

One-Pot Garlic Parmesan Chicken Pasta

One-pot garlic Parmesan chicken pasta is the definition of creamy comfort food with a healthy twist. Made with tender chicken, whole wheat pasta, and a light garlic-Parmesan sauce, this dish combines nutrition with flavor. Instead of heavy cream, Greek yogurt and low-fat milk provide creaminess while keeping it light. Fresh spinach and parsley add a pop of color and nutrients, making this pasta a complete meal. With one pot, you get a restaurant-quality dinner ready in under 40 minutes.

Why Garlic and Parmesan Are a Classic Pair

Garlic’s Bold Flavor

Garlic transforms the base of the sauce by infusing olive oil with depth and aroma. Sautéed until fragrant, it adds warmth without bitterness. Garlic works as the backbone of the sauce, blending seamlessly with broth and Parmesan. Its natural sharpness enhances the mildness of chicken and balances the creaminess of yogurt. Every bite of pasta carries that unmistakable garlicky touch, giving the dish both comfort and complexity.

Parmesan’s Creamy Richness

Freshly grated Parmesan creates richness without making the sauce heavy. It melts into the roux, thickening the sauce while adding sharp, nutty notes. Parmesan elevates the sauce by turning a simple base of broth and milk into something luxurious. Combined with garlic, it creates a classic duo loved in Italian-inspired cooking. The flavor is bold yet smooth, coating pasta evenly. Parmesan also balances the lighter Greek yogurt, ensuring the sauce feels indulgent without being overwhelming.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [35 minutes](#)
- Yield: [4 servings 1x](#)

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Description

Creamy one-pot garlic Parmesan chicken pasta made with lean chicken, whole wheat pasta, Greek yogurt, and Parmesan cheese. A light yet comforting dinner in under 40 minutes.

Ingredients

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- ☐ 8 oz whole wheat penne or fettuccine
 - ☐ 2 tbsp olive oil
 - ☐ 3 garlic cloves, minced
 - ☐ 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts, cubed
 - ☐ Salt and black pepper, to taste
 - ☐ 1/2 tsp paprika
 - ☐ 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning
 - ☐ 1 tbsp whole wheat flour
 - ☐ 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
 - ☐ 1/2 cup low-fat milk (1% or 2%)
 - ☐ 1/2 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt
 - ☐ 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
 - ☐ 2 cups baby spinach (optional)
 - ☐ Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Cook pasta in salted boiling water until al dente. Save 1/4 cup pasta water. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a skillet. Cook cubed chicken seasoned with salt, pepper, paprika, and Italian herbs until golden, 5–6 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

3. In the same skillet, heat remaining oil. Add garlic and sauté 30–60 seconds until fragrant.
4. Sprinkle in flour to form a light roux. Slowly whisk in broth and milk until smooth and slightly thickened.
5. Reduce heat and stir in Greek yogurt and Parmesan until creamy. Adjust thickness with reserved pasta water.
6. Return chicken and pasta to skillet. Add spinach and toss until wilted.
7. Serve hot with parsley and extra Parmesan on top.

Notes

Use shrimp or turkey instead of chicken for variety.

Add mushrooms, red peppers, or broccoli for extra flavor.

Reserve pasta water to adjust sauce consistency.

Best served fresh; refrigerate leftovers for up to 3 days.

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 25 minutes
- Category: Dinner
- Method: One-Pot
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 plate
- **Calories:** 420
- **Sugar:** 3g
- **Sodium:** 640mg
- **Fat:** 16g
- **Saturated Fat:** 6g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 8g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 38g
- **Fiber:** 4g
- **Protein:** 32g
- **Cholesterol:** 90mg

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Preparing the Chicken

Seasoning and Cooking

Cubed chicken breasts are seasoned with paprika, Italian herbs, salt, and pepper. This light but flavorful mix ensures the meat isn't bland. The paprika adds color, while herbs add fragrance. Cooking chicken until golden locks in juices and builds flavor for the sauce. Each piece stays tender and juicy, making it perfect for tossing with pasta. Because the chicken is cubed, it cooks quickly, keeping the recipe efficient.

Shaping the Foundation of Flavor

Cooking the chicken first leaves browned bits in the skillet, which enrich the sauce. These savory remnants dissolve into broth, garlic, and Parmesan, adding layers of flavor. The chicken also carries seasoning into the sauce once reintroduced. Shredded or cubed chicken both work, but cubed gives bite-sized consistency in every forkful. The combination of seared chicken and garlic Parmesan sauce ensures the protein isn't just an add-on but a central part of the dish.

Cooking the Pasta

Choosing Whole Wheat Pasta

Whole wheat pasta adds nutrients and fiber, making the dish more filling and balanced. Its nutty flavor works well with creamy sauces. Cooking pasta to al dente prevents it from getting mushy when mixed with sauce. Penne, fettuccine, or rotini all hold sauce well, but spaghetti offers a classic feel. Cooking pasta in salted water ensures it's flavorful on its own, a key step in elevating the final dish.

Using Pasta Water Wisely

Reserving a splash of pasta water before draining is essential. The starch in the water binds sauce to the pasta, preventing it from slipping off. Adding a little pasta water while tossing helps adjust the sauce to the right consistency. If the sauce becomes too thick, it loosens smoothly without losing creaminess. This simple technique ensures every strand of pasta is coated evenly with garlic Parmesan goodness, making the dish feel complete.

Building the Sauce

Making a Light Roux

The sauce begins with olive oil and garlic, followed by a sprinkle of flour to form a roux. This step thickens the sauce naturally without needing cream. Slowly whisking in broth and milk keeps it smooth and lump-free. Cooking the roux for 30 seconds removes the raw flour taste, creating a base that's light but structured. This foundation is crucial for a sauce that clings beautifully to pasta without feeling too heavy.

Greek Yogurt and Cheese Creaminess

Instead of heavy cream, Greek yogurt lightens the sauce while keeping it silky. It blends with Parmesan to form a balanced sauce with tang, sharpness, and richness. Parmesan melts fully, creating a velvety texture. Together, yogurt and Parmesan bring indulgence without excess fat. This combination proves that lighter ingredients can still produce a satisfying sauce. Adjusting thickness with pasta water ensures it's smooth and coats pasta perfectly. The sauce transforms simple ingredients into something decadent.

Bringing Everything Together

Tossing Pasta and Chicken

With sauce ready, cooked chicken and pasta are added back to the pot. Tossing ensures the sauce coats every piece evenly, creating a cohesive dish. The chicken absorbs flavors, while the pasta soaks in creaminess. This step makes the dish one harmonious meal instead of separate elements. The process of combining them in one pot also saves cleanup, staying true to the recipe's simple approach.

Adding Spinach for Freshness

Baby spinach is added just before serving, wilting gently into the sauce. This ingredient brings freshness, nutrients, and vibrant color. Its slight earthiness balances the richness of Parmesan and garlic. Spinach also enhances presentation, making the dish look as good as it tastes. Optional but recommended, it elevates the pasta by turning it into a complete meal with protein, vegetables, and carbs in one bowl.

Serving Suggestions

Garnishing for Impact

Finishing touches make this pasta special. Fresh parsley adds brightness, and extra Parmesan sprinkled on top amplifies richness. Serving hot ensures the sauce remains creamy and doesn't seize. The garnish also enhances presentation, making the dish restaurant-worthy. With minimal effort, these small details elevate the experience and make the meal feel polished.

Pairing with Sides

Although hearty on its own, this pasta pairs well with garlic bread, salads, or roasted vegetables. Garlic bread provides crunch and is perfect for scooping sauce. A crisp salad with vinaigrette balances the creaminess, while vegetables like zucchini or broccoli add nutrition. These sides complement the pasta without overwhelming it, making the meal feel complete. This flexibility means you can serve it casually or as a centerpiece for a dinner gathering.

Variations and Add-Ins

Protein Alternatives

This dish adapts easily with other proteins. Shrimp cooks quickly and pairs well with garlic and Parmesan, giving a seafood variation. Turkey or ground chicken also fit the creamy sauce. For a

vegetarian version, tofu or chickpeas absorb flavors and add protein. Each variation shifts the dish slightly but keeps the creamy garlic Parmesan base intact. This adaptability makes it a recipe you can return to often without feeling repetitive.

Customizing Flavor

Adding spices or vegetables creates endless options. Red pepper flakes increase heat, while nutmeg adds warmth. Mushrooms, roasted red peppers, or artichokes can deepen flavor and add texture. Each addition personalizes the recipe, making it unique. Just like [Baked Melt In Your Mouth Chicken](#), the recipe proves that small variations turn simple dishes into versatile staples. The base is strong enough to handle tweaks while always delivering creamy comfort.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use regular pasta instead of whole wheat?

Yes, regular pasta works fine. Whole wheat adds nutrition, but the sauce complements both options.

Can I make this ahead?

Yes, cook chicken and pasta, prepare sauce, and store. Reheat gently with extra broth or milk before serving.

Can I freeze leftovers?

It's better to refrigerate for up to three days. Freezing may separate the sauce, but it can still be done if reheated gently.

What if I want it spicier?

Add red pepper flakes, cayenne, or hot sauce to increase heat without affecting the sauce's creaminess.

What vegetables can I add?

Spinach, mushrooms, broccoli, or zucchini blend seamlessly and boost nutrition.

Conclusion

One-pot garlic Parmesan chicken pasta is creamy, comforting, and versatile. With tender chicken, healthy pasta, and a lightened garlic-Parmesan sauce, it delivers flavor without excess heaviness. Spinach and parsley add freshness, while Parmesan ties everything together. Adaptable with different proteins or vegetables, it's a recipe you can make again and again. Whether for family dinners or casual gatherings, this pasta proves that comfort food can also be balanced and wholesome while staying delicious.