

Creamy Chicken and Broccoli Orzo

If comfort food had a flavor, this Creamy Chicken and Broccoli Orzo would be it. Tender chicken, fresh broccoli florets, and buttery orzo pasta come together in a rich, creamy cheese sauce that feels like a warm hug. Everything cooks in one pan, saving you time and keeping cleanup minimal. It's the kind of easy, satisfying dish that turns an ordinary evening into something special. The best part is that it's ready in under 30 minutes, making it perfect for both weeknights and cozy weekends.

Why This Creamy Chicken and Broccoli Orzo Stands Out

This dish delivers comfort in every bite. The orzo cooks right in the same pan, soaking up all the flavors from the broth, milk, and chicken. It's creamy but never heavy, and the broccoli adds a touch of freshness that keeps the meal balanced. The combination of cheddar and Parmesan cheese creates a sauce that's velvety and deeply satisfying. Every bite is rich and cozy, yet it never feels too indulgent. It's homestyle cooking at its best.

You don't need fancy ingredients to create restaurant-worthy results. Simple staples like orzo, chicken, and cheese come together to make something special. The sauce thickens naturally as the orzo cooks, forming a luxurious texture without using heavy cream. For another comforting dish that melts in your mouth, try Baked Melt In Your Mouth Chicken from aaronrecipes.com—it shares that same creamy, irresistible goodness.

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Description

A creamy, one-pan meal with tender chicken, broccoli, and orzo pasta in a rich cheese sauce. Perfect for busy weeknights and comforting family dinners.

Ingredients

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Scale

- ☐ 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - ☐ 1 tablespoon butter
 - ☐ 1 small onion, diced
 - ☐ 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - ☐ 1 cup orzo pasta
 - ☐ 2 cups cooked chicken, chopped
 - ☐ 2 cups broccoli florets, chopped small
 - ☐ 2 cups chicken broth
 - ☐ 1 cup milk
 - ☐ 1 teaspoon salt
 - ☐ ½ teaspoon black pepper
 - ☐ 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
 - ☐ ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Heat olive oil and butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until soft and translucent.
2. Add minced garlic and orzo. Toast for 2–3 minutes, stirring often.
3. Add chopped chicken and broccoli florets. Stir well.
4. Pour in chicken broth and milk. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Bring to a gentle simmer, then cover and cook for 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. When the orzo is tender, stir in cheddar and Parmesan until melted and creamy.
7. Adjust seasoning if needed and serve warm, garnished with extra cheese or herbs.

Notes

Use rotisserie chicken to save time.

Freshly shredded cheese melts best.

Add mushrooms, spinach, or peas for extra vegetables.

Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days; reheat with a splash of milk.

Did you make this recipe?

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Ingredients That Make This Dish Irresistible

The ingredient list is simple yet powerful. You'll need olive oil, butter, onion, garlic, orzo pasta, cooked chicken, broccoli florets, chicken broth, milk, salt, pepper, cheddar cheese, and Parmesan cheese. These ingredients blend beautifully to create a creamy, flavorful meal that satisfies both the palate and the soul. The orzo acts as a sponge, absorbing every ounce of flavor from the broth and sauce, while the chicken adds hearty protein and the broccoli offers a pop of freshness.

Each ingredient plays a key role. Butter and olive oil build richness. Garlic and onion create depth. Chicken broth adds a savory base, while milk provides smoothness. Freshly shredded cheese melts perfectly, creating that signature creamy texture. Together, they form a comforting one-pan meal that feels indulgent but still wholesome. This combination of texture and flavor makes it an instant family favorite.

Step-by-Step: How to Make Creamy Chicken and Broccoli Orzo

Begin by heating olive oil and butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Once melted, add diced onions and sauté for three to four minutes until soft and fragrant. Stir in minced garlic and cook for about thirty seconds, just until aromatic. Add the orzo and toast it lightly for two to three minutes. Toasting brings out a subtle nutty flavor and helps the pasta hold its texture once the sauce forms.

Next, stir in the chopped chicken and small broccoli florets. Keeping the broccoli pieces small helps them cook evenly and blend into the dish. Mix everything well so the chicken and broccoli are evenly coated in the buttery orzo mixture. This step locks in flavor early, ensuring that every bite carries a little bit of everything—tender chicken, crisp broccoli, and that soon-to-be creamy pasta base.

Simmer It to Creamy Perfection

Pour in the chicken broth and milk, then season with salt and pepper. Stir gently and bring the mixture to a light simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover the skillet, and let it cook for ten to twelve minutes, stirring occasionally. During this time, the orzo will absorb the broth and milk, thickening naturally into a creamy, risotto-like texture. The broccoli will turn tender yet remain bright green,

and the chicken will warm through.

After about twelve minutes, check the consistency. The orzo should be soft but still have a bit of bite. If it seems too thick, add a small splash of milk to loosen it. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning as needed. At this stage, the dish should already smell incredible—rich with butter, garlic, and the savory aroma of the simmering broth. You're almost ready for the best part: the cheese.

Add the Cheese and Finish the Dish

Lower the heat and stir in the shredded cheddar and grated Parmesan. Mix slowly until both cheeses melt completely, forming a luscious, smooth sauce that clings to every bit of orzo, chicken, and broccoli. The cheddar gives it creaminess and color, while the Parmesan deepens the flavor with a hint of saltiness. Stir until the sauce is silky and everything is evenly coated.

Taste once more and adjust the seasoning if needed. If you like a little kick, add a pinch of red pepper flakes. Serve the orzo hot, topped with extra Parmesan and freshly ground black pepper. Each spoonful delivers layers of flavor—tender chicken, creamy sauce, and perfectly cooked pasta all balanced by the freshness of the broccoli. It's the definition of comfort made simple.

Why This Recipe Works Every Time

This recipe works because everything cooks together in one pan, allowing the flavors to blend naturally. The orzo absorbs both the broth and milk, creating a creamy base without any need for flour or heavy cream. The sauce thickens as it simmers, and the cheese ties it all together. The result is a creamy, balanced dish that tastes as though it took hours to make but is actually done in under half an hour.

It's also a versatile, reliable recipe that always impresses. You can customize it to fit your preferences, use leftover chicken, or swap out veggies. It's elegant enough for guests but easy enough for weeknights. Each bite feels rich and satisfying, yet it's wholesome and nourishing. Once you make it, it will quickly earn a spot in your regular dinner rotation.

Serving Suggestions and Variations

This creamy orzo is a complete meal on its own, but it also pairs wonderfully with sides. Serve it with a fresh green salad or a slice of garlic bread for a balanced plate. It's equally delicious alongside roasted vegetables or grilled salmon. If you prefer a lighter option, pair it with lemon-dressed greens to cut through the richness.

You can also customize it endlessly. Use rotisserie chicken to save time or swap the broccoli for peas, spinach, or asparagus. Add mushrooms for extra earthiness or a spoonful of Dijon mustard for a little tang. A sprinkle of crushed red pepper or a drizzle of hot sauce adds gentle heat. Whether you keep it classic or tweak it to your taste, this dish always turns out comforting and delicious.

Pro Tips for Success

For the smoothest sauce, always use freshly shredded cheese. Packaged shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents that prevent it from melting properly. Stir the cheese in gradually over low heat to avoid graininess. If your sauce ever gets too thick, simply add a splash of milk and stir

until creamy again.

Keep the heat moderate while cooking the orzo. Too much heat can cause the liquid to evaporate before the pasta cooks fully. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking, and taste often to achieve that perfect al dente texture. Lastly, toast the orzo before adding liquid—it makes a huge difference in depth of flavor.

FAQs

Can I make this ahead of time?

Yes. You can prepare the dish ahead and store it in the refrigerator for up to three days. Reheat it gently on the stove with a little milk to restore the creamy texture.

Can I use a different pasta?

Absolutely. Small pastas like ditalini, elbows, or even rice work well. Adjust the cooking time and liquid amount accordingly.

Can I make this vegetarian?

Yes. Skip the chicken and use vegetable broth instead of chicken broth. Add more vegetables like mushrooms, spinach, or peas for extra flavor and heartiness.

Conclusion

Creamy Chicken and Broccoli Orzo is everything a comfort meal should be—creamy, cheesy, hearty, and unbelievably easy to make. With simple ingredients and just one pan, you can have a rich, flavorful dish that's perfect for both busy weeknights and cozy family dinners. It's proof that comfort food doesn't need to be complicated. Each bite delivers that creamy satisfaction you crave, with just the right balance of warmth, texture, and flavor. Once you try it, this dish will become your new favorite one-pan classic.