

Queso Chicken and Rice One Pot Meal

When dinner needs to be quick, easy, and incredibly satisfying, this **Queso Chicken and Rice One Pot Meal** delivers every single time. It's creamy, cheesy, and bursting with Tex-Mex flavor—all made in one skillet. You get tender chicken, perfectly cooked rice, and a velvety queso sauce that ties everything together. Ready in just 30 minutes, this one-pot wonder will become your go-to recipe for busy weeknights or family dinners.

The Comfort of One-Pot Cooking

Why One Pot Is All You Need

There's something magical about meals that come together in a single pan. Less cleanup, more flavor—that's the beauty of one-pot cooking. Every ingredient works together, sharing seasonings and juices that create a depth of flavor you can't get when cooking separately. This queso chicken and rice dish is a perfect example. From the first sizzle of chicken to the final melt of queso, every step builds incredible taste and texture.

A Tex-Mex Inspired Favorite

Inspired by classic Tex-Mex flavors, this dish combines the best of creamy and spicy comfort food. The taco seasoning and diced tomatoes with green chilies bring a bold kick, while the queso adds that rich, cheesy smoothness. The result is a balanced, flavorful meal that feels indulgent yet simple to prepare. It's like enjoying your favorite Mexican restaurant dish straight from your own kitchen—warm, satisfying, and family-approved.

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Description

A creamy, cheesy Queso Chicken and Rice One Pot Meal packed with Tex-Mex flavor. Tender chicken, perfectly cooked rice, and melty queso come together in just 30 minutes.

Ingredients

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- ☐ 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces
 - ☐ 1 cup long-grain white rice
 - ☐ 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes with green chilies
 - ☐ 1½ cups chicken broth
 - ☐ 1 cup queso cheese (store-bought or homemade)
 - ☐ 2 tbsp taco seasoning
 - ☐ Optional: ½ cup corn, ½ cup black beans, ½ cup diced bell peppers
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Instructions

1. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Add chicken and half the taco seasoning; cook 3–4 minutes until golden.
3. Push chicken aside and toast the rice for 1 minute.
4. Add diced tomatoes (undrained), broth, and remaining taco seasoning.
5. Stir, cover, and simmer 18–20 minutes until rice is tender.
6. Remove from heat and stir in queso until melted and creamy.
7. Garnish with cilantro, lime juice, or jalapeños. Serve warm.

Notes

Add corn or black beans for texture and flavor.

Use mild ingredients for a family-friendly dish or spice it up with jalapeños.

Reheat with a splash of broth to restore creaminess.

This recipe freezes well for up to 2 months.

Did you make this recipe?

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Gathering the Ingredients

What You'll Need

This recipe calls for simple ingredients that you probably already have in your kitchen. You'll need one pound of boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs (cut into bite-sized pieces), one cup of long-grain white rice, one can (14.5 oz) of diced tomatoes with green chilies, one and a half cups of chicken broth, one cup of queso cheese (store-bought or homemade), and two tablespoons of taco seasoning. You can also add half a cup of corn, black beans, or diced bell peppers for extra flavor and color.

Ingredient Notes and Variations

The beauty of this dish lies in its flexibility. Use chicken thighs if you prefer juicier meat—they hold up beautifully to simmering. For the queso, any creamy cheese sauce works, from jarred queso blanco to homemade cheddar queso. If you like extra spice, use hot diced tomatoes with chilies. For a milder version, choose mild taco seasoning or add a dollop of sour cream at the end to balance the heat. Small tweaks make it easy to adapt to your family's taste.

Starting the Skillet

Cooking the Chicken

Heat one tablespoon of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken pieces and sprinkle with half the taco seasoning. Sauté for three to four minutes until golden brown on all sides. The goal is to lock in flavor, not fully cook the chicken just yet. Browning the meat builds a savory base for the rice and queso, filling your kitchen with that unmistakable Tex-Mex aroma.

Creating the Flavor Base

Once the chicken is lightly browned, push it to one side of the pan. Add the rice to the empty space and toast it for about one minute. This step enhances the rice's nutty flavor and keeps it from turning mushy. Stir occasionally to make sure it doesn't burn. By doing this, you're layering flavor early, giving the finished dish that depth you normally get from slow-cooked casseroles like the [Easy No-Peek Chicken & Rice Dish](#).

Building the Sauce and Simmering

Combining Ingredients

Add the can of diced tomatoes with green chilies (undrained), chicken broth, and the remaining taco seasoning. Stir everything together, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan.

These bits add rich flavor that infuses the broth as it simmers. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low. Cover the skillet and let it simmer for about 18 to 20 minutes until the rice is tender and the chicken is cooked through.

Perfecting the Texture

Keep an eye on the liquid levels—most of it should absorb by the time the rice is done, leaving a creamy consistency. If your rice finishes cooking before the liquid is gone, uncover and cook for a few minutes to evaporate the excess. The rice should be soft but not sticky, and the chicken should be tender enough to cut with a fork. This base sets the perfect stage for the star ingredient—queso cheese.

Adding the Creamy Queso

Melting the Cheese

Once the chicken and rice are fully cooked, remove the skillet from the heat. Stir in the queso cheese while everything is still hot. The queso melts beautifully, wrapping every grain of rice and piece of chicken in creamy, cheesy goodness. The heat from the skillet ensures a smooth, velvety texture without clumping. It's the secret that transforms this from a simple skillet meal into a cheesy Tex-Mex masterpiece.

Adjusting the Creaminess

You can adjust how rich and creamy you want your dish. For a thicker sauce, add more queso or a handful of shredded cheddar. If you prefer it lighter, stir in a splash of milk or a spoonful of Greek yogurt for tang. The queso balances the spices perfectly, turning the dish into the ultimate comfort food—creamy, flavorful, and irresistible from the first bite to the last.

Serving and Garnishing

How to Serve

This Queso Chicken and Rice One Pot Meal tastes best when served straight from the skillet. Garnish with chopped cilantro for freshness and sliced jalapeños for extra heat. A squeeze of lime juice brightens the creamy flavors, while a dollop of sour cream adds cool contrast. For extra crunch, sprinkle crushed tortilla chips over the top. It's a complete meal that's as pretty as it is delicious.

What to Serve With It

Although this dish is hearty enough on its own, it pairs beautifully with simple sides. A crisp green salad or roasted corn on the cob makes a refreshing complement. Warm flour tortillas can turn it into quick burritos or wraps. For a fun twist, scoop it into taco shells for a fusion of soft and crunchy textures. However you serve it, this one-pot wonder never disappoints.

Customizing the Flavor

Add-Ins and Enhancements

This recipe is endlessly customizable. Add black beans or corn for sweetness and extra texture. Diced bell peppers bring color and crunch, while a little chopped onion adds depth. To turn it into a creamy casserole, top with shredded cheese and bake for 10 minutes until bubbly. You can even add cooked chorizo or bacon for a smoky, rich variation that gives the dish even more flavor.

Making It Healthier

To lighten things up, use brown rice instead of white, but add a bit more broth and cooking time. Substitute reduced-fat queso or Greek yogurt mixed with a little shredded cheese for the sauce. Using skinless chicken breasts instead of thighs cuts calories while keeping the dish lean and protein-rich. These swaps make it healthier without losing the creamy texture that makes it irresistible.

Storing and Reheating

How to Store

Cool the dish before transferring it to airtight containers. Store in the fridge for up to three days. The queso sauce will thicken as it chills, but it reheats beautifully. To bring it back to life, add a splash of chicken broth or milk when reheating. Stir gently over low heat or microwave in short intervals, stirring between each one. It'll be just as creamy as when you first made it.

Freezer-Friendly Tips

This one-pot meal also freezes well. Divide into meal-sized portions, seal in freezer-safe containers, and store for up to two months. Thaw overnight in the fridge before reheating. If the sauce thickens too much, stir in extra queso or broth. The flavors remain bold and satisfying, making this a perfect make-ahead dinner or meal prep option for busy schedules.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use pre-cooked or leftover chicken?

Yes, pre-cooked chicken works perfectly. Skip the browning step and add the cooked chicken after the liquids and rice. Let it simmer together for the last few minutes to absorb the flavors. This is a great way to use up leftovers without losing any of the cheesy, creamy goodness that defines the dish.

Can I make this dish vegetarian?

Absolutely. Replace the chicken with black beans or a mix of beans and corn. Use vegetable broth instead of chicken broth and keep the rest of the recipe the same. The queso still gives it that creamy, indulgent feel, while the beans add protein and texture. It's a satisfying, meat-free alternative that doesn't skimp on flavor.

What kind of queso should I use?

You can use store-bought jarred queso or make your own. For a smooth melt, queso blanco or cheddar queso dip works best. If you want something richer, mix cream cheese and shredded cheddar with milk until creamy. Avoid overly thick queso dips—they can overpower the rice's texture and make the dish too heavy.

How spicy is this recipe?

The spice level depends on the ingredients you use. Mild taco seasoning and tomatoes make it family-friendly. For heat lovers, add hot diced tomatoes with chilies, extra chili powder, or diced jalapeños. The queso naturally balances spice, so it's easy to control how mild or fiery you want your meal to be.

Conclusion

The **Queso Chicken and Rice One Pot Meal** is everything a weeknight dinner should be—easy, quick, flavorful, and satisfying. With tender chicken, creamy queso, and perfectly seasoned rice, it delivers comfort in every bite. The one-pot method means less cleanup and more time to enjoy dinner with your family. Once you try it, this dish will become a staple in your kitchen—a Tex-Mex classic made effortlessly at home.

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