

BAKED CHICKEN

WITH BACON BOTTOM & WILD RICE

Lining the baking pan with peppered bacon infuses the rice and chicken with its amazing flavor and smokiness, and the kitchen smells so good while this dish bakes. I usually serve this with a good green salad and whatever veggies I have on hand.

PREP: 15 minutes

COOK: 1 hour and 15 minutes

COOL: none

One 12-ounce package thick-cut peppered bacon

½ white onion, thinly sliced

6 tablespoons salted butter

Three 6.2-ounce boxes Uncle Ben's Long Grain & Wild Rice Fast Cook, cooked according to package directions

One 10.5-ounce can condensed cream of onion or cream of mushroom soup

1 cup sour cream

1 cup store-bought chicken broth or Homemade Chicken Broth (page 216)

1 teaspoon garlic powder

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2½ pounds chicken tenders

¼ cup chopped chives or parsley, for garnish

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Lay the bacon slices side by side to cover the bottom of a 9 x 13 x 3-inch (deep) baking pan or other wide, deep baking dish. Use any remaining slices along the sides of the pan. Place the onion slices on top of the bacon, overlapping them as necessary to cover the bottom. Cut 4 tablespoons of the butter into cubes and evenly sprinkle them on top of the onions.
3. In a large bowl, combine the wild rice blend, soup, sour cream, broth, garlic powder, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir until combined. Spoon the rice over the butter cubes and smooth the mixture out. Nestle the tenders into the rice, pressing them down slightly. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter and brush it on the chicken. Season with a few pinches of salt and pepper.
4. Cover the pan tightly with foil and bake for 55 minutes. Uncover and bake until the chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes.
5. Sprinkle the chives or parsley on top. Serve right out of the pan.
6. Store leftovers in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Makes 10 to 12 servings