Cheddar Rice and Broccoli Bake

One 8-inch/20 cm square bake, four spoonable meal portions · Active 30 min · Total 1 hr 20 min

Skills: Coordinating freshly cooked rice, drained frozen vegetables and a small flour sauce

Ingredients

• 3/4 cup dry long-grain white rice (150 g), rinsed

• About 1 3/8 cups water for rice (330 ml), or packet-specified amount

• 10 1/2 oz plain frozen broccoli florets (300 g)

• 1 tablespoon neutral oil (15 ml)

• 1 small onion, finely chopped (100 g)

• 2 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (20 g)

• 1 1/4 cups milk (300 ml), or milk powder reconstituted according to its label and then measured

• 1 cup grated cheddar (100 g), divided:80 g for sauce and 20 g for top

• 1/4 teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g)

• 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)

Set out

8-inch/20 cm square baking dish, at least 2 qt/2 L, Saucepan with lid for rice, Microwave-safe bowl or second saucepan for broccoli, as its package directs, Wide skillet for sauce, Whisk, Food thermometer

Allergens

wheat, milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Put rice and 330 ml water in the saucepan. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer on low for 15 minutes or its packet time, then stand covered off heat for 5 minutes. Check it is tender. Meanwhile cook broccoli fully according to its package, drain well and cut large florets into bite-sized pieces.

2. Heat oven to 400°F/200°C. Heat oil in the skillet over medium heat and cook onion for 7–8 minutes. Stir in flour for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in milk, bring to gentle bubbling and cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring, until lightly thickened.

3. Remove from heat. Stir in 80 g cheese, salt and pepper, then fold in the freshly cooked rice and drained broccoli. Spread in the baking dish without pressing hard and scatter with the remaining 20 g cheese.

4. Bake for 20–25 minutes until bubbling, lightly golden on top and 165°F/74°C in the center. Rest for 5 minutes, then spoon into 4 portions. Begin quick shallow cooling promptly for any portions not being eaten.

A soft bake needs a spoon

The sauce is intended to keep rice pleasant during serving. The illustrated portion should be scooped rather than expected to stand like an egg-bound slice.

Ingredient labels

Flour supplies wheat and milk/cheddar supply milk. Reconstituted milk is perishable; read the powder’s ingredients and preparation instructions, and check cheese labels.

A useful detail

Rice, broccoli and sauce can cook in parallel while the oven heats. The 80-minute estimate allows preparation and a final bake; fewer burners or a longer rice packet time needs extra elapsed time.

Keep it well

Cool leftovers quickly in shallow portions, ideally within 1 hour, and refrigerate at 40°F/4°C or below. Use within 24 hours of cooking the rice. Reheat a portion only once to 165°F/74°C throughout. Freeze promptly cooled portions within that safe window for up to 1 month; thaw in the refrigerator and reheat once promptly. Do not give rice a new storage clock because it was baked.