

Cauliflower, Cheese, and Burger Casserole

Casseroles are inviting, especially on a cold day. The oven warms the kitchen, sending a delicious aroma through the house, and the rich food is deeply satisfying for the whole family, plus this dish is easy to prepare. Traditionally this type of casserole would use potatoes or macaroni as a filler; here the cauliflower and Brussel Sprouts provide the added texture with a lovely flavor and a powerful load of nutrients without any gluten and without a huge load of sugar from the potatoes or pasta.

For burger options, you can use a plant-based burger (vegetarian), ground organic turkey, or free-range ground sirloin—please avoid ground hamburger as it is loaded with junk ingredients. Recently, I have been using plant-based burger products from Beyond Burger and Impossible Burger and I have been pleasantly surprised by how good these products taste. Both make amazing burgers, although I like the ingredients in Beyond Burger the best.

Prep Time: 30 Minutes

Baking Time: 30 Minutes

Serves: Six

Ingredients:

6 cups cauliflower florets, chopped into bite sized pieces (1 medium-large head cauliflower)

2 cups Brussel Sprouts, stem removed and sliced in half lengthwise

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon avocado oil

1 medium onion, chopped

2 cups button mushrooms, chopped

½ teaspoon sea salt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

½ teaspoon paprika

1 teaspoon Italian herb seasoning

1-pound burger (choose from plant-based, organic ground turkey, or free-range sirloin)

4 medium garlic cloves, finely chopped

3 organic-fed, free-range chicken eggs

1 cup organic full cream (or for a lower dairy fat option, organic low-fat milk)

10 ounces grated organic cheese, divided (For organic cheese options, I prefer Conte, Gruyere, or Sharp-Aged Cheddar, or use a blend of your favorite options that melt well.)

(Casserole Cont.)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° F.

Prep cauliflower and Brussel Sprouts, add to a cookie sheet with sides, toss with olive oil. Place in the oven on a middle shelf and bake for 25-30 minutes, until veggies are tender but still al dente. After the initial 15 minutes of roasting, pull the tray out of the oven and stir to mix the veggies, then return to the oven to continue roasting.

While veggies are baking, heat a large sauté pan to medium-high heat, add avocado oil, then onion, and sauté for 1 minute with an occasional stir, then add mushrooms, salt, black pepper, paprika, and Italian seasoning and heat with an occasional stir for another 2 minutes. Next, add burger to the pan (plant-based, turkey, or sirloin) and with a wooden spoon break into small pieces. Continue to heat with occasional stirring until burger is lightly browned, reduce heat to low, stir in garlic and heat another 1 minute. Remove from heat.

Next whisk eggs in a bowl, add cream (or milk) and whisk again, then stir in half the grated cheese.

When the cauliflower and Brussel Sprouts have been roasted, reduce oven heat to 375°. Grease an oven-proof casserole dish, 9" x 13", with extra-virgin olive oil. Add cooked burger, onion, and mushrooms to the bottom of the dish. Next, add cauliflower and Brussel Sprouts over the burger, then pour the mixture of egg, cream, and half the grated cheese over the pan contents. Sprinkle remaining half of grated cheese over the top.

Place dish in the oven on a middle shelf and bake for 25-30 minutes, until the top is lightly browned. If need be, switch from bake to broil for the final 4-5 minutes. Let stand on the counter for 5 minutes before serving.

Enjoy,

Steven Masley, MD