quick and delicious casseroles in your crockpot** will not only cut down on your time in the kitchen, but it will also help save you money in the process.

Things You'll Need

- 6 thick slices of cooked ham
- 8 washed and sliced potatoes
- 1 white onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cups grated Cheddar cheese
- 2 cans cream of mushroom soup
- Crock Pot

Instructions

Place two slices of ham on the bottom of the Crock Pot. Add a single layer of potatoes and a single layer of onions, and sprinkle with 1/2 cup of cheddar cheese.

Add another two slices of ham, a layer of potatoes, a layer of onions and another 1/2 cup of cheddar cheese.

Add the remaining ham, potatoes and onions to the Crock Pot.

Pour the soup over the top of the ingredients. Add the rest of the cheese.

Cover the Crock Pot. Cook on high heat for four hours or on low heat for seven hours.

For more delicious crockpot recipes (in fact about 500 of them) along with tips for choosing a crockpot, caring for it and converting your family's favorite recipes to crockpot dishes, take a look at the [Crockpot Cooking Made Simple](#) ebook.

Using Casseroles For Freezer Cooking

Using your freezer is a smart and effective way to provide hot meals for your family, especially if the majority of those meals are casseroles! Here are a few good tips to making sure your casserole freezer cooking day is successful!

- Prepare two casseroles any time you make one. Put one in the oven to bake for dinner and put the second in the freezer for another night.
- Casseroles will stay good in the freezer for 2 to 3 months. Just be sure not to use leftovers in a freezer meal!
- Freeze in layers so that ice crystals will not form on your food. 2" deep is the perfect depth for freezing casseroles.
- Use glass pans or metal casserole pans when freezing.
- Plastic "freezer" bags are thicker and stop evaporation better than the less expensive "storage" bags, insuring a wholesome, tasty food. Don't reuse bags. This way, you are not passing on germs and bacteria.
- Make sure any container or wrap you use is completely sealed and will not leak. Press out as much air as possible; this helps avoid freezer burn.
- Label every container with the recipe name, reheating or serving instructions, and the date on which you prepared and froze the casserole.

Do I Have To Thaw My Food Out First?

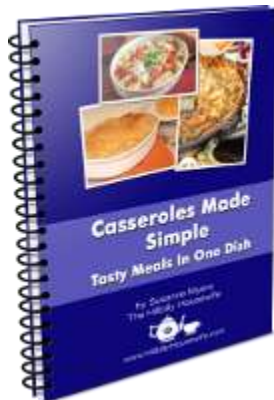
There are some tricks to reheating your frozen casserole successfully.

- To cook a frozen family size casserole, add about 40 minutes to 1 hour to the unfrozen cooking time. Deep dishes and very large size pans cooked from frozen may take up to 3 hours extra.
- The safest and best way to thaw frozen foods is to put them in the refrigerator the night before. Do not use the microwave.

- Most frozen foods can be taken from freezer to the oven without any worries or concerns.
- Foods which get mushy (pasta, rice, etc) get MORE mushy if thawed first. Cook from frozen if you have time.
- Preheat your oven following the instructions on the label you made when you froze it. Then cook it for the calculated reheating time.
- If the dish is large and frozen keep it covered and keep the oven temperature between 325 and 375 to avoid both drying out the edges and unsafe time for low temps in the middle of the dish.

If you follow these tips and tricks, your family will be getting a well deserved casserole dinner anytime you need a quick meal!

Casseroles Made Simple



For more delicious casserole recipes and helpful cooking tips, grab a copy of my ebook [Casseroles Made Simple – Tasty Meals In One Dish](#).

You will go from the oven to the table with a mouth watering meal for you family in no time! Hearty homemade meals, easy clean up, saving time, saving money... what's not to love about casseroles!

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Casserole Recipes

Here are a few simple casserole recipes for you to try...

Kid Friendly Beef Tomato Casserole

- 3 cups water
- 1 1/2 cup rice
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 lbs. good ground beef
- 1 small onion, diced small (may omit)
- 1 1/2 cups tomato sauce, divided
- 1 cup cracker crumbs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 Tbsp butter or margarine
- salt and pepper

Heat water to boiling in saucepan, add rice and salt, cover and simmer until rice is tender and water is absorbed.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Stir together in a separate bowl the raw ground beef, onion, and 1 cup of tomato sauce, until blended.

Put 1/2 the cooked rice in casserole dish, top with 1/2 the beef mixture, then the remaining 1/2 rice, then the remaining half beef mixture.

Pour the remaining 1/2 cup tomato sauce on top.

In separate bowl, mix together the cracker crumbs and Parmesan cheese.

Sprinkle the crackers-cheese mixture on top, then dot with pieces of the butter.

Bake, uncovered, in 350 degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until top and edges get golden brown.

Find more recipes like this [in Casseroles Made Simple](#) – the latest in the HBHW ebook collection.

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Easy Creamy Swiss Chicken Casserole

- 1 box (6 oz) stuffing mix, prepared per instructions
- 6 to 8 boneless chicken breasts or thighs, or a mix of each
- 1 regular can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 regular can chicken broth
- 6 to 8 slices of deli Swiss cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Arrange chicken in casserole dish.

In a separate bowl, put the soup and broth and mix together.

Pour half of this mixture over the chicken and cover the casserole; bake at 375 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes.

Remove chicken casserole from oven and arrange the slices of cheese over the chicken, then cover with the stuffing mixture, and finally pour the remaining soup mixture over the top of the stuffing.

Return to oven and continue baking, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes or until the edges start to brown and casserole is bubbling hot.

Serves 6 to 8.

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Tuna Treat Casserole

- 4 medium potatoes, cooked and diced
- 1 1/2 cups frozen peas
- 2 cans (5 oz size) good tuna (white or albacore)
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 Tbsp flour
- 1 3/4 cups milk
- 1/2 lb. grated Cheddar cheese
- salt and pepper to taste
- bread crumbs and butter

Preheat oven to 375 degrees and lightly butter or oil a casserole dish.

Layer in the potatoes, then the peas, then the tuna; drizzle the melted butter over evenly.

In a saucepan, melt the 2 Tbsp butter over medium heat, stir in the flour until combined well, then slowly stir in milk, stirring until mixture thickens; slowly add grated cheese, stirring constantly until cheese is melted. Salt and pepper to taste.

Pour the cheese sauce over the ingredients in casserole.

Mix together the bread crumbs and butter in a small saucepan and put on low heat until butter is melted.

Scatter the buttery bread crumbs over the top of the casserole.

Bake, uncovered, in preheated oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until top is golden brown and casserole is bubbling hot.

Serves 4 to 6.

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Lotsa Beans Casserole

- 1 pkg (16 oz.) frozen cut green beans, thawed
- 1 can Great Northern beans, drained
- 1 can kidney beans, drained
- 1 can Garbanzo beans, drained
- 1 can navy beans, drained
- 1 medium size onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 Tbsp molasses
- 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 4 Tbsp Vinegar
- 1 tsp dried mustard

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and grease a casserole dish.

Put all beans in large bowl and toss together, then add onion and green pepper, and toss again.

In separate bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients until smooth, then pour over bean mixture and toss to combine.

Turn mixture into a large casserole dish.

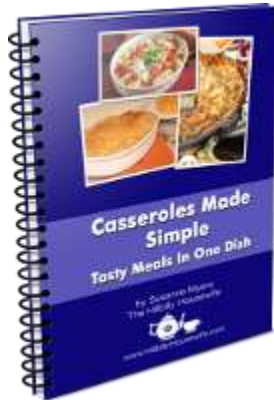
Bake, covered, at 325 degrees for 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until hot and bubbly.

Serves 6 to 8.

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Recommended Resources

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Crockpot Cooking Made Simple



Tired of spending all day stirring pots in the kitchen, or just don't have the time to make a big homemade meal for dinner each night? I don't either. Instead I put my crockpot to work.

Let me show you how simple and easy it is to put inexpensive and healthy meals on the table without all the work and fuss.

[Get your copy of Crockpot Cooking Made Simple here.](#)

Freezer Cooking Made Simple



If you like the convenience of those frozen TV dinners, but aren't too fond of the lack of nutrition, abundance of salt and aren't a big fan of the taste, take a look at my freezer cooking guide. I'd love to show you just how easy it is to make your own frozen meals that you can thaw and heat for quick and easy dinners on busy nights.

[Get your copy of Freezer Cooking Made Simple here.](#)

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