

Easy Chicken & Rice Bake Recipe

When you need a meal that’s hearty, family-friendly, and simple to prepare, this **Easy Chicken & Rice Bake Recipe** delivers every single time. Juicy chicken breasts, creamy mushroom sauce, and perfectly cooked rice come together in one pan for the ultimate comfort meal. Topped with melted cheddar cheese and baked until bubbly, it’s everything you love about a home-cooked dinner—easy, cozy, and absolutely delicious. This recipe transforms everyday ingredients into something special, with minimal effort and maximum flavor.

The Beauty of One-Pan Comfort Meals

Why This Bake Stands Out

One-pan dinners are lifesavers on busy nights. Everything cooks together in the same dish, so there’s no juggling multiple pots or pans. The flavors meld perfectly as the chicken cooks in the creamy sauce and the rice absorbs all that savory goodness. The result is a tender, cheesy, and flavorful meal that practically makes itself while you take care of everything else. It’s comfort food made simple.

Old-School Flavor Made Modern

This recipe captures that nostalgic feel of classic casseroles but with modern convenience. The creamy mushroom soup gives the base a rich, velvety texture, while the onion soup mix infuses it with a savory, homey flavor. A sprinkle of paprika and melted cheddar on top adds warmth and depth, making it the kind of meal that brings everyone to the table. Just like the [Easy One-Pan Cajun Chicken Rice](#), this dish is designed to impress with minimal prep time.

Easy One-Pan Cajun Chicken Rice

Easy Chicken & Rice Bake Recipe

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Description

A creamy, cheesy, and satisfying one-pan chicken and rice bake. Made with tender chicken, fluffy rice, and a rich sauce, this comforting recipe is a family favorite.

Ingredients

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- ☐ 3–4 thick-cut boneless skinless chicken breasts
 - ☐ 1½ cups white rice (uncooked)
 - ☐ 1½ cans cream of mushroom soup
 - ☐ ¾ cup water
 - ☐ 2½ cups milk
 - ☐ 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
 - ☐ 1 packet onion soup mix
 - ☐ ? teaspoon paprika
 - ☐ 1 teaspoon parsley (for garnish)
 - ☐ Salt and black pepper, to taste
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Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and grease a 9×13-inch baking dish.
2. In a bowl, whisk together cream of mushroom soup, milk, water, and onion soup mix.
3. Spread uncooked rice evenly in the dish and pour the soup mixture over it.
4. Place chicken breasts on top, pressing lightly to submerge slightly.
5. Season with paprika, salt, and pepper.
6. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes.
7. Remove foil, sprinkle cheddar cheese on top, and bake uncovered for 15 minutes until golden.
8. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving and garnish with parsley.

Notes

Substitute cream of chicken or celery soup if preferred.

Add vegetables or spices for extra flavor.

Store leftovers for up to 3 days; reheat with a splash of milk.

Use brown rice for extra fiber (increase liquid and bake time).

Did you make this recipe?

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Gathering the Ingredients

What You'll Need

This recipe uses simple pantry staples you likely already have on hand:

- 3–4 thick-cut boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1½ cups white rice (uncooked)
- 1½ cans cream of mushroom soup
- ¾ cup water
- 2½ cups milk
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 packet onion soup mix
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon parsley for garnish
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

These ingredients combine into a creamy sauce that seeps into the rice as it bakes, while the chicken stays juicy and tender under a layer of golden melted cheese.

Ingredient Substitutions

You can easily customize this bake. Substitute cream of chicken or celery soup if you prefer different flavors. For a lighter option, use reduced-fat milk and cheese. If you like a little heat, add a pinch of cayenne pepper or Cajun seasoning for a Southern twist. You can even swap in brown rice for extra fiber—just increase the liquid slightly and bake longer. The beauty of this recipe lies in its flexibility.

Preparing the Creamy Base

Mixing the Sauce

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and lightly grease a 9×13-inch baking dish. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cream of mushroom soup, milk, water, and onion soup mix. Whisk until the mixture is smooth and creamy. This sauce is the heart of the dish—it flavors the rice, keeps the

chicken moist, and creates that signature creamy texture that makes this bake irresistible.

Assembling the Base

Spread the uncooked rice evenly across the bottom of the greased dish. Pour the soup mixture over the rice, then gently shake the pan to distribute the liquid evenly. This ensures the rice cooks uniformly and absorbs all the delicious flavor. No pre-cooking required—the oven does all the work, allowing the rice to steam perfectly under the rich, savory sauce.

Adding the Chicken

Seasoning and Layering

Place the chicken breasts directly on top of the rice and sauce mixture. Press them down lightly so they sit snugly in the liquid but are not fully submerged. Season with paprika, salt, and black pepper. The paprika not only adds flavor but gives the chicken a warm, golden hue as it bakes. You can also sprinkle on garlic powder or Italian herbs for extra depth.

Building Flavor While It Bakes

As the chicken cooks, its juices seep into the rice, infusing it with natural flavor. The combination of soups and milk keeps everything creamy, while the onion soup mix adds a subtle, savory note that ties it all together. By the time it comes out of the oven, every layer—from the rice to the chicken—is infused with rich, comforting flavor.

Baking It to Perfection

The Covered Bake

Cover the dish tightly with aluminum foil to lock in steam. Bake it for 45 minutes. This step is crucial because the trapped steam cooks the rice evenly while keeping the chicken moist. During this time, the sauce thickens into a creamy consistency, and the rice absorbs all the broth and seasonings, becoming tender and flavorful.

The Cheesy Finish

After 45 minutes, remove the foil and sprinkle shredded cheddar cheese evenly over the top. Return the dish to the oven uncovered for another 15 minutes, until the cheese melts and turns bubbly and golden brown. The cheese layer adds richness and that perfect gooey finish. Let the dish rest for about 10 minutes before serving—this helps the sauce set slightly and makes the dish easier to portion.

Variations to Try

Flavor Add-Ins

Once you master the base recipe, the possibilities are endless. Add frozen peas, broccoli, or mixed vegetables for color and texture. A sprinkle of crispy fried onions or breadcrumbs before baking

creates a delicious crunch on top. You can also add diced mushrooms or sautéed onions for more depth. For extra richness, mix in a spoonful of sour cream or cream cheese before baking.

Light and Healthy Options

To make it lighter, use low-sodium soups and reduced-fat cheese. Replace milk with unsweetened almond milk for a dairy-light version. If you're following a low-carb diet, substitute cauliflower rice—but bake uncovered so the mixture doesn't get too watery. For more protein, add chopped cooked chicken breast or turkey into the sauce mixture. Each tweak keeps the dish wholesome and satisfying.

Serving and Storing

Perfect Pairings

This **Easy Chicken & Rice Bake Recipe** is hearty enough to serve on its own, but it pairs wonderfully with fresh sides. A crisp green salad with vinaigrette adds freshness, while roasted green beans or asparagus complement the creamy texture. Garlic bread or dinner rolls make great companions for soaking up extra sauce. Garnish with chopped parsley or a squeeze of lemon juice to brighten the flavors before serving.

Storage and Reheating Tips

Leftovers reheat beautifully. Store cooled portions in airtight containers and refrigerate for up to three days. To reheat, add a splash of milk to restore creaminess and warm in the oven at 350°F or microwave in short intervals, stirring occasionally. The flavors often deepen overnight, making leftovers even more delicious. You can also freeze the baked casserole for up to two months; thaw overnight before reheating.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use cooked rice instead of raw?

Yes, but reduce the liquid by half since the rice won't absorb as much. Mix the cooked rice with the sauce, top with chicken, and bake uncovered for 25–30 minutes.

Can I make this ahead of time?

Absolutely. Assemble the dish up to 24 hours in advance, cover tightly with foil, and refrigerate. When ready to bake, remove it from the fridge and let it sit at room temperature for 15 minutes before baking as usual.

Can I use other cheeses?

Yes. Cheddar melts beautifully, but mozzarella, Monterey Jack, or a mix of parmesan and provolone also work. Choose based on your flavor preference—cheddar adds sharpness, while mozzarella gives a smooth, creamy melt.

Why is my rice undercooked?

If the rice isn't tender after baking, it may need a few more minutes in the oven or an extra splash of liquid. Ovens vary, so check doneness before adding cheese.

Can I use chicken thighs?

Definitely. Boneless chicken thighs stay juicy and flavorful. They're a great alternative if you prefer dark meat or want extra tenderness.

Conclusion

The **Easy Chicken & Rice Bake Recipe** is a weeknight winner that never fails to please. With tender chicken, creamy sauce, and melted cheese all baked together, it's comfort food at its best. Everything cooks in one dish, saving time and cleanup while delivering big, family-approved flavor. Whether you're cooking for guests or just want a simple, satisfying dinner, this easy one-pan bake is the kind of meal you'll come back to again and again.

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