

GF Friendly

Peperoni Chicken Surprise

adaptable oven-baked chicken casserole

Why Surprise? Well, I decided to cook a recipe I'd concocted a while back, then realised I didn't have all the ingredients. So, I used what was on hand, including some left-over sliced potatoes from the previous night's meal. I was going to add some thinly sliced pumpkin; but, by the time everything else was in the casserole there was no room for it. You can try substitutes of your own for nearly all the ingredients to create your own surprise – Polish sausage or mild salami for the peperoni, even ham or bacon. The same with the vegetables – turnip, swede, parsnip, green beans, you name it.

- 1 large chicken breast fillet
- 5cm (2 inch) knob of peperoni, thinly sliced
- 1 medium onion, sliced in rings
- 1 capsicum, sliced in rings
- 1 carrot, thinly sliced
- 2 large florets of cauliflower, sliced
- 2 sticks celery, sliced across the stalks
- 300ml chicken gravy
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 1 large potato, cut in 6mm (¼ inch) slices and par-boiled
- ½ tsp Cajun spice (optional) OR whichever ones you fancy, including garlic and ginger, but beware of making it too hot!



Cook the gravy in the usual way beforehand – ideally a pouring consistency that is not watery. Prepare all the vegetables as per the recipe. Stir in any spices being used to this. The potato will need boiling, but not to the point where it starts to break up, so give it a poke with a fork once in a while to avoid over-cooking. Cut the peperoni into thin disks, and slice the chicken thinly across the grain.

Spread the celery across the bottom of the casserole, then half of the other vegies except for the potato and capsicum. Arrange the peperoni on these, top with the remaining onion, plus the capsicum. Spread out the chicken slices, add what's left of the vegies and finally line the top with potato slices. Pour the gravy evenly over, then cover the casserole with a lid or foil sprayed with oil to prevent the potatoes from sticking.

Bake on 160°C fan-forced (175°C conventional) for 45 minutes. Remove the cover, sprinkle on the grated cheese and return uncovered to the oven for a further 15 minutes to melt the cheese.

This recipe makes 3 good serves without additional vegetables

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