

Pioneer Woman’s Chicken and Rice Bake

When comfort food calls, nothing beats Pioneer Woman’s Chicken and Rice Bake. This timeless casserole blends juicy chicken, creamy sauce, and fluffy rice into one cozy dish. It’s rich, hearty, and unbelievably easy to make, requiring just one pan and a handful of kitchen staples. Every bite tastes like pure home-cooked comfort.

Why This Recipe Works So Well

It’s the kind of meal that fills your home with irresistible aromas. The long baking time allows the rice to soak up the creamy sauce while the chicken stays tender and flavorful. It’s practical, wholesome, and delicious enough for both busy weeknights and lazy Sunday dinners.

Who Will Love This Dish

Families, beginners, and even picky eaters all adore this recipe. There’s no complicated prep or fancy steps—just a foolproof method that delivers creamy, cheesy satisfaction every time. Plus, it reheats beautifully, making it ideal for leftovers and meal prep.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [2 hours 10 minutes](#)
- Yield: [6 servings](#)

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Description

Pioneer Woman’s Chicken and Rice Bake combines creamy soup, tender chicken, and fluffy rice into one comforting oven-baked meal perfect for family dinners.

Ingredients

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- ☐ Long-Grain White Rice (uncooked) – 1½ cups
 - ☐ Cream of Chicken or Mushroom Soup – 2 cans
 - ☐ Water – 1 cup
 - ☐ Milk – 2 cups
 - ☐ Onion Soup Mix – 1 envelope
 - ☐ Shredded Cheddar Cheese – 1½ cups (divided)
 - ☐ Boneless Skinless Chicken Breasts or Thighs – 3 pieces
 - ☐ Salt & Black Pepper – To taste
 - ☐ Optional: Broccoli, mushrooms, or peas
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and grease a 9×13-inch baking dish.
2. Whisk soups, milk, water, and onion mix until smooth.
3. Stir in uncooked rice and half the cheese.
4. Place chicken on top, season lightly.
5. Cover tightly with foil and bake for 1½–2 hours.
6. Remove foil, sprinkle remaining cheese, and bake uncovered for 15 minutes.
7. Let rest 10 minutes before serving.

Notes

Use thighs instead of breasts for juicier chicken.

Add vegetables like broccoli or peas for color.

Avoid instant rice—it overcooks.

Make ahead and refrigerate before baking for easy prep.

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 2 hours
- Category: Dinner, Main Course
- Method: Baking
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 portion (about 350g)
- **Calories:** 420
- **Sugar:** 4
- **Sodium:** 760
- **Fat:** 15
- **Saturated Fat:** 8
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 7
- **Trans Fat:** 0
- **Carbohydrates:** 45
- **Fiber:** 2
- **Protein:** 22
- **Cholesterol:** 115

Did you make this recipe?

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Preparing the Perfect Base

Getting Ready to Cook

Preheat your oven to 350°F and grease a 9×13-inch baking dish. A light coating of butter or spray prevents sticking and helps create that smooth, golden crust. Gather your essentials: long-grain rice, cream of chicken or mushroom soup, milk, water, and an onion soup mix packet. These form the flavorful, creamy base.

The Importance of Rice Choice

Use uncooked long-grain white rice—never instant. It bakes evenly, absorbing all the sauce without turning mushy. This slow-cook method allows the flavors to meld perfectly. As the rice cooks, it becomes infused with creamy goodness, turning into a soft, savory foundation for the chicken.

Creating the Creamy Mixture

Combining the Ingredients

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the soups, milk, water, and onion soup mix until smooth. Stir in the uncooked rice until evenly coated. The texture should be thick but pourable. This mixture ensures the rice absorbs moisture evenly, resulting in perfect consistency from edge to center.

Adding the First Layer of Cheese

Sprinkle in half of the shredded cheddar cheese and fold it gently into the mixture. The cheese melts into the base as it bakes, adding flavor and creaminess. This subtle layer gives the casserole that comforting richness people expect from a true Pioneer Woman-style bake.

Assembling the Bake

Nestling the Chicken

Place three boneless, skinless chicken breasts—or thighs for a juicier option—directly into the creamy rice mixture. Press them down gently so they're partly submerged. This allows the flavors to blend during baking, creating tender, juicy chicken that practically melts in your mouth.

Seasoning and Balancing Flavors

Lightly season with salt and black pepper. Since the onion soup mix already contains sodium, go easy on the salt. You can add garlic powder or paprika for extra depth. This simple balance brings out the best in each ingredient without overpowering the natural flavors.

Baking to Perfection

Covering and Slow-Baking

Cover the dish tightly with foil to lock in moisture and heat. Bake for about 1½ to 2 hours. The low, slow bake ensures the chicken cooks fully while the rice becomes creamy and soft. Check after 90 minutes; if the rice is tender and the sauce thick, it's nearly ready.

Adding the Cheesy Finish

Remove the foil and top with the remaining cheddar cheese. Bake uncovered for another 15 minutes until the top is golden and bubbling. The aroma at this point is irresistible—rich, savory, and slightly smoky from the baked cheese. Let it rest briefly before serving to allow the sauce to thicken.

Serving the Chicken and Rice Bake

Letting It Rest

Once baked, let your casserole sit for 10–15 minutes before serving. Resting allows the creamy sauce to settle and prevents it from being too runny. The texture turns velvety, making each spoonful smooth and cohesive. Garnish with parsley or a pinch of paprika for presentation.

Perfect Pairings

Serve your chicken and rice bake with steamed broccoli, green beans, or roasted carrots for color and freshness. Garlic bread is a perfect side to soak up the creamy sauce. For another comfort-food classic, check out [Baked Melt In Your Mouth Chicken](#) for a similar satisfying flavor profile.

Customizing and Enhancing Flavor

Easy Add-Ons

This recipe is adaptable. Toss in raw chopped broccoli, peas, or mushrooms before baking. They'll cook in the creamy sauce, adding texture and nutrition. You can also sprinkle breadcrumbs on top before baking for a subtle crunch that contrasts beautifully with the creamy rice.

Adjusting to Taste

If you want more flavor, mix mozzarella with cheddar or add a small spoon of sour cream to the base. Prefer a lighter texture? Use low-fat milk and soup. Small tweaks can make this classic casserole fit any taste or dietary preference while maintaining that signature comfort.

Storage and Reheating Tips

Storing Leftovers

Allow the dish to cool for up to one hour before storing. Keep leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for 3–4 days. You can also freeze an unbaked version—just wrap tightly and thaw overnight before baking as usual.

Reheating for Best Results

Reheat in the oven at 350°F for about 20 minutes. The oven method maintains the creamy texture better than the microwave. If microwaving, add a splash of milk before heating to keep the rice soft and moist. Stir halfway through for even reheating.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use brown rice instead of white rice?

Yes, but increase the liquid by $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and extend baking time to about 2½ hours, as brown rice cooks more slowly.

Can I prepare this dish ahead of time?

Definitely. Assemble the casserole a day in advance, cover, and refrigerate. Bake when ready for a fresh, just-made flavor.

What's the best way to make it lower in sodium?

Use low-sodium soups and skip the onion mix. Season with herbs instead for flavor without extra salt.

Conclusion

Pioneer Woman's Chicken and Rice Bake brings together everything people love about classic comfort food—creamy sauce, tender chicken, and hearty rice in one wholesome dish. It's easy, flexible, and guaranteed to satisfy. Whether it's a weekday dinner or Sunday family meal, this casserole offers a perfect mix of convenience and flavor. Serve it fresh from the oven, and you'll understand why it's a long-time favorite in kitchens everywhere.

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