



Festive Slow Cooker Chicken and Rice Bake

My Cozy Kitchen Helper

Hello, my dear. Come sit. My slow cooker is my best kitchen friend. It does the hard work while I put my feet up. This recipe fills the whole house with a happy smell. It feels like a warm hug.

I learned to use one years ago from my neighbor, Margie. She brought me soup when I had a cold. I still laugh at that. I was so impressed, I bought my own the very next week. It matters because good food should be simple. It leaves you time for the people you love.

The Magic of Browning

Now, we must brown the chicken first. I know, it's an extra step. But trust your grandma. It makes all the difference. That golden skin adds so much flavor to the rice.

Listen to it sizzle in the pan. Doesn't that smell amazing? That sound means good taste is coming. This step matters because it turns simple chicken into something special. It gives the dish a deep, rich heart.

A Little Spice Story

We add cumin and a tiny bit of cinnamon. This might seem odd to you. I thought so too, long ago. My own grandma taught me this trick. She said it makes the food sing.

She was right. You won't taste "cinnamon." It just makes everything feel warm and festive. *Fun fact: cinnamon was once more precious than gold!* What's a spice trick your family uses? I'd love to hear it.

Letting It All Get Happy

Now, the best part. We put everything in the pot. The rice, the onions, the chicken on top. You close the lid and walk away. For hours, it all gets to know each other. The flavors become friends.

I use this time to read or call a friend. What would you do with a free kitchen hour? The house will smell so good. It builds a happy feeling all afternoon.

Your Turn at the Table

When it's done, fluff the rice with a fork. Find those bay leaves and take them out. They are like little flavor fairies. Their job is done. Now, just taste. You might want a pinch more salt.

Serve it right in the bowl. The rice will be so tender. The chicken will fall apart. Do you prefer chicken thighs or breasts for cozy meals? This is a dish for sharing. It makes a simple Tuesday feel like a celebration.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs	2 pounds	Or 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skin-on thighs
Kosher salt	2 tsp + 1 1/2 tsp	For seasoning chicken and the rice mixture
Extra-virgin olive oil	2 tablespoons	
Yellow onion, thinly sliced	4 cups (about 2 large)	Sliced root-to-tip
Ground cumin	1 teaspoon	
Ground cinnamon	1/4 teaspoon	
Garlic, finely chopped	4 teaspoons (about 4 cloves)	
Raw basmati long-grain rice	2 cups	
Diced tomatoes (canned or fresh)	1 cup	
Frozen peas	1/2 cup	Optional
Chicken stock	1 1/2 cups	
Black pepper	3/4 teaspoon	

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Bay leaves	2	



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Instructions

Step 1: First, sprinkle salt all over your chicken. Let it sit while you work on the onions. This makes the chicken taste so good later. Now, slice your onions. You might cry a little, I always do! (A sharp knife actually makes you cry less.)

See also [Festive Red and Green Sugar Cookie Delights](#)

Step 2: Heat oil in a big pan. Cook the onions until they smell sweet and look soft. Stir in the cumin and cinnamon. Doesn't that smell amazing? Add the garlic last so it doesn't burn. Then put it all in your slow cooker.

Step 3: Use that same pan for the chicken. Place it skin-side down first. Let it get golden and crispy. This is the secret for the best flavor. Brown the other side too. It will sizzle and pop, that's okay!

Step 4: Put the rice in the slow cooker with the onions. Add tomatoes, peas, stock, and spices. Give it a gentle stir. Now nestle your chicken on top, crispy skin up. (Always keep the skin up so it stays crispy!)

Step 5: Cook on high for a few hours. Check the rice halfway. If it looks dry, add a little water. Your house will smell wonderful. What's your favorite cozy smell? Share below!

Step 6: Find and remove the bay leaves. They've done their job! Fluff the rice with a fork. Taste it to see if it needs a pinch more salt. Then it's time to serve your cozy feast.

Creative Twists

This recipe is like a friendly canvas. You can paint it with your own favorite flavors. My grandson loves to suggest new ideas. I still laugh at his “chocolate chicken” idea once. These twists are much better!

Sunshine Version: Use lemon pepper and add chopped artichoke hearts.

Garden Herb Version: Mix in fresh dill and parsley with the rice.

Cozy Curry Version: Swap the cumin for two teaspoons of mild curry powder.

Which one would you try first? Comment below!

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This bake is a full meal by itself. But I love a little something on the side. A simple green salad with a lemon dressing is perfect. Some cool, creamy yogurt for topping is lovely too. It cuts through the rich spices.

For a drink, a crisp apple cider is wonderful. For the grown-ups, a glass of chilled Riesling wine pairs nicely. It's a sweet contrast to the savory chicken. Which would you choose tonight?

See also [Almond Spiced Speculoos Christmas Cookies](#)



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Keeping Your Cozy Casserole

This dish keeps beautifully. Let it cool completely first. Then, store it in the fridge for up to four days. The flavors get even friendlier overnight.

You can freeze it for a future busy day. I use small containers for single servings. My grandson loves finding these ready for his lunch. Just thaw it in the fridge before reheating.

To reheat, add a splash of broth or water. Warm it gently on the stove or in the microwave. Stir it well so the rice stays lovely and moist.

Batch cooking this recipe is a smart trick. It gives you a gift of time later. A ready meal means more moments for stories at the table. **Have you ever tried storing it this way? Share below!**

Simple Fixes for Common Hiccups

Is your rice a bit crunchy? The slow cooker might be too hot. Just add a half cup of warm water. Stir gently, then let it cook a bit longer.

Is the chicken skin not crispy after cooking? I once served it straight from the pot. The skin was soft. Now, I pop it under the broiler for two minutes. It makes all the difference.

Are the onions burning in the pan? Your heat is likely too high. Turn it down to medium. Let them cook slow and sweet. This builds a deep, delicious base for your rice.

Getting these steps right builds your cooking confidence. It also makes the final meal taste just wonderful. **Which of these problems have**

you run into before?

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this recipe gluten-free? A: Yes, it is! Just check your chicken stock label to be sure.

Q: Can I make it ahead? A: Absolutely. Do steps one through four. Keep everything covered in the fridge. Start the slow cooker in the morning.

Q: What if I don't have peas? A: Use diced carrots or green beans. Or just leave them out. It will still be delicious.

Q: Can I double the recipe? A: You can, but use a very large slow cooker. Stir the rice well so it cooks evenly.

Q: Any optional tips? A: A squeeze of lemon at the end is lovely. *Fun fact: The acid wakes up all the other flavors!* **Which tip will you try first?**

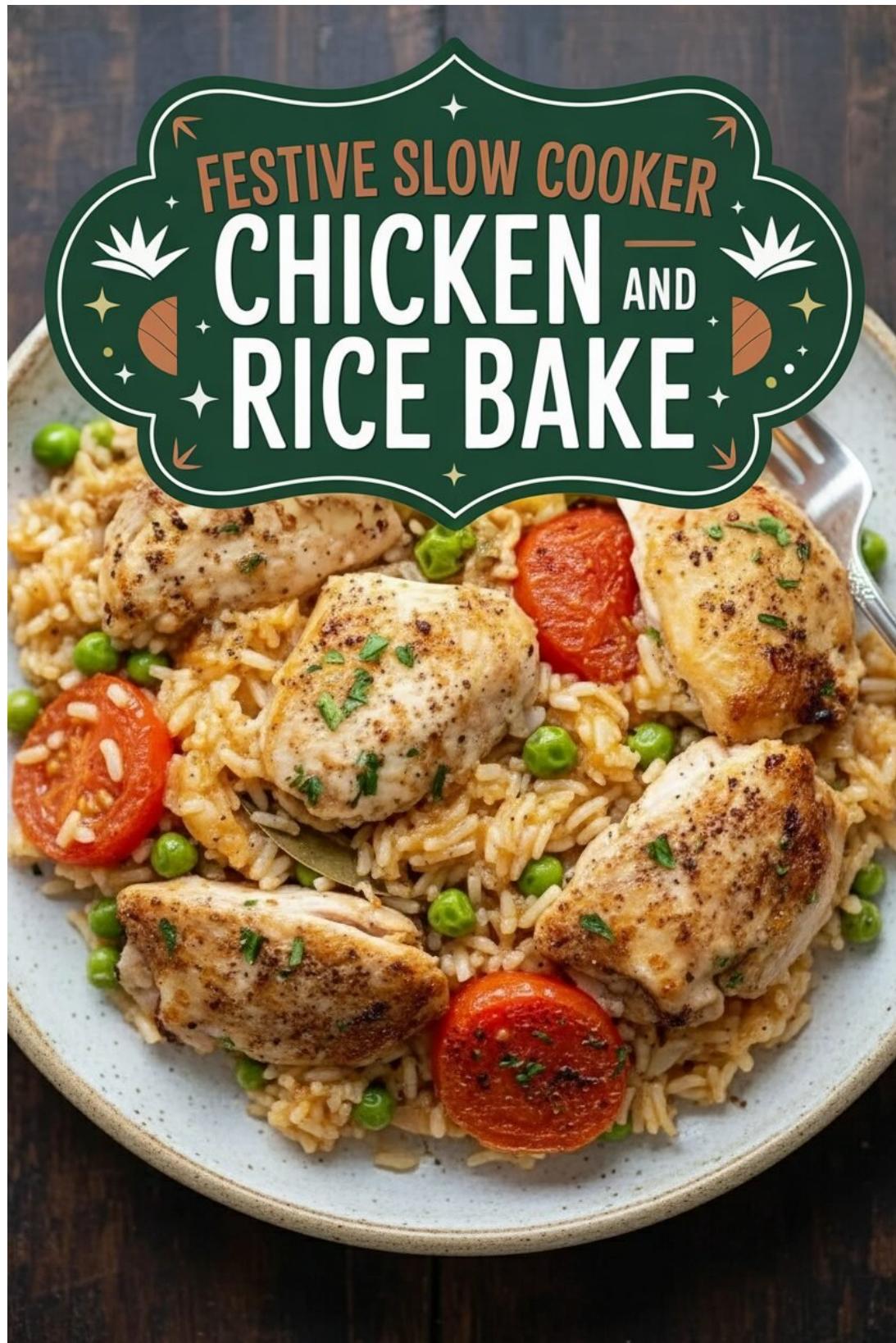
From My Kitchen to Yours

I hope this recipe finds a spot in your home. It is a hug in a bowl. The smell alone will make your kitchen feel like a celebration.

I love hearing your stories. Tell me about your family's favorite cozy meals. **Have you tried this recipe?** Let me know how it turned out in the comments below.

See also [Anise Star Christmas Cookies](#)

Happy cooking! —Elowen Thorn.



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Festive Slow Cooker Chicken and Rice Bake

Author: Elowen Thorn

Cooking Method:[Slow Cooker](#)

Cuisine:[American](#)

Courses:[Main](#)



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Difficulty: **Beginner**

Prep time: **25 minutes**



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Cook time: **2 minutes**

Rest time:

Total time: 2 minutes

Servings: **6 servings**



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Calories: **620 kcal**

Best Season:**Summer**

Description

A warm and comforting casserole where spiced, browned chicken thighs

cook atop fragrant basmati rice with onions, tomatoes, and peas.

Ingredients

- ▢ 2 pounds bone-in skin-on chicken thighs or 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skin-on chicken thighs
- ▢ Kosher salt
- ▢ 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ▢ 4 cups thinly sliced yellow onion (about 2 large onions, sliced root-to-tip)
- ▢ 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ▢ 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ▢ 4 teaspoons finely chopped garlic (about 4 cloves)
- ▢ 2 cups raw basmati long-grain rice
- ▢ 1 cup diced canned or fresh tomatoes
- ▢ 1/2 cup frozen peas (optional)
- ▢ 1 1/2 cups chicken stock
- ▢ 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- ▢ 2 bay leaves
- ▢ 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt (additional)

Instructions

1. Season the Chicken: Sprinkle both sides of the chicken thighs with approximately 2 teaspoons of kosher salt. Set the chicken aside while preparing the onions and aromatics.
2. Sauté the Onions, Garlic, and Spices: Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over high heat until shimmering. Add the sliced onions and cook for about 6 minutes, stirring frequently, until lightly browned. Reduce the heat to medium and stir in the ground cumin and cinnamon. Cook for 1 minute. Add the chopped garlic and cook

for an additional 30 seconds. Transfer the onion and garlic mixture to the bowl of a slow cooker. Do not clean the pan.

3. Brown the Chicken Thighs: Place the sauté pan back over medium heat. Add the chicken thighs, skin-side down. Cook for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the skin is well-browned and most of the fat has rendered. Turn the chicken pieces over and brown the opposite side for 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Assemble the Ingredients in the Slow Cooker: While the chicken is browning, add the raw basmati rice to the slow cooker and stir to combine with the onion mixture. Add the diced tomatoes, peas (if using), chicken stock, black pepper, bay leaves, and 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt. Stir gently to ensure even distribution. Once the chicken is browned, place the thighs skin-side up on top of the rice mixture.
5. Cook the Casserole: Cook on the high setting of the slow cooker for 2 to 3 hours. Cooking time will vary by model; metal bowls heat more quickly than ceramic. Check the rice halfway through the cooking time. If the rice appears dry, add 1/2 to 1 cup of additional water.
6. Finish and Serve: Remove the bay leaves. Fluff the rice with a fork and adjust seasoning with additional salt if needed. Serve warm.

Notes

For best results, use bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs for maximum flavor and juiciness. The optional peas add a nice pop of color and sweetness.

Keywords:Chicken, Rice, Casserole, Slow Cooker, Comfort Food