Cheddar Cauliflower Brown Rice Hotdish

One 8×12 in (20×30 cm) baking dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L;4 main-dish portions · Active 35 min · Total 2 hr

Ingredients

- 1 cup dry long-grain brown rice (180 g)
- 1 3/4 cups water (420 ml), or rice-packet amount for 180 g
- 1 lb 5 oz cauliflower, small florets and peeled stalk dice (600 g prepared)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml)
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g), divided equally between cauliflower and sauce
- 2 tablespoons butter (30 g)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (150 g)
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (18 g)
- 1 3/4 cups milk (420 ml)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (5 g)
- 4 oz mature cheddar, grated (115 g), divided:3 oz/85 g for sauce and 1 oz/30 g for top
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Set out

Oven, 8×12 in (20×30 cm) baking dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L, Covered rice saucepan, Large rimmed roasting tray, Medium saucepan, Whisk, Rimmed sheet under baking dish, Food thermometer

Allergens

Milk, Wheat, Mustard; check cheese labels. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Start rice first. Rinse, put in its covered saucepan with stated water or packet amount and bring to a simmer. Cook gently 35–45 minutes or packet time until tender, then stand covered off the heat 10 minutes. Add a little hot water and continue if grains are still hard before the rest.

2. While rice cooks, heat oven to 425°F (220°C). Toss cauliflower with oil and half the salt, spread in one layer on the roasting tray and roast 20–25 minutes, turning once, until almost tender with browned edges.

3. Meanwhile melt butter in the medium pan over medium-low heat. Cook onion 7–9 minutes until soft. Stir in flour 1 minute, gradually whisk in milk and simmer 3–4 minutes until sauce coats a spoon. Take off the heat and stir in mustard,85 g cheddar, remaining salt and pepper.

4. Reduce oven to 400°F (205°C). Fold freshly cooked hot rice and roasted cauliflower into warm sauce. Spread in the dish on its rimmed sheet and scatter remaining 30 g cheddar. Bake 25–30 minutes until lightly golden and the center and several other points reach 165°F (74°C).

5. Rest 5 minutes and divide into four portions.

Let the roast happen before the bake

The first tray stage is where cauliflower gets its browned flavor. Skipping it changes both the moisture and the cooking required under the cheese surface.

A useful detail

The 120-minute total includes ordinary brown-rice cooking and resting, with roasting and sauce made alongside, then the full bake. Longer rice-packet times are additional. Previously chilled rice is not substituted into this fresh continuous preparation.

Keep it well

Cool the finished rice bake quickly in small shallow portions, ideally within 1 hour of cooking, and refrigerate at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 24 hours of the rice's original cooking or an earlier ingredient deadline. Reheat no more than once, to 165°F (74°C) throughout, then eat immediately and discard reheated leftovers. Do not leave the full deep dish on the counter to cool. No freezer-batch method is included.