

Seasonal Eating
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Casserole Dishes

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Casseroles are the ultimate one dish meal. Vegetables, meat and a starch all in one. They may be old fashioned but they are still one of my favorite meals and especially in the winter when it's cold outside. There's something about the delicious smells coming from a warm oven that makes gathering around the table an event to look forward to in the evening. They also make good leftovers for lunch the next day.

The 9"x13" baking dish is a standard size for a casserole. This size pan is considered a 3 quart casserole dish. It is a great size for families of 4-8 people, usually with a few leftovers. However, if you are a family of 1-3 people, this makes a lot of food to eat up. So sometimes you may want to make just a half a recipe of a casserole or some casserole recipes call for 1 ½ quart or 2 quart dishes. So what pans or casserole dishes should you use?



Some casserole dishes will be labeled on the bottom with the amount of quarts they hold which makes it easy to figure out but some do not. You can always measure cups of water into your dish to fine out the volume, especially if it's an odd size. A one quart dish will hold 4 cups. Remember that you will need some room at the top for the casserole to bubble up and not spill over. In general, an 8" square baking dish will hold 1 ½ quarts and an 11" x 7" dish will hold 2 quarts. So an 8" square baking dish that is about 2" deep works well for a half recipe of regular casserole.

When it comes to casseroles you want to take into consideration the surface area. The crowning glory of a casserole is the crunchy topping, whether its buttery crackers, crushed up chips or fried onions. Every serving needs some of the topping. So even though a 9"x 5" x 3" loaf pan holds about the same volume as an 8" x 8" x 2" pan, there is less surface area and it will not make a good casserole. If your recipe calls for an 8" square pan and you only have a 9" square pan, just bake your casserole a little less time since it will be thinner and cook more quickly. When reheating a single serving of a casserole, I generally put it in a small shallow ceramic dish in the oven so the topping gets crunchy again. It's like a new little casserole!

The recipe below works well in an 11" x 7" pan (a 2 quart casserole dish). Welsh Rarebit is a dish of a tangy cheese sauce poured over toast, so this is a play on that sauce in a delicious casserole of chicken and broccoli. Give it a try on a cold, blustery winter day.

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating and family meals (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Welsh Rarebit Chicken and Broccoli Casserole

3 slices white bread, cut into cubes
8 tablespoons butter, divided
8 ounces mushrooms, sliced
1/2 onion, chopped
Kosher salt and black pepper
8 ounces frozen broccoli florets
2 cups shredded cooked chicken breasts (2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts)
3 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon Dijon style mustard
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 1/2 cups milk
1/2 cup beer
1 cup shredded Cheddar Cheese
1 tube round buttery cracker, crushed

Spray a 2 quart casserole dish with vegetable spray. Sprinkle in the bread cubes. In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter and sauté the mushrooms and onions until tender and the liquid is evaporated, sprinkling with a little salt and pepper. Pour the vegetables over the bread cubes. Microwave the broccoli for 3-5 minutes, stirring halfway through, until just tender. Drain, roughly chop and layer over the mushrooms. Add the shredded chicken on top. In the large skillet, melt 4 tablespoons butter and add flour. Cook and stir for a minute, adding a 1/4 teaspoon of salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Add the mustard and Worcestershire sauce, stirring to mix. Whisk in the milk and beer and bring to a boil. Cook and stir until thickened. Pull off the heat and add the cheese and whisk until melted. Pour the sauce over the top. With a fork, poke and wiggle to get the sauce to the bottom. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter and mix with crushed crackers. Sprinkle over the top. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-40 minutes until hot and bubbly and browned on top. Let stand for a few minutes before serving.