



## *Tips*

- To help the potatoes thaw more quickly, I put my bag of hash browns in the fridge the night before. In the morning, dump the bag into a large mixing bowl and break the semi-thawed hashbrowns into pieces.
- Use a box grater to shred a block of cheese. It melts better and has a smoother texture than pre-shredded. After all, in a recipe where cheese is one of the main ingredients, you want it to taste as good as possible!
- Don't bake frozen hashbrowns—thaw them first. Otherwise, they'll release moisture and your cheesy potato casserole will be more like cheesy potato mush
- Instead of cooking spray, use butter to grease your baking dish—it adds a nice richness and a bit of crispness to the outer crust.

## *Storage*

Refrigerate hashbrown casserole: place extras into an airtight container. Store leftovers for a few days, and warm individual servings in the microwave until hot.

Freeze leftover hashbrown casserole: spoon the cheesy hashbrowns into freezer-safe containers and store for up to three months. You can heat the casserole directly in the microwave, or let it thaw in the fridge, first.

# Variations

- **Frozen vs Fresh:** Sometimes they sell shredded, fresh hash browns near the heat-and-serve foods in the grocery store. You can use those instead of frozen if you find them.
- **Or, really fresh:** If you're feeling extra adventurous, grate fresh potatoes. Large, brown potatoes (like Russets) work great.
- **More (different) cheese, please:** Colby Jack has the perfect mild flavor, but there are lots of cheese types that will work. If you want more of a sharp flavor, you can use some or all sharp cheddar cheese. Or, experiment with a mozzarella and smoked gouda combo! Yum!
- **To dice, or not to dice:** We love the flavor and texture of chopped onion. However, if you have a picky eater, cut the onion into tiny pieces to disguise them along with the potatoes. Super top-secret mom tip!
- **Vegetarian Soup:** Instead of cream of chicken, you can use cream of celery or cream of mushroom soup. However, know that it will flavor the cheesy casserole a bit differently.
- **Aromatics:** If you prefer garlic, feel free to swap the onion powder with garlic powder and minced garlic.
- **Topping:** I've had cheesy hashbrowns before with a crunchy topping. Crumble corn flakes, potato chips, french fried onions, panko bread crumbs, or Ritz crackers into a bit of melted butter and add it to the potatoes before baking.
- **Hashbrown breakfast casserole:** Add some browned sausage to the mixture before baking. Serve underneath an over-easy egg!
- **Make it a meal:** Some families like to turn the perfect side dish into a full meal by adding some cooked ground beef or diced ham before baking.