



Makes one (9 × 13-inch) casserole
Cook Time: 1 hours 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE CASHEW CRUMBLE CHEESE

½ cup cashews
3 tablespoons nutritional yeast
½ teaspoon low-sodium tamari or soy sauce, Bragg's liquid aminos, or fresh lime juice

FOR THE FILLING

1 cup brown lentils, rinsed and soaked

1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

Sea salt

1½ cups brown rice, or 3 cups penne pasta

2 medium sweet potatoes, scrubbed and cut into ½-inch dice

¼ medium cabbage, chopped into ½-inch pieces

½ medium red onion, cut into ½-inch dice

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon dried basil

2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

2 medium zucchini, cut into ½-inch dice

1 bell pepper, any color, seeded and cut into ½-inch dice

1 tablespoon arrowroot powder

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

½ cup finely chopped onion

1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes with their juice

Vegan Rice Casserole with Lentils

This dish is a real crowd-pleaser, and is especially good for big gatherings like Super Bowl parties. I love it with rice, but it's also really good with pasta. Both options are given below. The lentils need to be soaked for at least six hours, so be sure to plan ahead.

From *The Forks Over Knives Plan*

This recipe is also available in our convenient [iPhone app](#) and newly released [Android app](#).

By Darshana Thacker Wendel

- 1 To make the cashew crumble cheese, in a food processor, grind the cashews into a meal (do not overprocess into cashew butter). Transfer them to a small bowl, and mix in the nutritional yeast. Little by little, add the liquid of your choice, stirring with a fork so that the mixture does not form clumps. The mixture should be crumbly. Set aside to dry until ready to use.
- 2 Place the soaked lentils in a medium saucepan with the Italian seasoning, salt, and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium, and cook, covered, until the lentils are cooked but still firm, about 15 minutes. Be careful not to overcook them. Set aside.
- 3 Meanwhile, if using rice, place it in a medium saucepan with 2½ cups water. Bring to a boil and stir once. Cover the pan, reduce the heat to low, and simmer, covered, until the rice is cooked, about 25 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Remove the cover and fluff the rice. Set aside.
- 4 If using pasta, bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook according to the package instructions until the pasta is al dente. Drain thoroughly and set aside.
- 5 Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 6 To prepare the sautéed vegetables, in a skillet with a lid, combine the sweet potatoes, cabbage, onion, garlic, dried basil, and 1½ cups of the vegetable broth. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the sweet potatoes are almost tender but still resist a bit when pierced with a knife, 15 to 20 minutes.
- 7 Add the zucchini and bell pepper and cook, uncovered, until the vegetables are completely softened, about 10 minutes.
- 8 In a small bowl, combine the remaining ½ cup vegetable broth and the arrowroot powder. Whisk until blended. Pour the mixture over the vegetables and stir gently to coat them. Cook over medium-low heat, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.
- 9 Meanwhile, prepare the tomato sauce. In a saucepan, combine the onion and ½ cup water. Cover and cook over high heat until the onions are very soft, about 10 minutes.

1 teaspoon dried basil

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon freshly ground white
or black pepper

Sea salt

1 cup roughly chopped fresh
basil

- 10** Add the tomatoes, dried basil, pepper, and salt, and cook over medium heat until the sauce thickens a bit and the flavors merge, about 15 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the fresh basil. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Set aside.
- 11** Spread the rice or pasta in a 9 x 13-inch baking pan that is 2 inches deep. Layer the lentils over the rice to cover completely. Spread the sautéed vegetables over the lentils. Spoon the tomato sauce over the vegetables. Spread the cashew crumble cheese all over the top.
- 12** Bake until the cashew cheese turns light brown, about 20 minutes.
- 13** Serve hot.