



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Crockpot Chicken & Broccoli Casserole

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Tips and Time Savers

- Shredded cheese from a block melts much better than the pre-shredded stuff. Use whatever fits your schedule, but for the best cheesy casserole ever, take an extra minute to shred it yourself!
- A whole head of broccoli will stay fresher longer than pre-cut fresh broccoli florets. So, if you're not making this slow cooker chicken broccoli meal for a few days, I recommend skipping the pre-cut option.
- For juicy chicken, start checking the temperature after six hours. Once it reaches 165 degrees F, you can shred it and move on in the recipe.
- Quickly shred the chicken by popping it into your food processor. However, be sure to use the plastic dough attachment, not the metal blade!
- Don't swap the uncooked rice for cooked, or it'll get mushy in the crockpot.

Storage

Refrigerate: Let the extras cool to room temperature before spooning them into an airtight container and refrigerating. For best results, eat within three days.

Freeze: You can freeze it for up to 3 months if you have to, however the texture can get mushy. You may need to add a little milk when reheating.

Reheat: You can quickly reheat leftover cheesy chicken broccoli rice casserole in the microwave. Give it a few 30-second rounds of heat, stirring in between each until it's hot. On the other hand, if you have a lot left over, feel free to reheat it in the oven. Spoon everything into a casserole dish, cover it tightly with foil, and bake at 350 degrees F until heated through.

Variations

- Stir in some pimentos for color... It's similar to pimento cheese.
- Try it with thick-cut pork chops or boneless turkey breast.
- You can swap either the cream of chicken soup or the cream of celery with a cream of mushroom soup if you'd like (or need) to. I do that with other recipes like the crock pot chicken and stuffing casserole.
- Out of chicken stock? No problem. Use water and a bouillon cube/paste, or just water if you're really in a pinch.
- Add cauliflower florets along with the broccoli for some variety.
- Stir in some mushrooms and diced onions for a bit more bulk.
- Use any kind of Minute rice you like—white rice, brown rice, long grain, or whatever suits your fancy as long as it's instant rice.
- Swap half of the cheddar with parmesan cheese for a different flavor. You could also use mozzarella cheese instead of cheddar altogether.
- Garnish with some fresh herbs, if you have them! Green onions, dill, and parsley are yummy options for this chicken broccoli casserole.

<https://www.restlesschipotle.com/crock-pot-broccoli-chicken-rice-casserole/>

FAQs

What kind of rice works best?

Instant or Minute Rice only—regular rice stays stubbornly underdone or turns gummy, depending on its mood.

Can I prep this the night before?

You sure can. Mix everything but the rice, cover the crock, and chill overnight. Add the rice before cooking and you're good to go.

How can I make it extra cheesy?

Add a handful of sharp cheddar into the sauce and another on top before serving. No one's ever complained about too much cheese.

Can I use cooked rice instead?

Yes—just stir it in after the chicken's shredded and hot.

How do I make it creamier?

Stir in a dollop of sour cream or a splash of heavy cream before serving.

Can I make it gluten-free?

Use gluten-free condensed soups and you're golden.

What's the best cheese for this?

Sharp cheddar's the classic, but Colby Jack or a mix with Parmesan is mighty fine.

How do I reheat it without drying out?

Add a spoonful of chicken stock or milk, cover, and warm gently.

Can I freeze it?

You can—just know the rice softens a bit after thawing.

Nice to have

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If your old slow cooker's seen better days, this one's the upgrade your kitchen deserves. The Hamilton Beach 6-Quart Set & Forget Slow Cooker does exactly what it promises—set it, forget it, and come home to dinner that's perfectly cooked every time. With a built-in temperature probe, locking lid for easy travel, and a dishwasher-safe crock, it's the kind of stainless-steel sidekick that makes busy weeknights downright civilized.

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