

# One-Dish Chicken and Rice Bake

When life gets busy, nothing beats a comforting, homemade dinner that practically cooks itself. This **One-Dish Chicken and Rice Bake** is the definition of easy comfort food. With tender chicken, fluffy rice, and a creamy, cheesy sauce, it's a complete meal baked to perfection in one pan. It's simple, satisfying, and designed for anyone who wants a delicious home-cooked dinner without spending hours in the kitchen. The best part? You'll only have one dish to clean when you're done.

## Why This Chicken and Rice Bake is a Family Favorite

### Easy Prep, Big Reward

This recipe proves that simplicity and flavor can go hand in hand. You don't need to precook the rice or brown the chicken; everything bakes together in one dish. The ingredients blend beautifully in the oven, creating a meal that's creamy, cheesy, and perfectly seasoned. With just a few minutes of prep, you can pop it in the oven and let it work its magic. By dinnertime, you'll have a hearty dish that looks and tastes like you spent hours making it.

### Comfort in Every Bite

There's something about the combination of chicken, rice, and cheese that feels like home. The sauce—made with cream of mushroom soup, milk, and onion soup mix—adds richness and depth. The rice absorbs all the savory flavors as it cooks, while the chicken stays tender and moist. Topped with melted cheddar, it's pure comfort food bliss. It's the kind of dish that brings the family running to the table.

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## Description

A creamy, cheesy One-Dish Chicken and Rice Bake that's hearty, comforting, and incredibly easy to prepare. Everything bakes together for a perfect family dinner.

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## Ingredients

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- ☐ 3–4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
  - ☐ 1 ½ cups white rice
  - ☐ 1 ½ cans cream of mushroom soup
  - ☐ ¾ cup water
  - ☐ 2 ½ cups milk
  - ☐ 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
  - ☐ 1 packet onion soup mix
  - ☐ ? tsp paprika
  - ☐ 1 tsp parsley
  - ☐ Salt and pepper to taste
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## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) and grease a 9×13-inch casserole dish.
2. Whisk together cream of mushroom soup, milk, water, and onion soup mix in a bowl.
3. Spread uncooked rice in the bottom of the dish and pour soup mixture over it evenly.
4. Place chicken breasts on top and season with paprika, salt, and pepper.
5. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes.
6. Remove foil, sprinkle cheddar cheese on top, and bake uncovered for another 15 minutes.
7. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with parsley.

## Notes

Add vegetables like broccoli, mushrooms, or peas for extra color.

Top with crushed crackers for a crunchy texture.

Mix Parmesan with cheddar for a richer cheesy layer.

Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.

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## The Ingredients That Make It Work

### A Simple List with Delicious Results

You'll only need a handful of pantry staples to make this recipe shine. Boneless, skinless chicken breasts provide the protein, while white rice forms the heart of the dish. The creamy base is made from cream of mushroom soup, milk, and water—creating a sauce that's thick, savory, and perfectly seasoned. A packet of onion soup mix adds depth of flavor, while paprika, salt, and pepper tie it all together. Cheddar cheese crowns it with gooey, melty goodness.

### Optional Add-Ons for Creativity

This recipe is endlessly adaptable. You can add mushrooms, broccoli, or peas for extra color and nutrients. A sprinkle of garlic powder or Parmesan cheese adds depth and richness. For crunch, top with breadcrumbs or crushed crackers before baking. The beauty of this dish lies in its flexibility—you can easily customize it to suit your taste, mood, or what's already in your pantry.

## Step-by-Step: How to Make One-Dish Chicken and Rice Bake

### Prepare the Dish and Sauce

Start by preheating your oven to 350°F (175°C). Lightly grease a 9×13-inch casserole dish to prevent sticking. In a large bowl, whisk together cream of mushroom soup, milk, water, and onion soup mix until smooth. This mixture creates the creamy base that keeps both the rice and chicken moist while baking. Spread the uncooked rice evenly across the bottom of the dish, then pour the soup mixture over it, making sure every grain of rice is covered.

### Add Chicken and Bake to Perfection

Place the chicken breasts on top of the rice, pressing them down slightly so they're half-submerged in the sauce. Season with paprika, salt, and pepper. Cover the dish tightly with foil to lock in steam, then bake for 45 minutes. This step ensures the rice cooks evenly while keeping the chicken juicy. Remove the foil, sprinkle shredded cheddar cheese evenly across the top, and bake uncovered for another 15 minutes until golden and bubbly.

## Why One-Dish Meals Are Game Changers

### Minimal Cleanup, Maximum Flavor

This dish is perfect for busy nights or when you just don't want to deal with multiple pots and pans. The rice, sauce, and chicken cook together, creating layers of flavor in one dish. There's no need for sautéing or extra prep—everything happens in the oven. When dinner's done, cleanup is a breeze since you only have one dish to wash. It's efficient, practical, and delicious, all at once.

## **A Comforting Classic That Always Delivers**

One-dish recipes like this have been kitchen staples for decades because they always satisfy. The aroma that fills the kitchen while it bakes feels nostalgic—warm, savory, and inviting. When you pull it out of the oven, the cheese is melted perfectly, the rice is tender, and the chicken is juicy. It's hearty enough for a main meal yet elegant enough to serve guests. The simplicity and flavor are what make it timeless.

## **Serving Suggestions and Pairings**

### **Perfect Sides to Complete the Meal**

This chicken and rice bake is filling on its own, but you can pair it with a few simple sides for a complete dinner. Try roasted vegetables, garlic bread, or a crisp green salad with a light vinaigrette. The freshness balances the creaminess beautifully. For a cozy comfort combo, serve it with buttery mashed potatoes or steamed green beans. A sprinkle of fresh parsley on top adds color and freshness to every serving.

### **Creative Ways to Enjoy Leftovers**

If you have leftovers, they reheat beautifully. Store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator and warm them in the oven or microwave until hot. The flavors intensify overnight, making it even more delicious the next day. You can also repurpose leftovers into something new—stuff them into wraps or use them as a base for a creamy chicken rice soup. This dish keeps on giving.

## **Tips and Tricks for Perfect Results**

### **Keep the Chicken Moist and Flavorful**

To prevent dry chicken, make sure the foil is sealed tightly during the first 45 minutes of baking. The trapped steam keeps everything moist. If your chicken breasts are thick, slice them in half horizontally so they cook evenly. Don't overbake; once the cheese melts and the rice is tender, it's ready. Resting the casserole for 5–10 minutes before serving allows the sauce to thicken slightly, making each portion perfectly creamy.

### **Enhance the Creaminess and Flavor**

If you love extra creamy casseroles, add an extra half-can of soup or a splash more milk. For a more robust flavor, stir in a teaspoon of garlic powder or swap cream of mushroom soup for cream of chicken. Mixing in Parmesan with the cheddar gives the topping a richer, nuttier taste. And if you want more texture, top it with crushed crackers or breadcrumbs before the final bake—it adds crunch and contrast.

## **Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them**

### **Using Uncooked Rice Without Enough Liquid**

Always make sure your soup and milk mixture fully covers the rice. This ensures even cooking and prevents any crunchy spots. The liquid ratio in this recipe is perfect for fluffy rice, but oven temperatures can vary, so check the dish near the end. If the rice still seems a bit firm, add a splash of milk, cover, and bake another 10 minutes. It's an easy fix for perfect results every time.

### **Skip the Resting Step**

Allowing the casserole to rest before serving helps everything set. The rice continues to absorb moisture, the cheese firms slightly, and the sauce thickens. Cutting into it too soon can make it look runny. Just 5 to 10 minutes of rest makes a big difference, ensuring each serving holds its shape and looks as good as it tastes.

## FAQs

### Can I make this dish ahead of time?

Yes! You can assemble the casserole up to a day ahead, cover it tightly, and refrigerate it until ready to bake. When you're ready to cook, let it sit at room temperature for 15–20 minutes before baking as directed. It's a perfect make-ahead meal for busy weeknights or meal prepping.

### Can I use brown rice instead of white rice?

You can, but brown rice takes longer to cook and needs a bit more liquid. Add an extra half cup of milk and increase the baking time by about 20–25 minutes. Keep it covered during the entire baking process to ensure the rice cooks fully and the chicken stays moist.

### Can I freeze leftovers?

Absolutely. Let the casserole cool completely before portioning it into airtight containers. It freezes well for up to three months. To reheat, thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bake covered at 350°F (175°C) until warmed through. It's a great option for easy lunches or future dinners.

## Conclusion

**One-Dish Chicken and Rice Bake** is the ultimate combination of simplicity and satisfaction. It's a creamy, cheesy, hearty meal that requires little effort and delivers big on flavor. Perfect for family dinners, potlucks, or meal prepping, it's a dish that feels nostalgic yet modern in its ease. Whether you stick to the basics or add your favorite mix-ins, this recipe guarantees a delicious result every time. With one dish, one bake, and one happy family at the table, this classic is here to stay.