Chicken Enchilada-Style Hotdish

One 9×13 in (23×33 cm) dish, at least 3.5 qt/3.3 L;6 main-dish portions · Active 30 min · Total 1 hr 35 min

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon neutral oil (15 ml)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped (6 g)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin (4 g)
- 1 teaspoon mild smoked paprika (2 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 3 cups plain tomato passata (750 ml)
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken stock (120 ml)
- Up to 1/4 cup water (60 ml), only to adjust finished sauce to 750 ml
- 1 lb fully cooked plain chicken, safely chilled and short-shredded (450 g)
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed (8 1/2 oz/240 g drained)
- 1 cup water- or brine-packed roasted red pepper, drained and chopped (150 g)
- 3 scallions, trimmed and finely sliced (40 g)
- 12 small plain corn tortillas, about 6 in/15 cm across (300 g total)
- 3 1/2 oz cheddar, grated (100 g)

Set out

Oven, 9×13 in (23×33 cm) baking dish, at least 3.5 qt/3.3 L, Medium saucepan, Measuring jug, Large bowl, Knife and board, Rimmed baking sheet, Suitable foil, Food thermometer

Allergens

Milk; check corn tortillas for wheat cross-contact and stock/chicken labels for other allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Heat oven to 400°F (205°C). Put the dish on a rimmed sheet. Heat oil in the saucepan over medium-low heat and stir garlic, cumin, paprika and oregano 30 seconds. Add passata and stock and simmer 10–15 minutes until sauce coats a spoon. Measure the sauce. If more than 750 ml remains, return it to the pan and simmer a little longer; if slightly less, use a little of the listed water to make exactly 750 ml sauce.

2. Mix chicken, beans, drained roasted pepper and scallion in the bowl. Cut tortillas into quarters, making 48 pieces, and divide into three groups of 16.

3. Spread 100 ml sauce across the dish base. Overlap one group of 16 tortilla quarters, add half the filling and 200 ml sauce. Repeat with another 16 tortilla quarters, remaining filling and 200 ml sauce. Add final 16 quarters, cover with remaining 250 ml sauce and scatter cheddar.

4. Cover with suitable foil and bake 25 minutes. Uncover and bake 10–15 minutes more until the center and several other points reach 165°F (74°C). Shield the surface again if it colors before the middle is hot.

5. Rest 5 minutes, then cut into six portions.

Three tortilla groups keep the layers balanced

Set the groups aside before opening the oven. Counting the quarters once is easier than discovering most of the tortillas went into the bottom layer.

A useful detail

The 95-minute total allows sauce preparation and volume adjustment, measured layering, up to 40 minutes baking and rest. Sauce allocation is 100+200+200+250 ml. The chicken is already cooked; cooking it from raw is an additional separate stage to 165°F (74°C).

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F (32°C), at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 3 days of the chicken’s original cooking or opening, or an earlier ingredient deadline. Reheat to 165°F (74°C). Freeze promptly cooled portions for up to 1 month for quality only within the original safe window; thaw in the refrigerator.