

# Chicken Broccoli Rice Casserole •

This casserole builds flavor in layers, starting with pressure-cooked chicken that produces tender meat and a flavorful broth used to enrich the cream sauce. The rice is cooked al-dente and finishes in the oven while absorbing the sauce. Broccoli is blanched briefly to maintain its structure and bright color through the final bake. Corn is caramelized to bring out its natural sweetness, onions are softened, then garlic and mushrooms are added to build a savory base. The sauce brings everything together: a spiced roux (rosemary, paprika, nutmeg) built with the reserved chicken broth and milk, then finished with cream cheese for richness and tang. All components are combined and baked to meld. Crispy fried onions are added near the end to preserve their crunch and add textural contrast.

## Ingredients

Chicken thighs	2-3lb.	Sweet corn, canned	8 oz.
Rice, long-grain white	2 cups	Bay leaf	1
Neutral oil	2 tsp.	Rosemary, dried	1 tsp.
Water	4 cups	Sweet paprika	1 tsp.
Chicken Better Than Bouillon	3 Tbsp.	MSG	¼ tsp.
Broccoli	1 head	Garlic powder	½ tsp.
Cream cheese	8 oz.	Onion powder	½ tsp.
Onion, medium	1	Nutmeg powder	pinch
Garlic cloves	6-8	Salt	1 tsp.
Butter	6½ Tbsp.	Black pepper	½ tsp.
Flour	3 Tbsp.	Red pepper, crushed	¼ tsp.
Milk	2 cups	Crispy fried onions	¼ cup
Mushroom slices, canned	8 oz.		

## Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Prepare **chicken broth**: whisk 3 Tbsp. **Better Than Bouillon** into 4 cups **water** until dissolved; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Chop **broccoli**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Drain **corn**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Mince **garlic** and drain **mushrooms**; combine in *Small Bowl #3* — Soften **cream cheese** at room temp and cube; set aside in *Small Bowl #4* — Grease a 9 inch×13 inch baking dish with ½ Tbsp. **butter**

1. Place **chicken thighs** in Instant Pot. Add 2 cups **chicken broth** (*Medium Bowl #1*), 1 tsp. **thyme**, and one **bay leaf**. Cook on **high pressure** for 15 minutes and release after 5 minutes.
2. Set cooked **chicken** aside on a plate; let rest for 5-10 minutes, then pick and dice meat, discarding bones and skin. Place diced **chicken** in *Large Bowl #1*. Strain cooked broth and reserve in *Medium Bowl #4*.

3. Cook **rice** al-dente using 2 cups **chicken broth** (*Medium Bowl #1*) and a **bay leaf**. Stop your rice cooker 5-10 minutes early.
4. While rice cooks, bring a pot of salted water to boil. Blanch **broccoli** for *2 minutes*, then immediately strain in a metal colander rinsing with cold water. Drain well and transfer to a large bowl.
5. In a large skillet, melt 4 Tbsp. **butter** on medium heat. Add 2 tsp. **oil** and **corn** (*Small Bowl #1*) and increase heat to medium-high to brown and caramelize the corn, about *5 minutes*. Add diced **onion** (*Small Bowl #2*) and cook until translucent, *5-10 minutes*. Add **garlic** and **mushrooms** (*Small Bowl #3*), cooking for another *5 minutes*. Remove from heat and transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.
6. In a large saucepan, melt 2 Tbsp. **butter**. Add 1 tsp. **rosemary**, 1 tsp. **paprika**,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **MSG**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **garlic powder**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **onion powder**, pinch **nutmeg**, 1 tsp. **salt**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. **black pepper**, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **red pepper**. Heat on medium, stirring constantly for *30 seconds*. Sprinkle 3 Tbsp. **flour** over the butter/spice mixture using a whisk to combine. Cook, stirring constantly for *2 minutes*.
7. Gradually whisk in 2 cups of **reserved broth** (*Medium Bowl #4*), then 2 cups **milk**. Heat and whisk constantly until bubbling and thickened. Add cubes of **cream cheese** (*Small Bowl #4*) and cut/whisk until melted and smooth. Remove from heat and transfer to *Large Bowl #3*; set aside.
8. In *Large Bowl #4*, combine and mix blanched **broccoli** (*Medium Bowl #2*), cooked **rice**, cooked **vegetables** (*Large Bowl #2*), diced **chicken** (*Large Bowl #1*), and **sauce** (*Large Bowl #3*).
9. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish and bake at  $375^{\circ}\text{F}$  for *20 minutes*. Remove from oven to sprinkle liberally with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup **crispy fried onions**, and bake another *10 minutes*. Rest *5-10 minutes* before serving.