

# Thinking Outside the Box!



## Chicken, Sweet Potato, and Wild Rice Casserole

Often times, the reason cited for not being able to keep nutrition goals on track and consuming enough high-quality nutritious foods is that it is just too time consuming. Fact of the matter, the time it takes to order take-out, wait on food delivery, or drive through a fast food, also takes time. Drilling down, the true reasons why many don't adopt the best strategy to meeting their nutrition goals (cooking more meals at home) are that effort is needed preparing a meal and having to clean the dishes. For most, with some planning, the time it takes can be less time than it takes to drive to and sit down for a meal at a restaurant.

One doesn't need advanced skills to do this. Using the microwave to cook frozen vegetables or heat nutritious frozen dinners and serving them alongside a prepared salad are acceptable tactics to building a healthy eating pattern. A prepared rotisserie chicken, from a grocery store can be used in making 2-3 family dinners, such stir fry, and/or chicken tacos. The key is assessing one's skill set, time, and planning around it.

The burden of cleaning pots and pans and utensils is a warranted reason. This can get tiresome, especially if it's done daily. It is totally understandable that when time is tight, after a long day of work, that the thought of a large volume of dishes awaits should a meal be cooked at home, could prime some to just default to a drive through. The key to not being overcome with this burden is plan to prepare food for multiple meals at one time. For example, double the batch and freeze one. When grilling or baking chicken breast called for in a recipe, make double and then plan on using the other half for a meal the next day. When making rice, make a big pot and use what is needed for the meal, portion out the rest and freeze it for later meals. Cut and wash all the fresh produce that is planned during the week on Sunday, that way you only have to wash the cutting board and knives once. The produce will then be ready for salads, or to be thrown in soups, or cooked as a side.

If you are one of the many that desire to cook more meals at home, consider truly assessing the time you spend a week waiting on meal delivery, in lines at take outs, or sitting down for a meal at a restaurant. Add in the time that it also takes to drive to and from home. From this tally, dedicate half that time to preparing more meals at home. Use some of the suggestions above to get started. Also, cooking more meals at home can lead to saving roughly 1,000 calories a week, perhaps less time is needed at the gym to maintain calorie balance.

Use this featured meal to adopt try a couple the suggestions.



### Ingredients: 4 servings

- 1 cup wild rice mix, cooked
- 1.5-2 lbs. chicken breast
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 medium-sized sweet potatoes, diced
- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts or broccoli
- 1 cup mushrooms, diced
- 2 tbsp. paprika
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup sliced almonds

### Directions:

1. In a large pan add one tbsp. olive oil and turn it to medium-high heat. Add the chicken and season with salt and pepper. Monitor the chicken, flipping it occasionally and cook until the internal temperature reaches 165 degrees F. Put the cooked chicken on a plate and set aside.
2. In the same pan used to cook the chicken, add 1 tbsp. olive oil and add the diced onions, garlic, and sweet potatoes.
3. Once the onions turn translucent, add the Brussels sprouts and mushrooms. Season liberally with the paprika and salt and pepper. Continue to stir so it's cooked evenly for about 5 minutes.
4. Add half a cup of the chicken broth, cover, and cook for 5 minutes.
5. While the vegetables are cooking, cut the chicken into one inch cubes and preheat the oven for 350 degrees F.
6. Pour the rice into a 9 x 13 baking dish and mix in the chicken, vegetables, dried cranberries and the remaining chicken broth. Sprinkle the top with the sliced almonds and bake for 10 minutes.

#### Tips:

- 1 cup of wild rice takes about 45 minutes to cook so to save time, make it the night before.
- You can caramelize the onions by adding a little sugar while they're cooking.
- Instead of dried cranberries you can use diced apples for that bit of sweetness.

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

FOR ADDITIONAL MEAL SOLUTIONS, PLEASE [CLICK HERE COMMISSARIES.COM/HEALTHY-LIVING/HEALTHY-EATS](https://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living/healthy-eats)