

Chicken Noodle Casserole Recipe

Comfort food reaches new heights with this hearty chicken noodle casserole. It takes all the beloved elements of classic chicken soup—tender meat, soft noodles, and savory vegetables—and transforms them into a bubbly, cheesy baked dish. This casserole is the definition of “hug on a plate,” offering warmth and satisfaction with every forkful. It is a fantastic way to use up leftover chicken or rotisserie chicken, making it a practical choice for busy weeknights. With a creamy sauce binding everything together and a crunchy topping that adds texture, this dish is destined to become a regular in your family’s meal rotation.

Why You’ll Love This Recipe

Perfect for Make-Ahead Meals

One of the greatest strengths of this recipe is its durability. You can assemble the entire casserole in the morning, or even the night before, and keep it in the refrigerator until you are ready to bake. It is a stress-free solution for days when you know you won’t have time to cook from scratch at dinner time. The flavors actually meld and deepen as it sits, making the final result even more delicious. It also freezes well, allowing you to stash a backup dinner in the freezer for emergency busy nights.

Crunchy Topping Highlights

While the creamy interior is delicious, the topping is what makes this casserole addictive. A mixture of buttered breadcrumbs or crushed crackers creates a golden, crispy crust that contrasts beautifully with the soft, creamy noodles underneath. This textural interplay prevents the dish from feeling one-note or mushy. Whether you use Panko breadcrumbs for extra crunch or crushed buttery crackers for a salty kick, that top layer adds a professional finish that elevates the humble casserole into something special.

09 a scoop of Chicken Img 3

Creamy Chicken Noodle Casserole



Aaron recipes

A hearty and comforting chicken noodle casserole recipe with a creamy cheese sauce and crispy breadcrumb topping. Great for using leftover chicken.

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Prep Time 15 minutes mins

Cook Time 30 minutes mins

Total Time 45 minutes mins

Course Dinner, Main Course
Cuisine American

Servings 6 servings
Calories 480 kcal

Equipment

- 9×13 Baking Dish
- Large Mixing Bowl
- Whisk

Ingredients

- 12 oz Wide egg noodles
- 3 cups Cooked chicken, shredded or diced
- 2 cans Cream of chicken soup (10.5 oz each)
- 1/2 cup Sour cream
- 1/2 cup Milk
- 1 cup Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Frozen peas and carrots, thawed
- 1 cup Panko breadcrumbs or crushed crackers
- 2 tbsp Butter, melted

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease a 9×13 inch baking dish.
2. Cook egg noodles in boiling salted water for 2 minutes less than package directions. Drain well.
3. In a large bowl, mix soup, sour cream, milk, chicken, vegetables, and half the cheese.
4. Gently fold in the cooked noodles until coated.
5. Pour mixture into baking dish. Top with remaining cheese.
6. Mix breadcrumbs with melted butter and sprinkle over the top.
7. Bake for 30-35 minutes until bubbly and golden brown. Let rest 5 minutes before serving.

Notes

Undercook the noodles slightly when boiling, as they will continue to cook in the oven.

Keyword baked chicken noodles, chicken noodle casserole, easy casserole recipe

Ingredient Highlights & Substitutions

Essential Ingredients

The core of this dish relies on wide egg noodles, cooked chicken, and a creamy binding sauce. Egg noodles are essential because they hold their shape well in casseroles without disintegrating. You will need a creamy base, often made from a condensed cream of chicken soup or a homemade béchamel sauce seasoned with poultry herbs. Cheddar cheese adds a sharp, gooey element that binds the noodles and chicken together. Frozen peas and carrots are a convenient way to add color and nutrition without extra chopping prep.

Smart Substitutions

If you prefer not to use condensed “cream of” soups, you can easily make a scratch sauce using butter, flour, chicken broth, and heavy cream. For a different flavor profile, try using tuna instead of chicken to turn this into a classic tuna noodle casserole. If you are out of egg noodles, rotini or penne pasta work as sturdy substitutes. You can also vary the cheese; Swiss or Gruyère adds a sophisticated nuttiness, while mozzarella provides a milder, stretchier finish.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Prep Phase

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease a 9×13 inch baking dish to prevent sticking. Cook your egg noodles in salted boiling water, but drain them two minutes before the package instructions say they are done. They will finish cooking in the oven, and par-boiling prevents them from becoming mushy. If you are using raw chicken, cook and dice it now; otherwise, shred your rotisserie or leftover chicken into bite-sized pieces. Thaw your frozen vegetables under warm water and drain them well so they don't water down the sauce.

Cooking Phase

In a large mixing bowl, combine the condensed soup (or homemade sauce), milk, sour cream, melted butter, and seasonings. Whisk until smooth. Stir in the shredded chicken, vegetables, and half of the shredded cheese. Gently fold in the cooked noodles, ensuring they are evenly coated with the sauce without breaking them. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish. Top with the remaining cheese. In a small bowl, mix breadcrumbs with a little melted butter and sprinkle this evenly over the top. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes until the casserole is bubbling around the edges and the topping is golden brown.

Pro Tips for Perfect Results

Technique Secrets

The key to a moist casserole is the sauce-to-noodle ratio. It might look slightly soupy when you mix it, but the noodles will absorb significant moisture while baking. If the mixture looks dry before baking, add a splash of milk or chicken broth. Another secret is the sour cream; adding a half-cup to the sauce introduces a pleasant tang and richness that cuts through the saltiness of the cheese and soup, balancing the flavor profile perfectly.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Overbaking is the enemy of creamy casseroles. If left in the oven too long, the sauce breaks and evaporates, leaving you with dry, sticky noodles. Watch the timer and pull it out as soon as it is bubbly and hot. Another mistake is using low-fat ingredients. Low-fat cheese doesn't melt smoothly, and skim milk can make the sauce watery. For the best texture, stick to full-fat dairy products—this is comfort food, after all.

Serving Ideas & Pairings

Presentation & Plating

Let the casserole stand for 5 to 10 minutes after taking it out of the oven. This “resting period” allows the sauce to set slightly, making it easier to serve neat squares rather than a sloppy scoop. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley or chives to break up the beige color palette. Serve it directly from the baking dish at the table for a cozy, family-style meal.

Pairing Suggestions

This is a rich, carb-heavy dish, so green vegetables are the best accompaniment. Steamed broccoli or green beans with lemon zest offer a light, fresh contrast. A simple green salad with a vinaigrette dressing helps cut the richness of the cheese sauce. Avoid serving bread or potatoes on the side, as the casserole already provides plenty of starch.

For a soup version of this classic comfort meal, try our [Grandma's Chicken Soup](#).

Nutrition Facts

Nutrient	Amount % Daily Value	
Calories	480 kcal	24%
Protein	25 g	50%
Carbohydrates	42 g	14%
Fat	22 g	34%
Saturated Fat	10 g	50%
Cholesterol	95 mg	32%
Sodium	850 mg	37%

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I put raw chicken in the casserole?

No, you should not put raw chicken directly into the casserole. The baking time is not long enough or hot enough to safely cook raw poultry amidst the dense noodles and sauce. Always use pre-cooked, diced, or shredded chicken.

Why is my casserole watery?

This usually happens if you didn't drain the noodles or vegetables well enough. Frozen vegetables release water as they cook, so thaw and drain them first. Also, using low-fat milk instead of whole milk or cream can result in a thinner sauce.

Can I make this gluten-free?

Yes. Use gluten-free pasta (cooked al dente) and ensure your condensed soup or sauce thickener is gluten-free (many condensed soups contain wheat). Use gluten-free breadcrumbs or crushed gluten-free crackers for the topping.

Conclusion

Chicken Noodle Casserole is the ultimate solution for a satisfying, low-stress dinner. It delivers the nostalgic flavors of home in a format that is easy to prepare and practically foolproof. By combining tender chicken, cheesy sauce, and a crispy topping, you create a meal that appeals to both picky eaters and sophisticated palates alike. It serves as a reminder that sometimes, the best meals are the ones that simply make you feel good.