

Casseroles: An Easy, Make-Ahead Meal

Use the guide below to choose your ingredients. To cook, season with salt and pepper or other spices, to taste. Bake at 350°F for 40-60 minutes or until top is brown and bubbly.

Protein 1 cup, fully cooked	+	Vegetables 1½-2 cups, chopped	+	Sauce (choose one)	+	Whole Grains 1½ cups, cooked	+	Toppings ½ cup
Beef (lean cuts), cubed or ground		Greens (kale, spinach, chard)		Low-fat or nonfat cream soup, such as mushroom, celery, or tomato (10 ounce can) + ¼ cup nonfat milk		Brown rice		Grated low-fat cheese
Chicken or turkey (boneless; skin removed), cubed or ground		Mixed vegetables (such as carrots, peas and corn)		Diced tomatoes (14.5oz can, drained — approx. 1 cup) + ½ cup reduced-fat sour cream (optional)		Whole wheat pasta		Bread crumbs
Low-sodium ham, diced		Zucchini				Barley		Crushed corn flakes
Beans or lentils		Mushrooms				Quinoa		Crushed tortilla chips
Canned tuna or salmon		Broccoli				Cubed whole wheat bread (1 cup)		

Casserole Ideas:

- **Chicken, Rice & Broccoli:** 1 cup diced, cooked chicken + 1½ cups chopped, blanched broccoli + 1½ cups cooked brown rice + 1 can cream of mushroom soup + ¼ cup nonfat milk + ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese on top.
- **Smoked Turkey & Spinach:** 1 cup diced, smoked turkey + 1½ cups chopped spinach + ½ cup chopped mushrooms + 1½ cups cooked barley + 1 can cream of celery soup + ¼ cup nonfat milk + ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese on top.
- **Mexican Black Beans & Rice:** 1 cup black beans + 1½ cups chopped spinach + ½ cup corn + 1½ cups cooked brown rice + 1 cup diced tomatoes + ½ cup low-fat sour cream + ½ teaspoon ground cumin + ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper + ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese on top.

Chef's Tips:

- **Vegetables:** Cook firmer veggies like carrots or broccoli, and heartier greens like kale or collards, for 3-4 minutes in boiling water. Drain well before adding to casserole. If using canned or thawed frozen vegetables, drain them well. You don't need to cook them before adding.
- **Whole Grains:** Cook grains according to package instructions ahead of time. Refrigerate and add to casseroles you make that week.
- **Toppings:** Toppings like bread crumbs, corn flakes, or tortilla chips may brown quickly. Cover the casserole loosely with foil while cooking. Remove the foil for the last 5-10 minutes.