

Broccoli Cheese Casserole

By Sarah Jampel

Total Time 45 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (1,321)



Joseph De Leo for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini.

In this casserole, a homemade cheese sauce that's good enough to toss with pasta replaces the canned creamed soup. When you mix in broccoli florets and cooked rice, then top the whole thing with crushed crackers and more Cheddar, you get a gooey holiday side with a crisp top. Use white or orange Cheddar or a mix of the 2, aiming for a range of 4 to 5 cups, based on how rich and cheesy you'd like it. And while this does contain a lot of broccoli, you'll probably want to serve a salad on the side.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

¾ cup unsalted butter, plus more for greasing dish

Kosher salt

3 to 4 large heads broccoli (about 3½ pounds), trimmed of long stalks and cut into small florets

1½ teaspoons red-pepper flakes

2 bunches scallions

½ teaspoon black pepper

¾ cup all-purpose flour

4½ cups whole milk

5 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

3 cups cooked long-grain white rice

2 cups coarsely crushed Ritz crackers

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat the oven to 350 degrees and butter a deep 9-by-13-inch baking dish.

Step 2

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the broccoli florets and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until bright green. Drain immediately and set aside.

Step 3

In a large heavy-bottomed pot, melt the butter with 1 teaspoon red-pepper flakes over medium heat. When melted, add the scallions, 1 teaspoon salt and the black pepper, and cook until scallions have softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the flour and stir to combine. Stir constantly for 1 to 2 minutes, until the flour streaks are slightly golden in color, then add the milk in a slow stream, stirring continuously.

Step 4

Continue to stir the milk until the mixture is thick and creamy, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from heat and add 4 cups of the cheese, stirring vigorously to melt it down into a smooth sauce. Taste and season with salt.

Step 5

Add the cooked rice and parboiled broccoli to the pot and stir until evenly coated with sauce.

Step 6

Transfer the mixture to the prepared dish and sprinkle with remaining 1 cup grated cheese, Ritz crackers and remaining ½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes.

Step 7

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until bubbling. For more color, cook under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes, watching carefully. Serve warm.

TIP

The casserole without the cracker-cheese topping can be assembled a day earlier and stored in the refrigerator. You might need to add 5 to 10 minutes to the cook time if baking from cold.

Private Notes

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