



Starmadillo Ranch Chicken Casserole

This version of King Ranch Chicken Casserole has less than half the sodium but is just as delicious. Salt is reduced by eliminating the two cans of condensed soup, and the most commonly used brand of diced tomatoes with chilis. Fresh ingredients are used in their place to give it that Texas ranch casserole flavor. This will make about eight good servings

Ingredients:

1 chicken breast (about one pound)
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon cumin (optional)
¼ cup canola oil
¼ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup diced onion
1 green bell pepper, seeded chopped
2 Jalapeño chilies, seeded and chopped
1-14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes, no salt added
½ cup chopped mushrooms
¼ cup sour cream
About 10 corn tortillas
8 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
Salt to taste (optional)

Preparation:

Boil the chicken breasts with the thyme and oregano until cooked. Remove the chicken from the broth and shred the meat. Skim the fat from the resulting broth and reserve 1 ¼ cup for the recipe.

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a saucepan, combine the flour and the oil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Heat the mixture just until it foams and reduce the heat. Add the onions, bell pepper, and jalapeño and sauté them in the flour and oil mixture for 5 to 10 minutes. You want the vegetables to be heated through and for the flavors to come out. Add the diced tomatoes, mushrooms, sour cream and the 1 ¼ cup of reserved broth. Simmer the sauce for a few minutes and give it a taste. You can add salt at this stage if you think it needs it. 1 teaspoon of salt adds about 300 mg of sodium per serving.

Cover the bottom of a 13" x 9" baking dish with sauce, and then layer on about half of the shredded chicken. Cover the chicken layer with about one third of the shredded cheese. Add a layer of corn tortillas, cut into quarters.

Layer on the rest of the chicken and then almost all of the remaining sauce, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Add another one third of the cheese, more tortillas, and the remaining sauce. The only thing you should have left is cheese, so throw that on top now!

Bake in the oven for 40 minutes. Then turn on the broiler to brown the top, 3 to 5 minutes.