

DUMP & BAKE ITALIAN CHICKEN RICE BAKE

- ~~1 1/4~~ cups marinara + ~~1/2~~ cup chicken broth
- 1 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes with basil, garlic and oregano (NOT drained)
- 1 cup uncooked long grain white rice
- 1 1/2 lbs. skinless, boneless chicken breast or chicken tenderloins, diced into bite sized pieces
- ~~1 tsp~~ Italian seasoning 1 TBS
- ~~1/2 tsp salt~~ Salt 1/2 tsp
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 TBS chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Spray a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

Stir marinara sauce, tomatoes (in their juice) and uncooked rice together in the prepared dish (or in a separate bowl).

In a small bowl, combine diced, uncooked chicken with Italian seasoning and salt.

Add seasoned chicken to the rice mixture and stir to completely combine. Transfer to prepared baking dish.

Cover tightly with foil or with a lid.

Bake for 35 minutes, remove the cover, and give the dish a good stir. At this point the chicken should be cooked through and the rice should be just about tender (but still slightly al dente). If the rice is too hard, cover the dish and return to the oven for 5-10 more minutes, or until it's ready.

Once the rice is just about tender, sprinkle mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses over top. Return dish to the oven, uncovered, for about 5 more minutes, or just until cheese is melted and rice is completely done.

Garnish with parsley before serving.

Dump & Bake Italian Chicken

COOK'S TIPS AND RECIPE VARIATIONS:

If you prefer, you can **use about 2 cups of chopped, cooked chicken** instead of the uncooked chicken.

If you prefer to use **brown rice**, you will need to **increase the total baking time to 75-90 minutes**. I suggest adding the chicken during the final 35 minutes so that the meat doesn't get overdone and dry.

After 35 minutes, remove the dish from the oven and take off the cover. Give everything a good stir. At this point, the rice should be *just about* tender and finished cooking, but may still be slightly al dente. **If the rice is still hard, return the dish to the oven (covered) for another 5-10 minutes** before adding the cheese on top. **Total baking times can vary depending on the type of dish** that you're using (for instance, glass dishes may require a longer baking time than a nonstick metal pan). Your best bet is to just taste the rice and make sure that it's almost finished before you sprinkle that cheese on top!

Can Chicken and Rice Casserole be cooked in the Crock Pot?

Yes, but you have to be careful! Different slow cookers cook the ingredients at slightly different temperatures, so cooking times will always vary depending on your appliance.

You'll need to watch your rice closely towards the end of the cooking time, since you want to be sure to turn it off when the rice is tender. If the rice cooks for too long, it will become mushy.

In general, chicken and rice cooks in a Crock Pot on LOW for 3 1/2 - 5 1/2 hours, or on HIGH for 1 1/2 - 2 1/2 hours. Again, check your rice regularly, give it a stir if possible, and turn off the slow cooker as soon as the rice is tender and the chicken is cooked through.