

Mexican-Style “Rice” & Beef Casserole

with Black Beans & Monterey Jack Cheese

The term “Tex-Mex” has been a part of the English lexicon since the 1870s. In cuisine, it’s used to refer to the American adaptations of traditional Mexican dishes that cropped up in Texas. Interestingly enough, it was the railroad that spurred the development of Tex-Mex food. Trains made American ingredients cheaper in the remote parts of Texas. Those ingredients (particularly cheeses and ground beef) are still what defines the cuisine. Here, we’re creating our own version of a Tex-Mex casserole using quinoa and Monterey Jack cheese.



Ingredients

- 8 Ounces Ground Beef
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup White Quinoa
- 1 15-Ounce Can Diced Tomatoes
- 1 Cup Black Beans
- 1 Green Bell Pepper
- 1 Red Onion
- 1 Bunch Cilantro

Knick Knacks

- 3 Ounces Monterey Jack Cheese
- 1 Jalapeño Pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Mexican Crema
- 2 Teaspoons Mexican Casserole Spice Blend
(Ground Cumin, Smoked Paprika, Chile Powder, Garlic Powder & Cayenne Pepper)

Makes 3 Servings

About 700 Calories Per Serving

Cooking Time: 35 to 45 minutes



1



Cook the quinoa:

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Heat a medium pot of salted water to boiling on high. Once boiling, add the **quinoa**. Cook 12 to 14 minutes, or until tender. Drain thoroughly and set aside.

2



Prepare the ingredients:

While the quinoa cooks, wash and dry the fresh produce. Rinse and drain the beans. Remove and discard the stem, ribs and seeds of the bell pepper; medium dice the bell pepper. Thinly slice the jalapeño into rounds. For a milder dish, remove and discard the seeds of the jalapeño. (Thoroughly wash your hands and cutting board after handling the pepper.) Peel and thinly slice the onion. Pick the cilantro leaves off the stems; discard the stems. Grate the cheese.

3



Brown the beef:

While the quinoa continues to cook, in a large pot, heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add the **ground beef** and season with salt and pepper. Cook, frequently breaking the meat apart with a spoon, 3 to 5 minutes, or until browned.

4



Add the vegetables:

Reduce the heat to medium and add the **bell pepper, onion** and **spice blend** to the pot of browned beef; season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 4 minutes, or until the vegetables have softened slightly. Add the **diced tomatoes, beans** and **½ cup of water**; cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 4 minutes, or until slightly reduced in volume. Remove from heat.

5



Assemble the casserole:

Stir the **cooked quinoa** and **Mexican crema** into the beef and vegetable mixture; season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to an oven-safe baking dish. Evenly top with the **grated cheese**.

6



Bake the casserole:

Place the assembled casserole onto a sheet pan. Bake 14 to 16 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and lightly browned. Remove from the oven. Let stand for at least 2 minutes before serving. Garnish with the **cilantro** and **as much of the jalapeño as you'd like**, depending on how spicy you'd like the dish to be. Enjoy!