

Prep time: 15 minutes | Cook time: 45 minutes | Total time: 1 hour | Yield: 8-10 servings

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Ingredients

- 1 lb breakfast sausage (mild or hot, depending on your crowd)
- 1 (30 oz) bag frozen shredded hashbrowns, thawed
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 8 large eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt

- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder (optional, but recommended)
- ½ teaspoon onion powder (optional)
- Olive oil or cooking spray, for greasing

Instructions

1. Preheat and prep (5 minutes, intensity: low)

Set your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a 9×13-inch baking dish generously. If your cream cheese is still cold, cut it into small cubes and let it sit on the counter while you do the next steps—it needs to be soft enough to blend without leaving cold lumps in the final bake .

2. Brown the sausage (7–10 minutes, intensity: medium)

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and break it apart with a wooden spoon as it cooks. You want it browned and crumbly, with no pink remaining. Once done, drain the excess fat—this step matters more than you’d think. Skipping it leaves a greasy pool at the bottom of the casserole that weighs down the whole dish . Set the sausage aside.

3. Build the base (5 minutes, intensity: low)

Spread the thawed hashbrowns evenly across the bottom of the greased baking dish. Scatter the cooked sausage over the top. If there’s any visible moisture on the hashbrowns, pat them dry with paper towels first—wet hashbrowns steam instead of crisping, and nobody wants a soggy casserole . Drop spoonfuls of the softened cream cheese across the sausage layer. Don’t bother spreading it perfectly; it will melt and distribute as it bakes.

4. Whisk the egg mixture (3 minutes, intensity: low)

In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder until smooth and uniform. Pour this mixture evenly over the hashbrown-sausage-cream cheese layers. Give the dish a gentle shake to help the egg settle into the crevices.

5. Top and bake (40–45 minutes, intensity: low, with a check at 35 minutes)

Sprinkle the shredded cheddar evenly over the top. Bake uncovered for 40–45 minutes. The edges will set first—that's normal. Your real doneness test is the center: give the pan a gentle shake. It should wobble like set gelatin, not slosh like liquid . If the center is still loose, give it another 5–10 minutes. If the top is browning faster than the center is setting, tent it loosely with foil.

6. Rest before serving (5–10 minutes, intensity: none—walk away)

This is the hardest step. Let the casserole rest on the counter for at least 5 minutes. The residual heat finishes setting the eggs, and the brief rest makes for clean, neat slices instead of a crumbled mess on the serving spatula .

Notes & Variations

- Make-ahead: Assemble the night before, cover, and refrigerate. When baking from cold, add 8–10 extra minutes and rely on the center-jiggle test rather than the clock .
- Spicy version: Use hot breakfast sausage and swap the cheddar for pepper jack. A small can of drained diced green chiles folded into the egg mixture adds a nice Tex-Mex edge.
- Veggie add-in: Sauté diced bell peppers, onions, or spinach until dry before layering. Wet vegetables will undermine the texture just like wet hashbrowns.
- Storage: Cool leftovers completely, then refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 4 days. Reheat individual squares in the microwave or a 350°F oven until heated through.

Nutrition (per serving, based on 8 servings)

Note: Nutrition varies by specific brands and sausage type. The following is a representative estimate.

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~420-500 kcal
Total Fat	~32-39 g
Saturated Fat	~14-15 g
Carbohydrates	~15-18 g
Protein	~17-24 g
Sodium	~710-730 mg
Cholesterol	~215-230 mg
Fiber	~1 g
Sugar	~1-2 g