

Casseroles

There are an endless combination of ingredients leading to a 'casserole' at some point.

The basics are 3 layers.

BOTTOM

The bottom layer goes in first, hence first in the list.

The liquid, if any is added, or whatever comes out of the other ingredients, collects in the bottom. It is important to keep some liquid in the bottom to keep the casserole from burning. The bottom layer must be 'liquid tolerant'. As such, pre-cooked meat works well, as does potato or rice.

MIDDLE Goodness

The middle layer(s) are just that ... layers of goodness ... whether it be meat or vegetable or alternating layers of both.

TOP

The top layer goes on last, hence last in the list. It is usually but not always a starch; potatoes or rice. The main role of the top layer is to help keep the moisture in.

LIQUID

There's another layer. Liquid is needed. It can be water, milk or canned milk. Sometimes it is tomato (or other) soup poured over the top.

Light Casseroles → Bake at 350 °F (175 °C) for 60 to 90 minutes or until done.

Heavy Casseroles → Bake at 400 °F (200 °C) for 60 to 90 minutes or until done.

The net result is a goodness sandwich with starch top and bottom that is then steamed / baked in a liquid.

7(ish) Layer Dinner

The king of all casseroles when I was growing up was 7 layer dinner although it did not always have 7 layers.

- Layer of sliced potatoes
- Layer of sliced onions
- Layer of Hamburger
- Layer(s) of VEG (multi-layer or mixed)
 - Carrots (sliced, diced or frozen)
 - Peas (canned or frozen)
 - Corn (kernel = canned or frozen)
- Layer of rice (instant rice usually)
- Tomato Soup for liquid

Variations

I have friends that call this 'Shipwrecked Casserole'

Corned Beef Hash

Not a hash at all - a casserole.

A staple from my father's parents and our 2 month summer camping trips.

Fry corned beef with onions and kernel corn to make the bottom layer

Make mashed potatoes and add as the 'second' layer.

Bake until hot through (it is already cooked) then add shredded cheese and bake until melted.

Fish Casserole

A staple aboard the boats during multi-day fishing trips; usually long lining, trawl or gill-netting.

Alternating layers of sliced potatoes, onions and fish fillets.

Top and bottom layers are potato.

Layer of bread or cracker crumbs.

Soup, water or milk for liquid. If FRESH fillets, often no liquid needed.

Scallop Potatoes

Another childhood staple.

Alternating layers of sliced potatoes and onions.

Canned milk for liquid, a bit of butter here and there if you like. You only need enough liquid to cover the first (bottom) 1/3 of the casserole. The rest will steam.

Grandma likes to bake it with the lid off for the last few minutes so the top layer browns up.

Au Gratin aka Fancy Scallop Potatoes

Alternating layers of sliced potatoes and onions.

The 'sauce' is a multiple of this ratio :

- 1 rnd Tablespoon of butter
- 1 rnd Tablespoon of flour
- 1 cup for milk
- 1 cup of cheese

Melt the butter and whisk/stir in the flour to prevent lumps.

Add the milk and simmer, stirring constantly, until everything thickens.

Add the cheese at the very end, stir in until melted.

Pour the whole thing over the potatoes, cover and bake.

Variations

I lived with Sam, a German chap, in 2017/18 who insisted on putting apples, raisons and nutmeg in his fancy scallop potatoes.

Clan Brown / Mayo mix cream of mushroom soup with milk and add that to 50% or so of their scallop potatoes.

2017 Barrington Street Scallop Potatoes

Back when I lived for a winter with a bunch of Australian women and a German fellow.

