**French-Style Chicken and Leek Casserole**

An easy French inspired dish, this chicken and leek casserole is as good as anything you would find in a French brasserie and is easy enough for a delicious after-work dinner, and budget-friendly too.

Satisfying and full of flavour, it needs only 15 minutes’ preparation to produce a satisfying meal that will cook while you get on with other things.

A true one-pot dish, this traditional French-style chicken and leek casserole includes potatoes, which absorb some of the stock until they are so tender that they are ready to fall apart.

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

* 2 tbsp olive oil
* 4 chicken thighs
* 2 rashers back bacon (or 4 rashers streaky), cut into small pieces
* 1 small onion, peeled and cut into pieces
* 200g baby mushrooms, trim stalk and wipe with dry kitchen paper
* 1 large leek, cut into ¼”/ ¾ cm slices
* 400g small salad potatoes, e.g. Charlotte, cut in half
* 350ml chicken stock
* chopped fresh parsley to serve

Add half the oil to a casserole dish and fry the chicken thighs until they have some colour.

Remove from the pot and set to one side.

Fry the bacon and onion together until it starts to colour and is softened. Again, remove from the pan and set to one side.

Add the remaining oil to the casserole if needed. Gently fry the mushrooms and leeks, trying not to move the leeks around too much. You want them to retain their shape, so try to avoid breaking them up.

Add the potatoes to the pan along with the onion and bacon. Make some hollows and nestle the chicken into the pot between the other ingredients. Pour the stock in and season well with pepper and salt.

Put the lid on the casserole. Bring to a simmer and then turn the heat right down. Cook for 45 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and the potatoes are soft.

If you need to thicken the dish when the chicken is ready, scoop out a little of the stock, and allow it to cool.

Put 2 tsp of cornflour into a small bowl.  Add the cooled stock to the cornflour, stir to make a runny paste and add it to the casserole.  Stir in well and allow to simmer for another couple of minutes to thicken.  Repeat if needed.

The cloudiness of the cornflour paste will vanish once it is cooked.   Repeat as needed. **Do not** add cornflour directly to the hot casserole.

Garnish with chopped parsley to serve.

**Cook’s tips**

You can use any chicken portions here. I prefer thighs, however, as they have more fat and more flavour. They also tend to be more affordable.

Substitute up to 100ml of the stock for white wine if you prefer.

**Leftovers/Reheating**

Pack into air-tight containers and put in the fridge as soon as cold.   Reheat in the microwave in a suitable container or in a covered pan on the stove top over a low heat.

You can freeze your chicken and leek casserole and microwave to reheat, but I find it is better to scoop the potatoes out once defrosted, cut them in half and fry them, rather than re-heating them along with the rest of the casserole.

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**Recipe created and photography by Helen Best-Shaw of https://fussfreeflavours.com/**