

Spring Chicken Casserole

Now the warmer weather is here, chicken is the ideal meat: light, tasty and healthy, it's endlessly versatile and gorgeous roasted, in salads, in curries, stir-fries, fajitas... Casseroles are also a great idea as you can mix everything in one pot then get on with other spring jobs while it's cooking. If you're stuck for ideas, this recipe works well with thighs as well as breasts, or any leftover pieces from your roast (if you haven't picked the bird clean yet). Use squash or swede to give a bit of body and extra taste, and serve with steamed spring cabbage or spinach, calabrese or cauliflower and a nice pile of potatoes – or maybe a nice crispy jacket potato and salad for a healthier version.

Serves 4

8 chicken thighs or 4 breasts/pieces
100g streaky bacon
2 medium carrots
2 medium swede or half a large squash
150g mushrooms
2 cloves of garlic
1 large onion or 2 leeks
1-2 tbsp olive oil
450ml chicken stock
2 tbsp plain flour
salt & pepper to taste



SXC

Preheat the oven to 180-200C. Peel the carrots, onions or leeks and swede or squash, then chop into small chunks. Wipe the mushrooms clean and cut into quarters. Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the chicken and fry over a medium heat for around five minutes until golden on the outside. Place the chicken in an oven-proof casserole dish.

Snip the bacon into pieces, and place in the frying pan with the onions or leeks. Fry for a few minutes until the onions are soft, sprinkle with some flour and add the crushed garlic, swede or squash and carrots. Stir and add a few tablespoons of stock; mix well and heat, then add the rest of the stock and bring to the boil.

Pour everything from the frying pan over the chicken, stir well and cook for an hour, until the chicken and vegetables are thoroughly cooked.



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