Broccoli Cheddar Lentil Bake

One 8×12 in (20×30 cm) dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L;4 main-dish portions · Active 35 min · Total 1 hr 35 min

Ingredients

- Scant 1 cup dry green or brown lentils, picked over and rinsed (180 g)
- 3 cups water (720 ml), for lentils; add water if needed to keep covered
- 1 lb 2 oz broccoli, small florets and peeled stem dice (500 g prepared)
- Water for steamer according to its instructions
- 2 tablespoons butter (30 g)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour (25 g)
- 1 1/2 cups milk (360 ml)
- Scant 2/3 cup low-sodium vegetable stock (150 ml)
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard powder (1 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt (1.5 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 5 oz mature cheddar, freshly grated (150 g)
- 1/2 cup coarse fresh breadcrumbs (30 g)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil (10 ml)

Set out

Oven, 8×12 in (20×30 cm) baking dish, at least 3 qt/2.8 L, Two saucepans, one with steamer insert, Fine sieve, Colander, Whisk, Small bowl, Rimmed baking sheet, Suitable foil if needed, Food thermometer

Allergens

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

Make it

1. Heat oven to 375°F (190°C). Put the dish on a rimmed sheet. Bring lentils and their 720 ml water to a boil, lower heat and simmer 20–25 minutes or per packet until tender but not collapsing. Add water if needed to keep submerged. Drain thoroughly in the sieve.

2. Steam broccoli 4–6 minutes or until nearly tender, keeping the steamer from boiling dry. Drain in the colander and let surface steam escape.

3. Melt butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in flour 1 minute, then gradually whisk in milk and stock. Add mustard powder, salt and pepper. Simmer 3–4 minutes until smooth and lightly thickened. Take off heat and stir in all the cheddar until melted.

4. Fold lentils and broccoli into sauce and spread in the dish. Mix crumbs and oil in the small bowl and scatter lightly over the top. Bake 25–30 minutes until golden and the center and several other spots reach 165°F (74°C). Shield crumbs loosely if needed. Rest 5 minutes and serve four portions.

A sieve is part of the sauce control

Draining lentils is not just tidying up the method. Their retained cooking water changes the sauce concentration, so use the fine sieve and let the last surface moisture drain before assembly.

A useful detail

The 95-minute total includes sorting and rinsing lentils, parallel lentil cooking and broccoli preparation, sauce, assembly, up to 30 minutes baking and rest. Older lentils can need longer; drain only after their centers are tender.

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 or an earlier dairy deadline. Reheat to 165°F (74°C). The crumb layer softens after storage; this cheese sauce is best refrigerated rather than frozen.