

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 35 minutes
- Total Time: 50 minutes
- Yield: 6 servings
- Difficulty Intensity: Easy / Beginner-Friendly
- Cooking Heat Intensity: Medium (Stovetop) & Medium-High (Oven at 375°F / 190°C)

Table of Contents

- ◆
 - [Ingredients](#)
 - [Main Casserole Base](#)
 - [Seasoning Blend](#)
 - [Topping & Garnish](#)
 - [Step-by-Step Cooking Instructions](#)
 - [Pro Tips for Success](#)
 - [Estimated Nutrition \(Per Serving\)](#)

Ingredients

Main Casserole Base

- 1.5 lbs (680g) Ground Beef (80/20 lean-to-fat ratio works best for flavor)
- 1 large Yellow Onion, finely diced
- 2 medium Bell Peppers (1 green and 1 red for color and subtle sweetness), cored and chopped into ½-inch pieces
- 3 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 can (14.5 oz / 410g) Diced Tomatoes, with juice
- 1 can (15 oz / 425g) Tomato Sauce
- 1 cup Low-Sodium Beef Broth
- 3 cups Cooked Long-Grain White Rice (or cooked brown rice)
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire Sauce

Seasoning Blend

- 1 tsp Italian Seasoning

- 1 tsp Smoked Paprika
- 1 tsp Garlic Powder
- ½ tsp Onion Powder
- 1 tsp Kosher Salt (adjust to taste)
- ½ tsp Freshly Cracked Black Pepper
- ¼ tsp Red Pepper Flakes (optional, for a slight warmth)

Topping & Garnish

- 2 cups Sharp Cheddar Cheese (or Monterey Jack), freshly shredded
- 2 tbsp Fresh Parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Step-by-Step Cooking Instructions

1. Preheat and Prep: Temperature: 375°F (190°C).

Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly grease a 9×13-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray or olive oil and set aside. Ensure your cooked rice is ready at room temperature.

2. Brown the Beef and Aromatics: Heat: Medium-High (Stovetop).

Place a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef and diced onion. Cook for 6 to 8 minutes, breaking the meat apart with a wooden spoon, until the beef is fully browned and no pink remains. Carefully drain excess grease, leaving about 1 tablespoon in the skillet for moisture and flavor.

3. Sauté the Bell Peppers: Heat: Medium (Stovetop).

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the chopped red and green bell peppers along with the minced garlic to the skillet. Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes until the peppers are fragrant and slightly softened, but still retain a bite (they will finish tenderizing in the oven).

4. Build the Savory Sauce: Heat: Medium-Low (Stovetop).

Pour in the diced tomatoes (with juice), tomato sauce, beef broth, and Worcestershire sauce. Stir in the Italian seasoning, smoked paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and optional red pepper flakes. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer for 3 minutes to blend the spices into the liquid.

5. Combine with Rice and Transfer: Assembly Stage.

Fold the 3 cups of cooked rice into the beef and pepper sauce mixture until evenly distributed. Remove the skillet from heat. Taste the mixture and adjust seasoning with extra salt or pepper if needed. Transfer the entire mixture into the prepared 9×13-inch baking dish, spreading it into an even layer with a spatula.

6. Bake to Perfection: Oven: 375°F (190°C) | Time: 20 mins uncovered.

Evenly sprinkle the shredded cheddar cheese across the top of the casserole. Place in the oven and bake uncovered for 20 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbling around the edges and the cheese is fully melted, gooey, and lightly golden.

7. Rest and Serve: Resting Time: 5 mins.

Remove the dish from the oven and let it rest for 5 minutes before serving. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley and serve hot.

Pro Tips for Success

- 1. Use Pre-Cooked or Leftover Rice: Cold or room-temperature leftover rice absorbs the sauce without turning mushy. Avoid using hot, fresh rice directly out of the cooker if possible, as it holds extra moisture.
- 2. Freshly Shredded Cheese: Pre-packaged shredded cheese contains anti-caking agents that hinder smooth melting. Shredding your cheddar from a block yields a much creamier texture.
- 3. Lean Meat Alternative: You can substitute lean ground turkey or ground chicken for ground beef. If using poultry, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil when cooking to keep the meat juicy.

Estimated Nutrition (Per Serving)

Nutritional values are estimates based on 6 equal servings.

Nutrient	Amount Per Serving
Calories	485 kcal
Protein	31 g
Total Fat	22 g
Saturated Fat	10 g
Carbohydrates	41 g
Dietary Fiber	3 g
Sugars	5 g

Nutrient	Amount Per Serving
Sodium	820 mg
Calcium	280 mg
Iron	3.8 mg