

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.

Choose from each category for a unique casserole.

Protein + Vegetable + Sauce + Whole grain + Topping = Casserole

Category	Ingredient choices
Protein 1¼ cups, fully cooked	Beef (lean cuts), cubed or ground Chicken or turkey (boneless; skin removed), cubed or ground Low-sodium ham, diced Beans or lentils Canned tuna or salmon
Vegetables 1½-2 cups, chopped	Greens (spinach, kale, collards, chard) Mixed vegetables (such as carrots, peas, and corn) Zucchini Mushrooms Broccoli
Sauce Choose one	Low-fat or nonfat cream soup, such as mushroom, celery, or tomato (10 ounce can) + ¼ cup nonfat milk Diced tomatoes (14.5 oz can, drained — approx. 1 cup) + ½ cup reduced fat sour cream (optional)
Whole Grains 1½ cups, cooked	Brown rice Whole wheat pasta Barley Quinoa Cubed whole wheat bread (1 cup)
Toppings ½ cup	Grated low-fat cheese Bread crumbs Crushed corn flakes Crushed tortilla chips

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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 vegetables like carrots or broccoli and heartier greens like kale or collards for 3-4 minutes in boiling water. Drain well before adding to casserole. 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 tin foil while cooking. Remove foil for the last 5-10 minutes.
- **This recipe framework should provide approximately 4 servings for 3-5 year olds** in CACFP and fulfill one meat, one vegetable, and one grain component for lunch or supper. Different meats and vegetables cook differently so measure each component to be sure before serving.

