

Cheesy Broccoli and Tomato Strata

Layer bread cubes with broccoli, tomatoes, and cheese, cover with a light custard, and bake into a nutrient-packed casserole. Reduced-fat cheese trims the fat but delivers a full dose of protein and calcium. Strata can be made up to 24 hours ahead of time. Just cover and refrigerate until you're ready to bake it.

- 1 ½ cups (6 ounces) frozen broccoli florets, thawed
- 6 cups cubed Italian, French or sourdough bread, crusts removed, about 6 to 8 slices
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded reduced-fat Jack, Colby-Jack, Cheddar, or Provolone cheese
- ½ cup chopped seeded Roma tomatoes or red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped green onion
- 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves
- ¾ cup egg substitute or 3 large eggs
- 1 cup fat free milk
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ cup grated fresh Parmesan or Romano cheese
- ½ cup tomato-based pasta sauce, warmed (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°.

1. Chop broccoli stems and thinly slice florets. Press broccoli between several layers of paper towels to remove excess moisture. Remove crusts from bread and cut into ¾-inch cubes. Coat 8-inch square baking pan with nonstick spray.
2. Arrange half of bread in single layer in bottom of pan. Reserve 1 tablespoon each tomato and green onion for garnish. Evenly sprinkle broccoli, shredded cheese, tomato, green onion, and basil over bread. In medium bowl, stir egg substitute or eggs, milk, salt, and pepper with wire whisk until blended. Pour half of milk mixture evenly over all. Press with back of spoon to saturate bread. Top with remaining bread cubes. Pour remaining milk mixture evenly over bread cubes. Again, press down with back of spoon to saturate bread. Sprinkle with Parmesan and reserved tomato and green onion.
3. Bake uncovered 35 to 40 minutes or until golden and set. Let stand 5 minutes. Cut into squares to serve. Top each with 2 tablespoons warm pasta sauce, if desired.

Prep time: 30 minutes • Cook time: 40 minutes • Makes: 4 servings

Variation:

Italian Sausage

Strata: Add ½ cup chopped, cooked or ready-to-eat Italian chicken or turkey sausage. Add in step 2 with the shredded Jack cheese and broccoli.

Tester's Comment:

"After I tested this recipe I thought it would be good for Saturday brunch. That's the one time we can count on everyone being around at the same time. So I made it Friday night and just had to stick it in the oven the next morning."

Nutrients per serving:

Calories	274
Protein	20 g
Total Fat	8 g
(Saturated Fat	5 g)
Carbohydrate	30 g
Calcium	362 mg
Cholesterol	23 mg
Fiber	3 g
Sodium	813 mg

