Invent Your Own Casserole
Julia Hanfling, RD, CDE
3 Peaches Nutrition & Diabetes Coaching

This master recipe is designed to be flexible, use leftovers, and/or make use of what is on sale. You create the possibilities based on the foods you have on hand. This recipe shows you how to get a balanced meal and save money at the same time by choosing your own combination of protein, vegetables, starch, and sauce. This recipe make 4 servings (1 cup each) and can easily be cut in half or doubled.

- - -Choose 1 from each Step - - -

Step 1

Protein (meat, fish, chicken, turkey, or other source)
Choose 1 of these:

2 cans tuna (7 ½ ounces each)	2 cups turkey, chicken, or ham (cooked)
1 pound ground beef or turkey (cooked)	2 cups tofu

Step 2

Vegetables
Choose 1 – 2 cups vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned)

Broccoli	Carrots	Mushrooms
Tomatoes	Green Beans	Onions
Spinach	Peppers – green, red, yellow	Shredded Cabbage

Note: Corn, peas, and potatoes count as starchy carbohydrates, not as vegetables

Step 3

Starchy Carbohydrates (already cooked)
Choose 1-2 cups of these: **OR** 1 ½ cups of these:

Quinoa	Lima or other beans	Rice
Potatoes	Corn or Peas	Noodles (whole grain)

Step 4

Seasoning
Italian Seasoning (basil, oregano, thyme, marjoram)

Black Pepper	Dash of Salt	Herbs

Step 5

Sauce
Choose 1 of these:

1 cup salsa – mild, medium, or hot	1 cup milk – beat in one egg
1 cup spaghetti sauce	1 ½ cup sour cream + 3 oz can enchilada sauce
1 – 10 oz can of soup – tomato, mushroom (use reduced salt if possible)	

Step 6

Topping
Choose ¼ to ½ cup of 1 of these:

unsweetened cereal (crushed)	bread crumbs/cracker crumbs
grated cheddar cheese	ground flax seed

Invent Your Own Casserole – Stovetop Cooking Instructions

1. Cook noodles or other starchy carbohydrates according to package directions. Set aside. The carbohydrate content can be reduced without undoing the recipe.
2. Place ½ cup broth or 1 Tablespoon oil in a heated skillet or sauce pan.
3. Combine the meat, vegetables, and seasoning in the pan.
4. Cook on medium heat for 10 minutes or until almost done.
5. Add starchy carbohydrates to the skillet.
6. Pour in the sauce.
7. Heat for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add more liquid if it gets dry.
8. Place in a serving dish. Add the topping in the pan or in the serving dish.

The following recipes all use the same basic formula. What do you have on hand? How can you adapt this for yourself or your family? Plan to make extra for tomorrow's lunch or dinner.

"Around the World" Combinations

Italy in a Skillet

Step 1: 1 pound lean ground beef, cooked

Step 2: 2 cups onions & broccoli

Step 3: 1 cup noodles, cooked

Step 4: 2 teaspoons Italian Seasoning mix

Step 5: 1 cup spaghetti sauce

Step 6: ¼ cup parmesan cheese

Makes: 4 servings
Each serving provides 440 calories, 20 grams carbohydrates, 31 grams protein, 20 grams fat.

Mexican Stovetop

Step 1: 2 cups chicken, cooked

Step 2: 2 cups tomatoes, celery, & onions

Step 3: 1 ½ cups black beans, cooked

Step 4: 1-2 teaspoons cumin, plus ½ bunch fresh cilantro or 2 Tablespoons dried

Step 5: 1 cup sour cream plus one 3 oz can mild or medium enchilada sauce

Step 6: ½ cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated

Makes: 4 servings
Each serving provides 380 calories, 25 grams carbohydrates, 35 grams protein, 12 grams fat.

Asian Bowl

Step 1: 2 cups chicken, cooked

Step 2: 1 cup chopped carrots & broccoli plus 1 cup packed chopped spinach

Step 3: 1 ½ cups rice, cooked

Step 4: 1 teaspoon ground ginger plus 1 teaspoon minced garlic

Step 5: 1 cup chicken broth plus 2 Tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce

Step 6: 2 – 4 Tablespoons sesame seeds

Makes: 4 servings
Each serving provides 385 calories, 27 grams carbohydrates, 44 grams protein, 10 grams fat.

Midwest Potluck

Step 1: 2 cups lean ham

Step 2: 2 cups green beans

Step 3: 1 cup potatoes, cooked (2 medium)

Step 4: Pepper to taste, salt is optional

Step 5: 1 cup milk with 1 egg

Step 6: ½ cup bread crumbs

Makes: 4 servings
Each serving provides 300 calories, 25 grams carbohydrates, 25 grams protein, 8 grams fat.