

Cheesy Broccoli and Rice Casserole

Serves 8 to 10

Ingredients:

<i>3 slices hearty white sandwich bread torn into pieces</i>	<i>1 onion finely chopped (use food processor)</i>
<i>3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese</i>	<i>1 1/4 cups long grain white rice</i>
<i>4 tablespoons butter melted (+3 tablespoons for cooking onions & broccoli stems)</i>	<i>4 cups low-sodium chicken broth</i>
<i>2 garlic cloves pressed</i>	<i>1 1/4 cups half-and-half (you might want to try cream or whole milk)</i>
<i>2 pounds broccoli (~3-4 medium heads of broccoli) with florets cut into 1" pieces and stems peeled and chopped</i>	<i>1 teaspoon salt</i>
	<i>2 cups shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese</i>
	<i>1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper</i>

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400°.
2. Grease 13"x9" baking dish.
3. Pulse bread, 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, and melted butter in food processor until coarsely ground and then add garlic and pulse once. Set aside.
4. Microwave broccoli florets, covered, in large bowl until tender (2 to 4 minutes). Set aside.
5. Melt remaining 3 tablespoons of butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat.
6. Cook onion and broccoli stems in butter until softened (8 to 10 minutes, or longer).
7. Add rice and cook, stirring constantly until rice is translucent (1-2 minutes).
8. Stir in broth, half-and-half, and salt, and bring to a boil
9. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring often, until rice is tender (20-25 minutes).
10. Off heat, stir in cheddar cheese, cayenne, remaining Parmesan cheese, and broccoli florets.
11. Pour mixture into prepared baking dish and top with bread crumb mixture.
12. Bake until sauce is bubbling around edges and top is golden brown (~15 minutes)
13. Cool 5 minutes and serve.

Filling can be prepared, placed in greased baking dish, covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for 1 day. Refrigerate topping separately. Bring filling to room temperature before adding bread crumbs, and then bake as directed.