

Easy One Pot Chicken and Rice: Simple Homemade Dinner Idea

Finding the time and energy for a complete, satisfying dinner during a busy week is a common struggle. After a long day, the last thing anyone wants is a complicated recipe followed by a sink full of dishes. This **Easy One Pot Chicken and Rice** recipe is the perfect solution. It delivers a flavorful, nutritious, and comforting homemade meal using just a single skillet. By combining tender chicken, fluffy rice, and savory aromatics in one pan, you create a cohesive dish where the flavors meld beautifully, and cleanup becomes incredibly simple. This is the simple homemade dinner idea you've been searching for.

Why You'll Love This Easy One Pot Chicken and Rice

The Beauty of Minimal Cleanup

The primary advantage of this recipe is its efficiency. Every component, from searing the chicken to toasting the aromatics and simmering the rice, happens sequentially in the same pot. This method means you are not juggling multiple pans, timers, or burners. Consequently, after enjoying your delicious meal, you are left with only one pot to clean, transforming your post-dinner routine from a chore into a quick task. This efficiency makes home-cooked meals more accessible on even the busiest nights.

A Complete, Balanced Meal

This dish is not just simple; it is also a well-rounded meal. It contains high-quality protein from the chicken, which is essential for muscle repair and satiety. The rice provides necessary carbohydrates for energy, while the onions, garlic, and added vegetables (like peas and carrots) offer essential vitamins and fiber. You get all the elements of a balanced plate without the need for multiple, complex side dishes. This makes it an ideal choice for families looking for a nutritious and filling dinner.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [35 minutes](#)
- Yield: [4 servings 1x](#)

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Description

This Easy One Pot Chicken and Rice is the perfect solution for busy weeknights. It delivers a flavorful, nutritious, and comforting homemade meal using just a single skillet with tender chicken, fluffy rice, and savory aromatics.

Ingredients

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☐ 1 tbsp Olive Oil 1 lb Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast (cut into 1-inch pieces) 1 Onion (chopped) 2 cloves Garlic (minced) 1 cup Long-Grain White Rice (uncooked) 2.5 cups Chicken Broth (low sodium) 1 cup Frozen Peas and Carrots 1 tsp Dried Thyme Salt and Pepper to taste

☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. 2. Season chicken pieces with salt, pepper, and thyme. Add to the skillet and cook until lightly browned, about 4-5 minutes. Remove chicken and set aside. 3. Add chopped onion to the skillet. Cook until softened, about 3-4 minutes. Add minced garlic and cook for 1 minute more until fragrant. 4. Stir in the uncooked rice, coating it in the oil and aromatics. 5. Pour in the chicken broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. 6. Return the browned chicken to the skillet. Cover and simmer for 15-18 minutes, or until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed. 7. Stir in the frozen peas and carrots. Cover and let sit off the heat for 5 minutes, allowing the residual heat to cook the vegetables. 8. Fluff with a fork and serve immediately.

Notes

Use long-grain white rice (like Jasmine or Basmati) for best results. Do not use brown rice, as the cooking time will differ. Boneless, skinless chicken thighs can be used in place of breasts for a more moist and flavorful dish.

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 25 minutes
- Category: Dinner, Main Course
- Method: One Pot, Simmering
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 serving
- **Calories:** 410
- **Sugar:** 4g
- **Sodium:** 590mg
- **Fat:** 8g
- **Saturated Fat:** 1.5g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 6g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 45g
- **Fiber:** 3g
- **Protein:** 35g
- **Cholesterol:** 70mg

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Key Ingredients for the Perfect Skillet Meal

Selecting Your Protein

For this recipe, boneless, skinless chicken breasts are a lean and popular choice. They cook relatively quickly and absorb the flavors of the broth and seasonings. However, boneless, skinless chicken thighs are also an excellent option. Thighs contain slightly more fat, which translates to a more tender, moist, and flavorful result. Whichever you choose, be sure to cut the chicken into uniform 1-inch pieces to ensure they cook evenly and are perfectly bite-sized in the final dish.

The Aromatic Base

The foundation of flavor in any great one-pot meal is its aromatic base. This recipe relies on the classic combination of chopped onion and minced garlic. Sautéing these in the skillet after browning the chicken releases their natural sweetness and fragrance. Furthermore, this step helps to “deglaze” the pan, lifting all the delicious browned bits left by the chicken, which then dissolve into the broth and add immense depth of flavor to the rice. Do not rush this step; properly softened aromatics make a significant difference.

Step-by-Step Guide to Cooking Chicken and Rice

Browning the Chicken

The first critical step is to brown the chicken. Heat olive oil in your skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season your chicken pieces with salt, pepper, and dried thyme. Add them to the hot pan in a single layer, working in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding. Sear the chicken

for 4-5 minutes, just until it is lightly browned on the outside. It does not need to be cooked through at this point. Once browned, remove the chicken with a slotted spoon and set it aside.

Toasting the Rice and Simmering

After sautéing your onions and garlic, add the uncooked rice directly to the skillet. Stir it constantly for about one minute, coating every grain in the oil and aromatics. This “toasting” step gives the rice a slightly nutty flavor and helps it maintain a better texture. Next, pour in the chicken broth and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to a low simmer, return the browned chicken to the skillet, and cover the pot tightly. Let it simmer for 15-18 minutes without lifting the lid.

Choosing the Best Rice and Chicken

Best Rice Varieties

The type of rice you use is crucial. Long-grain white rice, such as Jasmine or Basmati, is the best choice for this easy one-pot chicken and rice. These varieties hold their shape well and absorb the liquid without becoming overly starchy or mushy. You should avoid short-grain rice like Arborio, which is designed to release starch and create a creamy texture (ideal for risotto, but not this dish). Similarly, brown rice should not be substituted directly, as it requires a much longer cooking time and a different liquid ratio.

Chicken Breast vs. Chicken Thighs

As mentioned, both chicken breasts and thighs work well. The table below outlines the main differences to help you choose based on your preference.

Feature	Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breast	Boneless, Skinless Chicken Thighs
Flavor	Mild, lean “chicken” flavor.	Richer, more robust flavor.
Texture	Firm and lean. Can dry out if overcooked.	Tender, moist, and very forgiving.
Fat Content	Very low.	Higher fat content.
Best For	A lighter dish; absorbs seasoning well.	A more savory, moist, and flavorful dish.

Ultimately, the choice is up to personal preference. Both yield a fantastic result in this one-pot meal.

Tips for Customizing Your One Pot Dinner

Adding More Vegetables

This recipe is incredibly versatile. You can easily boost the nutritional content by adding more vegetables. Hearty vegetables like diced celery or bell peppers can be sautéed along with the onion. Quick-cooking vegetables are best added at the end. For instance, stir in a cup of frozen corn, spinach, or broccoli florets during the last 5 minutes of cooking. The residual steam will cook

them perfectly while keeping them vibrant and crisp.

Experimenting with Spices

Do not be afraid to change the flavor profile. Instead of thyme, try using a teaspoon of smoked paprika and a pinch of cumin for a smokier, Spanish-inspired flavor. For an Italian twist, use dried oregano and basil, and consider stirring in a handful of sun-dried tomatoes with the broth. You can also add a squeeze of fresh lemon juice and chopped fresh parsley at the very end to brighten up all the flavors.

Serving and Storage Solutions

The Perfect Serving Suggestions

This easy one-pot chicken and rice is a hearty meal all on its own. It truly does not require anything else. However, if you want to add a fresh component, it pairs beautifully with a simple green salad dressed in a light vinaigrette. The acidity of the dressing will cut through the savory richness of the rice. It also works well with a side of steamed green beans or a slice of crusty bread to soak up any remaining broth from the bowl.

Storing and Reheating Leftovers

Leftovers are one of the best parts of this dish. Store any remaining chicken and rice in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. To reheat, place a serving in a microwave-safe bowl and sprinkle it with a tablespoon of water or chicken broth. This adds moisture and helps the rice steam, preventing it from drying out. Cover with a damp paper towel and microwave for 90-120 seconds, or until heated through.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Avoiding Mushy Rice

The most common mistake that leads to mushy rice is lifting the lid too early or too often. Once the pot is covered and simmering, do not peek. Lifting the lid releases the steam that is necessary to cook the rice evenly. Trust the process and the timer. Additionally, make sure you use the correct 1:2.5 rice-to-broth ratio (for 1 cup of rice, 2.5 cups of broth) and use the right type of long-grain rice.

Ensuring Chicken is Cooked

While the chicken is browned at the start, it finishes cooking as the rice simmers. When you return the chicken to the pot, nestle it into the rice and broth mixture. The simmering liquid and steam will gently cook it through. After the 15-18 minute simmer time and the 5-minute rest, the chicken pieces will be perfectly tender and fully cooked. If you are unsure, you can always use an instant-read thermometer to check that the internal temperature has reached 165°F.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use brown rice for this recipe?

You should not substitute brown rice directly without modifications. Brown rice requires a significantly longer cooking time (around 40-50 minutes) and more liquid. If you use it, the chicken will be overcooked and dry by the time the rice is tender.

What if I don't have chicken broth?

You can substitute vegetable broth, or even water, though the flavor will be less rich. If using water, you may need to add extra seasonings, such as a teaspoon of chicken bouillon powder or extra herbs and salt, to compensate for the lack of flavor.

Is this recipe gluten-free?

Yes, as written, this recipe is naturally gluten-free. All ingredients (chicken, rice, broth, vegetables, and spices) do not contain gluten. Just be sure to double-check that your chicken broth is certified gluten-free, as some brands can have hidden gluten additives.

Conclusion

This **Easy One Pot Chicken and Rice** is the ultimate weeknight dinner solution. It is a simple homemade dinner idea that delivers on every front: it is packed with flavor, nutritionally balanced, and incredibly efficient. By minimizing your cooking time and drastically reducing cleanup, this recipe gives you back valuable time in your evening. It is a versatile, comforting, and reliable meal that your whole family will love. If you enjoy this simple skillet, you might also love the spicy kick of a **one-pot queso chicken and rice**. Give this recipe a try, and it is sure to become a staple in your dinner rotation.

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