

Mexican-Spiced Beef & Rice Casserole

with Crispy Tortilla Strips

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

COOK TIME: 30-40 minutes

SERVINGS: 4

This casserole—inspired by a famous Tex-Mex “pie” of chili, cheese and corn chips—starts with a layer of lime rice, followed by spicy, saucy beef and beans. (Placing the rice at the bottom helps it stay moist while baking.) After a sprinkling of sharp cheddar, the casserole is ready for the oven, where all of its rich, satisfying flavors come together. As for our chips, we’re oven-toasting corn tortilla strips separately for perfect crispiness.



BLUE APRON WINE PAIRING:

Bodegas VQ Grenache, 2015

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Ingredients



1½ lbs
GROUND BEEF



3
CORN TORTILLAS



1 cup
JASMINE RICE



1½ cups
PINTO BEANS



3 oz
SHARP CHEDDAR
CHEESE



3 cloves
GARLIC



2
SCALLIONS



1
LIME

KNICK KNACKS:



2 Tbsp
TOMATO PASTE



1 Tbsp
MEXICAN SPICE
BLEND



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1 Prepare the ingredients:

- ☒ Preheat the oven to 475°F.
- ☐ Wash and dry the fresh produce.
- ☐ Quarter the lime.
- ☐ Peel and mince the garlic.
- ☐ Cut off and discard the root ends of the scallions; thinly slice on an angle, separating the white bottoms and green tops.
- ☐ Drain and rinse the beans.
- ☐ Grate the cheese.
- ☐ Stack the tortillas, then cut into 1/2-inch-wide strips.

2 Cook the rice:

- ☐ In a medium pot, combine the **rice**, a **big pinch of salt** and **2 cups of water**; heat to boiling on high.
- ☐ Once boiling, cover and reduce the heat to low. Cook 12 to 14 minutes, or until the water has been absorbed and the rice is tender.
- ☐ Turn off the heat and stir in **the juice of 2 lime wedges**. Fluff the cooked rice with a fork. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

3 Cook the beef & beans:

- ☐ While the rice cooks, in a large pan (nonstick, if you have one), heat 1 teaspoon of olive oil on medium-high until hot.
- ☐ Add the **ground beef**, **garlic** and **white bottoms of the scallions**; season with salt and pepper. Cook, frequently breaking the meat apart with a spoon, 3 to 5 minutes, or until browned and cooked through.
- ☐ Add the **tomato paste**, **beans** and **spice blend**; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, 2 to 3 minutes, or until the tomato paste is dark red and fragrant.
- ☐ Add **1/4 cup of water** and cook, stirring occasionally, 1 to 2 minutes, or until the water has cooked off.
- ☐ Turn off the heat. Stir in **the juice of the remaining lime wedges**. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

4 Assemble & bake the casserole:

- ☐ Transfer the **cooked rice** to a baking dish; spread into an even layer. Evenly top with the **cooked beef and beans**, then the **cheese**.
- ☐ Bake 11 to 13 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and lightly browned.
- ☐ Remove from the oven. Let stand for at least 2 minutes before serving.

5 Toast the tortilla strips:

- ☐ While the casserole bakes, place the **tortilla strips** on a sheet pan. Drizzle with **1/2 teaspoon of olive oil** and season with salt and pepper; toss to thoroughly coat.
- ☐ Arrange in a single, even layer. Toast in the oven 7 to 9 minutes, or until browned and crispy. Remove from the oven.

6 Serve your dish:

- ☐ When cool enough to handle, garnish the **baked casserole** with the **toasted tortilla strips** and **green tops of the scallions**. Enjoy!