6 Advantages to Casseroles

One pot meals are gaining more popularity in today's hectic world where everyone's busy with their career. Coming back home after a hectic day at work puts you in no position to make a complete meal. This is when casserole meals come in handy when you want to make a simple but comforting and delicious meal without much effort. Lasagna's, Mac and Cheese, Gratings and Soufflés form part of the casserole family and are loved by the old and young alike. If you have a well-stocked pantry with basic ingredients, then getting a casserole dish ready is no big deal. Listed below are six advantages and reasons why casserole recipes are the best.

1. Time saver
Time is definitely a big factor when it comes to cooking. With casserole recipes, the advantage of time is definitely on your side. If you have enough time, then you can obviously source fresh vegetables, chop them by hand in precision and even take time stirring and cooking. But, on the other hand, if you are time constrained, doing the above mentioned chores would only make matter worse. In such scenarios opting for frozen vegetables, using a food processor to chop and slice them up could be helpful. If it is a dish like stew you are making, then you might be at an advantage as keeping it in the refrigerator for a day or two will only make the flavors catch on better. Heat it up when you are ready to eat and you have a perfect meal on your table.

2. Prep, freeze and serve
One of the best advantages of casseroles are that you can make them in advance, freeze them and then thaw them for later use. Although, most of the dishes can be frozen, there are a few guidelines to follow when it comes to preparation of casserole dishes. For example, all starchy items like pasta, rice, beans etc. should not be over cooked as they would then become mushy. Cooking them al dente is ideal. If there are crunchy toppings to be added in your casserole dish, then wait till the day you serve to add them, as they could get horridly soggy. When freezing dishes, make sure you cover them with a freezer paper or foil and not plastic wrap and lastly, let the casserole dish thaw overnight and you can then bake as directed. Follow these basic rules and you will not have to worry.

3. Don't skimp on the dairy
It is advisable to use full fat dairy products in casserole dishes, especially if you plan on freezing them. Using low fat cheeses and milk would only result in a rubbery texture once thawed and reheated. The cheese products are also known to prevent proper melting when replaced with fat-free versions. So, if you want to have a hearty, rich and creamy dish, but want to cut back on calories at the same time, then go for low fat grated cheese combined with whole wheat bread crumbs to increase the texture and goodness. Using a little less quantity than what is mentioned in recipes can also help.

4. You can use deep dish
Casserole recipes need not be made in particular ‘casserole dishes’. Instead you can use any deep dish which would hold your ingredients comfortably. For example using a glass or metal dish or even disposable aluminum pans work great when it comes to making casseroles.

5. As you wish
Experiment with recipes and ingredients as much as possible. The advantage of casseroles are that they are truly forgiving, giving you the freedom to add or reduce ingredients as per your taste, but at the same time not compromising on the outcome. You know your tastes and preferences better and so feel free to alter recipes to your liking.

6. Liven it up
Liven up your surroundings while cooking your favorite casserole dishes and it could make a lot of difference to the final outcome. Play music, dance around, wear colorful aprons and do other fun things that could make cooking much more interesting.