

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 5 minutes

Oven Temperature: 375°F (190°C)

Difficulty: Easy

Intensity Level: Low-Moderate (light stovetop work, then hands-off baking)

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Introduction

Cheesy Cabbage Beef Casserole is the kind of hearty, comforting dish that fills the kitchen with warmth and the table with happy eaters. It combines tender sautéed cabbage, seasoned ground beef, and a rich, creamy, cheesy sauce, all baked together under a golden blanket of melted mozzarella and cheddar. Think of it as a cross between a deconstructed cabbage roll and a cozy weeknight skillet dinner — without the fuss of rolling individual cabbage leaves.

This recipe is budget-friendly, family-friendly, and endlessly adaptable. It works beautifully as a main course with a side of crusty bread or a simple green salad, and it reheats wonderfully for leftovers the next day. Whether you're feeding a hungry crowd or meal-prepping for the week, this casserole delivers big flavor with minimal effort.

Ingredients

For the Casserole Base

- 1½ lbs (680 g) ground beef (80/20 or 85/15 recommended)
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium head green cabbage (about 2 lbs / 900 g), cored and roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or butter

- 1 teaspoon salt (plus more to taste)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 cup (240 ml) beef broth
- 1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream or whole milk
- 4 oz (113 g) cream cheese, softened and cubed

For the Cheese Topping

- 1½ cups (170 g) shredded mozzarella cheese

- 1 cup (100 g) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
 - ¼ cup (25 g) grated Parmesan cheese
 - 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish, optional)
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Equipment Needed

- Large skillet or Dutch oven (12-inch)
 - 9×13-inch baking dish
 - Wooden spoon or spatula
 - Measuring cups and spoons
 - Colander (for draining beef)
 - Aluminum foil (optional)
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Instructions

Step 1: Preheat and Prepare (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a 9×13-inch baking dish with butter or nonstick spray. Set aside.

Step 2: Brown the Beef (Time: 8 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef and cook, breaking it apart with a wooden spoon, for 6–8 minutes until fully browned. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper. Once cooked, drain excess fat if desired, then transfer the beef to a bowl and set aside.

Step 3: Sauté the Aromatics (Time: 3 minutes | Intensity: Low-Moderate)

In the same skillet, reduce heat to medium. Add the olive oil (or butter), diced onion, and minced garlic. Sauté for 2–3 minutes until the onion becomes translucent and fragrant. Be careful not to burn the garlic.

Step 4: Cook the Cabbage (Time: 10 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

Add the chopped cabbage to the skillet in batches if necessary. Stir to combine with the onions and garlic. Add the salt, black pepper, smoked paprika, thyme, and oregano. Cook for 8–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage softens and reduces in volume by about half. It should be tender but not mushy.

Step 5: Build the Sauce (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

Push the cabbage mixture to the sides of the skillet and add the tomato paste and Worcestershire sauce to the center. Stir and cook for 1 minute to deepen the flavor. Pour in

the beef broth and heavy cream, then add the cubed cream cheese. Stir everything together until the cream cheese melts and the sauce is smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Step 6: Combine Beef and Cabbage (Time: 2 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Return the browned beef to the skillet and stir until evenly incorporated with the creamy cabbage mixture. Let it simmer for 1–2 minutes so the flavors meld.

Step 7: Assemble the Casserole (Time: 3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Transfer the beef and cabbage mixture into the prepared baking dish, spreading it into an even layer. Sprinkle the mozzarella, cheddar, and Parmesan cheeses evenly over the top.

Step 8: Bake (Time: 20–25 minutes | Intensity: None — hands-off)

Bake uncovered on the middle rack for 20–25 minutes, until the cheese is melted, bubbly, and lightly golden brown. If you prefer a deeper golden crust, broil on high for the final 2–3 minutes — watch it closely to avoid burning.

Step 9: Rest and Serve (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Remove the casserole from the oven and let it rest for 5 minutes before serving. This allows the layers to set and makes serving easier. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley if desired.

Serving Suggestions

- Crusty sourdough or garlic bread
 - Simple garden salad with vinaigrette
 - Steamed green beans or roasted broccoli
 - Mashed potatoes or buttered egg noodles
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Storage and Reheating

- Refrigerator: Store leftovers in an airtight container for up to 4 days.
 - Freezer: Freeze in a freezer-safe container for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator before reheating.
 - Reheating: Warm in the oven at 350°F (175°C) for 15–20 minutes, or microwave individual portions in 1-minute intervals until heated through.
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Tips and Variations

- Lower carb: Skip any bread sides and enjoy as-is.
- Spicy kick: Add ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes or a diced jalapeño with the onions.
- Different meat: Ground turkey or Italian sausage work beautifully.
- Extra veggies: Add sautéed mushrooms, bell peppers, or riced cauliflower.
- Make-ahead: Assemble the casserole up to 24 hours in advance, cover, and refrigerate. Add 5-10 minutes to the baking time.

Nutrition Information (Per Serving)

Based on 8 servings. Values are estimates and will vary based on exact ingredients and brands used.

Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Calories	~465 kcal
Total Fat	~34 g
Saturated Fat	~16 g
Trans Fat	~1 g
Cholesterol	~110 mg
Sodium	~690 mg
Total Carbohydrates	~10 g

Nutrient	Amount per Serving
Dietary Fiber	~3.5 g
Total Sugars	~5 g
Protein	~27 g
Vitamin C	~45% DV
Calcium	~28% DV
Iron	~15% DV
Vitamin A	~20% DV