

Broccoli Casserole

Ingredients:

- 1 pound broccoli florets
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 cup milk
- A pinch of nutmeg (optional)
- 4 oz cream cheese, room temperature and cut into cubes
- 1/2 cup shredded white cheddar cheese
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- Salt & pepper

Instructions:

1. **Preheat the Oven:**
 - Heat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. **Prepare the Broccoli:**
 - Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
 - Add the broccoli florets and cook for about 3 minutes, until softened.
 - Remove the broccoli from the hot water and transfer it to an ice bath to cool down completely.
 - Drain the broccoli and place it in a lightly buttered casserole dish. Set aside.
3. **Make the Cheese Sauce:**
 - In a pan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter over medium heat.
 - Add the flour and stir constantly for 1 to 2 minutes until the flour is cooked.
 - Gradually add the milk while whisking vigorously. The mixture may be lumpy at first, but continue whisking until the sauce thickens and becomes smooth.
 - Add the cream cheese cubes to the sauce and stir until fully melted and smooth. Taste the sauce and adjust with salt and black pepper as needed. Add a pinch of nutmeg if using.
4. **Assemble the Casserole:**
 - Pour the cheese sauce over the broccoli in the casserole dish and mix well to ensure the broccoli is evenly coated.
 - Sprinkle the shredded white cheddar cheese over the top in an even layer.
5. **Prepare the Topping:**
 - Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in a pan.
 - Add the bread crumbs and cook, stirring, for about a minute until the bread crumbs are fully coated in butter.
6. **Bake the Casserole:**

- Evenly spread the buttered bread crumbs over the cheddar cheese layer.
- Place the casserole dish in the preheated oven and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until the cheese is bubbly and the top is golden brown.

7. Serve:

- Remove the casserole from the oven and let it cool slightly before serving.

Enjoy this delicious and creamy broccoli casserole as a comforting side dish or a hearty vegetarian main!