



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Cowboy Tater Tot Casserole

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Tips and Extras

- Make it easy with frozen veg. I like to buy packages of frozen fajita mixed vegetables that contain onions and different colored bell peppers. This saves me a ton of prep time! Sometimes I add them into my meat lover's pizza tater tot casserole, too!
- Prefer fresh? If you prefer to use fresh peppers and onions you'll want about ½ cup of each, diced.
- This chicken spaghetti with Rotel will use up any extra ingredients you have lying around!
- Stretching Ingredients: Use extra ingredients like beans or more corn to stretch the recipe further.
- Individual Portions: Make this is small, foil tart pans or mini-loaf pans and freeze for individual sized servings. Perfect for those times when everyone in the entire family is going in different directions.

Storage

Refrigerator storage:

Unbaked cowboy casserole stores well in the refrigerator for up to three days. Cover tightly with plastic wrap.

Once cooked and cooled to room temperature, you can move the leftovers to an airtight container or use a casserole dish with a lid to store it for up to 5 days.

Freezer storage

After adding the tater tots and cheese on top, wrap the unbaked casserole with plastic wrap and freeze for up to 3 months.

When ready to bake you'll just thaw it in the refrigerator overnight and bake as directed.

After cooking, you can freeze leftover cowboy casserole in an airtight container or freezer bag for the same amount of time.

How to reheat Tater Tot casserole

To reheat: To reheat, cover the baking dish with foil and bake at 375°F until warmed through. Reheat small amounts in the microwave.

Variations

1. Switch up the protein. Use ground turkey, ground sausage, or shredded or ground chicken instead of ground beef.
2. No tater tots. Use mashed potatoes, au gratin potatoes, or cornbread batter over the top instead.
3. Homemade tater tots work great in this – plus you can mix in cheese or chopped onions to change up the flavor.
4. Change the cheese. Monterey Jack, Pepper Jack, Colby, or a Mexican blend of cheese all work as well in place of the cheddar in this recipe.
5. Stretch it. Make this easy meal even more budget-friendly by stretching it with a can of Ranch-style, pinto, or black beans. Just add them in with the corn. Be sure to drain the black or pinto beans, but leave the sauce on the Ranch-style beans.
6. Make it mild. If you don't want any hint of heat, use plain diced tomatoes instead of Rotel tomatoes.
7. Switch soups. Cream of chicken or cream of celery soup works just as well in place of cream of mushroom.

FAQs

How long would it take to bake it from frozen?

You'll need at least an hour to bake from frozen. Use an instant read thermometer to ensure that the casserole registers 165 in the center before removing from the oven. All in all, it's best to thaw it overnight in the fridge before baking.

Can cowboy casserole be made ahead?

Put this hearty casserole together up to three days ahead of time and refrigerate until ready to bake and serve. It can also be frozen for up to three months. See the storage heading for more info.

Nice to have...

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Hot Tip:

I swear by my Pyrex Glass Baking Dish Set with Lids and Handles — because if I'm going to feed an army (or just one teenager with a hollow leg), I need bakeware that won't crack under pressure. These bad boys go from oven to fridge to dishwasher without a meltdown... unlike me on a Monday. Plus, the snug-fitting lids mean fewer foil disasters and way more leftovers that actually get eaten.

 [Grab your set here and thank me later.](#)