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## Broccoli and Cheese Casserole

This Broccoli and Cheese Casserole is a cozy, comforting dish that's packed with flavor and perfect for any occasion. Fresh broccoli florets and tender stems are lightly sautéed with garlic and onions, then folded into a velvety cheese sauce made from milk (or rich heavy cream), melty cheddar or Colby Jack, parmesan and a touch of nutmeg for warmth. Finished with a crisp panko topping, this casserole bakes up golden and bubbly—ideal as a hearty side or even a vegetarian main. It's an easy-to-make, crowd-pleasing classic you'll turn to again and again.

### Ingredients:

- 4 cups broccoli florets and stems, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 cups milk (low fat, whole, or substitute with heavy cream)
- 1/3 cup diced onions
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp olive oil
- Pinch of nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp black or white pepper
- 2 tbsp butter (*omit if using heavy cream*)
- 2 tbsp flour (*omit if using heavy cream*)
- 2 1/2 cups cheddar or Colby Jack cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- Kosher or sea salt, to taste
- Panko bread crumbs, for topping

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Warm the milk or heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Do not boil. Set aside.
3. In a 2.5-quart saucepan or braiser, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add diced onions and cook until tender, about 3–4 minutes.
4. Add minced garlic and sauté for 30 seconds, just until fragrant.
5. If using milk:
  - Add butter and let it melt.
  - Sprinkle in flour and stir constantly for about 1 minute to cook off the raw flour taste.
6. Slowly add the warm milk to the pan, whisking vigorously to dissolve the flour and form a smooth sauce.
7. If using heavy cream, simply add it to the saucepan now.
8. Stir in a pinch of nutmeg and pepper, continue cooking over medium heat, whisking often until tiny bubbles form around the edge of the pan. Do not let it boil.
9. Gradually add the cheddar or Colby Jack cheese, whisking until fully melted and incorporated.
10. Remove from heat and stir in the parmesan cheese.
11. Taste and add Kosher or sea salt if needed
12. If using a braiser, add all the broccoli directly to the cheese sauce and stir to combine.  
If using a casserole dish, place the broccoli in the dish and pour the cheese sauce over the top.
13. Sprinkle panko breadcrumbs evenly over the top and lightly spray with cooking spray.
14. Cover with a lid or aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes.
15. After 30 minutes, reduce oven temperature to 350°F (175°C). Remove the cover and continue baking for an additional 15–20 minutes, or until the top is golden brown.
16. Remove from oven and let the casserole rest for 10 minutes to set.
17. Serve warm and enjoy!