

# Chicken Broccoli Rice Casserole (Gluten-Free)

## Ingredients

Long-grain white rice	2 cups	Canned mushrooms	8 oz. can
Chicken broth (for rice)	3 cups	Diced green chiles	4 oz. can
Cooked chicken, diced	1 lb.	Dried thyme	1 tsp.
Broccoli florets	8 oz.	Paprika	1 tsp.
Sharp cheddar cheese	8 oz.	MSG	½ tsp.
Cream cheese, softened	6 oz.	Garlic powder	½ tsp.
Onion, medium	1	Onion powder	½ tsp.
Garlic cloves	6-8	Ground nutmeg	¼ tsp.
Butter	4 Tbsp.	Salt	1 tsp.
Gluten-free flour	¼ cup	Black pepper	½ tsp.
Milk	2 cups		
Chicken broth	1 cup		

## Directions

Preheat oven to *350°F* — Grease a 9x13 inch baking dish — Shred **sharp cheddar** — Dice **onion** — Mince **garlic** — Cut **broccoli** into florets — Drain **mushrooms** — Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature

1. Cook **rice** using **chicken broth** instead of water according to package directions.
2. While rice cooks, bring a pot of salted water to boil. Blanch **broccoli florets** for *2 minutes*, then immediately transfer to an ice bath. Drain well.
3. In a large saucepan, melt **butter** over medium heat. Add diced **onion** and cook until translucent, about *5 minutes*. Add minced **garlic** and drained **mushrooms**, cooking for another *2-3 minutes*.
4. Sprinkle **gluten-free flour** over the butter mixture and cook, stirring constantly, for *1-2 minutes*.
5. Gradually whisk in **milk** and **chicken broth**. Add **cream cheese** and stir until melted. Add **thyme**, **paprika**, **MSG**, **garlic powder**, **onion powder**, **nutmeg**, **salt**, and **pepper**. Simmer, stirring frequently, until sauce thickens, about *5 minutes*.
6. In a large bowl, combine cooked **rice**, blanched **broccoli**, diced **chicken**, **green chiles**, and sauce. Mix well.
7. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish. Top with shredded **sharp cheddar**.
8. Bake for *25-30 minutes* until bubbly and cheese is melted.
9. Let stand for *5-10 minutes* before serving.

## Equipment Required

- 9x13 inch baking dish
- Large saucepan for sauce
- Medium pot for rice
- Large pot for blanching broccoli
- Large mixing bowl
- Colander or strainer
- Box grater for cheese
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Bowl for ice bath

## Mise en Place

- Bring **cream cheese** to room temperature *1 hour* before starting
- Dice chicken if not already prepared
- Cut broccoli into uniform florets for even cooking
- Measure all ingredients before starting the sauce
- Have ice bath ready before blanching **broccoli**

## Ingredient Tips

- Use a 1:1 gluten-free flour blend for best results
- Sharp or extra-sharp cheddar provides the best flavor
- Fresh broccoli is preferred over frozen for better texture
- Rotisserie chicken works well for convenience
- Full-fat dairy products yield the creamiest sauce
- Use mild **green chiles** for flavor without heat

## Preparation Tips

- Don't skip blanching the **broccoli** - it ensures perfect texture
- Cook **rice** slightly al dente as it will continue cooking in the casserole
- Whisk sauce continuously to prevent lumps
- Let **cream cheese** fully soften for smooth incorporation
- If sauce is too thick, thin with additional warm **broth**
- Taste and adjust seasonings before adding to casserole

## Make Ahead & Storage

- Can be assembled up to *24 hours* ahead and refrigerated
- If made ahead, bring to room temperature for *30 minutes* before baking
- Add extra **broth** if mixture seems dry after refrigeration
- Leftovers keep for *3-4 days* in refrigerator
- Reheat covered at *350°F* until warm, about *20 minutes*
- Can be frozen for up to *3 months*; thaw overnight in refrigerator

## Serving Suggestions

- Serve with a crisp green salad
- Top with extra shredded **cheese** if desired
- Garnish with fresh parsley or chives
- Add crushed gluten-free crackers on top for extra crunch
- Pairs well with additional steamed vegetables
- Consider serving with gluten-free garlic bread