

Old School Chicken and Rice Casserole: Simple Homemade Comfort Food

There is a special power in nostalgic dishes. This **Old School Chicken and Rice Casserole** is the very definition of simple homemade comfort food. It is the casserole many of us grew up with: creamy, hearty, and wonderfully simple, relying on pantry staples to create a meal that feels like a warm hug. This recipe is not about fancy techniques or exotic ingredients. It is about reliability and the deep, satisfying flavor that comes from baking chicken, rice, and a creamy soup blend together until they become a cohesive, delicious, and filling dinner for the whole family.

What Makes This Old School Chicken and Rice Casserole Endure?

The Power of Pantry Staples

This casserole has remained a family favorite for decades because it is built entirely from pantry staples. Canned condensed soups, milk, and uncooked rice are ingredients you can keep on hand, making this a perfect recipe for a night when you have not planned ahead. The ability to pull together a hot, satisfying meal from the pantry is a cornerstone of simple homemade comfort food. This reliability makes it a timeless classic that transcends culinary trends.

A True “Fix-it-and-Forget-it” Meal

In a world of multi-step, technique-heavy recipes, the simplicity of this casserole is a welcome relief. The preparation is incredibly fast: you simply whisk the liquids and rice, pour them over the chicken in a baking dish, and cover it. The oven does all the hard work. There is no pre-cooking the rice or browning the chicken. This “dump and bake” method is perfect for busy parents or anyone who wants to put a homemade dinner on the table without being tethered to the stove.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [1 hour 35 minutes](#)
- Yield: [6 servings 1x](#)

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Description

The classic, creamy, and comforting Old School Chicken and Rice Casserole just like mom used to make. This simple homemade comfort food is hearty, easy, and baked to perfection using pantry staples.

Ingredients

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Scale 1x 2x 3x

☐ 1 can (10.5 oz) Campbell's® Condensed Cream of Mushroom Soup1 can (10.5 oz) Campbell's® Condensed Cream of Chicken Soup1 cup Milk1.5 cups Uncooked Long-Grain White Rice1/4 cup Onion (finely chopped)1.5 lbs Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts (cut into 1-inch pieces)1/2 tsp PaprikaSalt and Pepper to taste

☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease a 9×13 inch baking dish.2. In a large bowl, whisk together the Cream of Mushroom soup, Cream of Chicken soup, and milk until smooth.3. Stir in the uncooked rice and chopped onion.4. Arrange the chicken pieces in a single layer in the prepared baking dish.5. Pour the soup and rice mixture evenly over the chicken.6. Sprinkle the top with paprika, salt, and pepper.7. Cover the baking dish tightly with aluminum foil.8. Bake for 1 hour.9. Remove the foil, stir the casserole, and bake uncovered for an additional 15-20 minutes, or until the rice is tender and the chicken is cooked through.10. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Notes

Covering tightly with foil is crucial for the rice to cook properly. Do not use instant rice or brown rice, as the cooking times and liquid ratios will be incorrect. Using both soup varieties provides the best, most balanced flavor.

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 1 hour 20 minutes
- Category: Casserole, Dinner, Main Course
- Method: Baking
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 serving
- **Calories:** 430
- **Sugar:** 3g
- **Sodium:** 890mg
- **Fat:** 12g
- **Saturated Fat:** 4g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 7g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 40g
- **Fiber:** 2g
- **Protein:** 38g
- **Cholesterol:** 90mg

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The Classic Ingredients for Ultimate Comfort Food

The Creamy Soup Base

The unmistakable creamy texture of this old school casserole comes from a blend of condensed soups. This recipe uses one can of Cream of Mushroom and one can of Cream of Chicken soup. This combination provides a savory, well-rounded flavor. The mushroom soup adds earthy depth, while the chicken soup enhances the primary protein. Whisked together with milk, these soups transform into a rich, creamy sauce that perfectly envelops every piece of chicken and grain of rice.

The Right Rice and Chicken

For this casserole to work, you must use uncooked long-grain white rice. Instant rice will turn to mush, and brown rice will not cook in the allotted time. The long-grain rice absorbs the creamy soup mixture as it bakes, cooking perfectly and becoming infused with flavor. For the chicken, boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into 1-inch pieces are ideal. They cook through perfectly in the hot, steamy environment of the covered casserole, remaining tender and juicy.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Baking the Casserole

Assembling the Dish

First, preheat your oven to 375°F and lightly grease a 9×13 inch baking dish. In a large bowl, whisk the two cans of condensed soup and the milk until the mixture is smooth and combined. Stir in the uncooked long-grain white rice and the finely chopped onion. Next, arrange your chicken pieces in a single, even layer at the bottom of the prepared baking dish. This ensures the chicken cooks

evenly and stays moist.

Baking to Perfection

Pour the soup and rice mixture evenly over the chicken, making sure all the rice is submerged in the liquid. Sprinkle the top with paprika, salt, and pepper. The paprika adds a beautiful color and a hint of smoky flavor. Cover the baking dish very tightly with aluminum foil. This step is critical; the foil traps the steam, which is what cooks the rice. Bake for 1 hour. Then, remove the foil, give the casserole a good stir, and bake uncovered for 15-20 more minutes.

The Role of Cream Soup in This Recipe

Why Condensed Soup Works

Condensed soups are a brilliant culinary shortcut invented for recipes just like this. They are not just soup; they are a seasoned, stable, and concentrated sauce base. They provide flavor, fat, and thickeners all in one convenient can. When thinned with milk and combined with the liquid from the chicken, they create the perfect-consistency sauce that cooks the rice and chicken simultaneously. Attempting to replicate this from scratch would require making a complex béchamel sauce, which defeats the “simple” nature of the dish.

Modern Alternatives

While the classic recipe is beloved, some modern cooks prefer to make their own cream soup base. You can create a substitute by melting butter, sautéing mushrooms and onions, making a roux with flour, and whisking in chicken broth and heavy cream. This traditional from-scratch method provides a different, albeit delicious, flavor. The table below compares the two approaches.

Method	Classic (Condensed Soup)	From-Scratch (Roux Base)
Preparation Time	5 minutes	20-25 minutes
Flavor Profile	Salty, savory, nostalgic, umami-rich.	Milder, “fresher,” buttery flavor.
Consistency	Thick, rich, and very creamy.	Can be customized from thin to thick.
Ease of Use	Extremely easy, very low failure rate.	Requires careful whisking to avoid lumps.

Variations on the Traditional Casserole

Adding Cheese

Cheese is a natural addition to any comfort food casserole. To make this an **Old School Chicken and Rice Casserole** with cheese, simply stir 1 cup of shredded cheddar or Colby Jack cheese into the soup and rice mixture before pouring it over the chicken. You can also sprinkle another cup of cheese on top during the final 15-20 minutes of uncovered baking time, allowing it to melt and turn golden brown.

Incorporating Vegetables

You can easily add vegetables to this dish. Stir in a 10-ounce package of frozen peas and carrots (thawed) along with the uncooked rice. Another popular variation is adding a can of drained mushrooms or a package of frozen, thawed broccoli florets. The vegetables will cook perfectly as the casserole bakes, adding extra nutrition and color to the final meal.

Perfect Pairings and Serving Suggestions

What to Serve Alongside

This casserole is incredibly rich and hearty, so it pairs best with simple, fresh, and acidic side dishes that can cut through the creaminess. A crisp green salad with a bright lemon vinaigrette is an excellent choice. Other great options include steamed green beans with a squeeze of lemon, roasted asparagus, or simple glazed carrots. These sides provide a contrast in both texture and flavor.

Simple, Hearty Companions

If you are leaning into the full comfort-food experience, this dish is wonderful with a side of fluffy buttermilk biscuits or a slice of crusty bread. These are perfect for scooping up any of the delicious, creamy sauce left on the plate. A simple side of steamed broccoli also works well, as its fresh, slightly bitter flavor balances the casserole's savory notes.

Make-Ahead and Freezing Tips

Assembling in Advance

This casserole is a fantastic make-ahead meal. You can assemble the entire dish as directed (without baking), cover it tightly with plastic wrap and then foil, and refrigerate it for up to 24 hours. When you are ready to eat, remove the plastic wrap, re-cover with foil, and bake. You may need to add 10-15 minutes to the initial covered baking time since you are starting from a cold dish.

How to Freeze the Casserole

This dish freezes beautifully, either baked or unbaked. For an unbaked casserole, assemble it in a freezer-safe baking dish, cover tightly with plastic wrap and aluminum foil, and freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw it in the refrigerator overnight before baking as directed. You can also freeze leftovers. Portion the cooled, baked casserole into airtight containers and freeze. Reheat in the microwave from frozen until hot.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did my rice come out crunchy?

This is almost always because the baking dish was not covered tightly enough with foil. The rice needs trapped steam to cook. Ensure the foil is sealed around all edges. It could also be that your oven temperature is too low, or you did not bake it for the full 1 hour 20 minutes.

Can I use cooked rice instead?

No, this recipe is specifically designed for uncooked rice. The rice absorbs the liquid from the soup and milk mixture as it bakes. If you use cooked rice, it will absorb all the liquid and turn into a very soft, unpleasant mush.

Is it necessary to use two different kinds of soup?

It is not strictly necessary, but it is highly recommended. Using both Cream of Mushroom and Cream of Chicken provides a more complex and balanced flavor. Using only one or the other will still work, but the taste will be more one-dimensional.

Conclusion

This **Old School Chicken and Rice Casserole** is a testament to the enduring appeal of simple homemade comfort food. It is a humble, unpretentious dish that delivers consistent, delicious results with minimal effort. The creamy sauce, tender chicken, and perfectly cooked rice come together in the oven to create a meal that is both satisfying and deeply comforting. It is a recipe that has been passed down for a reason. This traditional bake is a family favorite, much like the modern classic **one-pot queso chicken and rice** that brings a different kind of heat.

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