

Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta: Simple Dinner

This **Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta** is the definitive answer to the “what’s for dinner?” dilemma on a busy weeknight. It is a simple dinner solution that delivers a five-star, restaurant-quality comfort meal in under 30 minutes, all while using a handful of ingredients you likely already have. Forget about complex sauces that simmer for hours. This recipe brilliantly uses the magic of starchy pasta water, rich cream, and sharp Parmesan to create a velvety, luxurious sauce that clings perfectly to every single piece of tender, juicy chicken and al dente pasta. It’s the kind of simple dinner that tastes like a decadent treat.

Why You’ll Love This Recipe

Perfect for Busy Weeknights

Life in the United States moves fast, and finding the energy for a complicated, multi-pot meal after a long day is a tall order. That is precisely why this **Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta** recipe is a true weeknight hero. The entire dish, from prepping the chicken to tossing the final pasta, comes together in about 30 minutes. The cleanup is just as efficient, as the sauce is built in the very same pan used to cook the chicken. It’s the perfect, satisfying solution for those evenings when you crave the comfort of a home-cooked meal but are tempted by the speed of takeout.

Family-Friendly Flavor Highlights

This dish is a certified crowd-pleaser, designed to win over everyone at the table, from toddlers to discerning adults. The flavor profile is rich, savory, and comforting, yet it remains mild and approachable for even the pickiest eaters. The simple, classic combination of tender chicken, a silky garlic-parmesan sauce, and your family’s favorite pasta shape is a home run every time. It’s a satisfying, savory, and easily adaptable meal. You can keep it classic or even sneak in some finely chopped spinach for a hidden nutrient boost. This simple dinner makes mealtime a stress-free, delicious event.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [30 min](#)
- Yield: [4 servings 1x](#)

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Description

This Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta is the answer to your busiest weeknights. It delivers a restaurant-quality, comforting meal in under 30 minutes, using simple ingredients. A velvety, luxurious sauce clings perfectly to every piece of tender chicken and al dente pasta.

Ingredients

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- ☐ 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
 - ☐ 12 oz penne pasta
 - ☐ 1 tbsp olive oil
 - ☐ 1 tbsp butter
 - ☐ 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - ☐ 1 cup heavy cream
 - ☐ 1/2 cup chicken broth
 - ☐ 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
 - ☐ Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - ☐ 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the penne pasta according to package directions until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of pasta water before draining.
2. While the pasta is cooking, season the chicken cubes generously with salt and pepper.
3. Heat the olive oil and butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken in a single layer and cook for 3-5 minutes per side, until golden brown and cooked through. Remove the chicken from the skillet and set aside.

4. Reduce the heat to medium. Add the minced garlic to the skillet and cook for 30-60 seconds until fragrant.
5. Pour in the chicken broth, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Stir in the heavy cream and bring to a gentle simmer.
6. Reduce the heat to low and gradually stir in the grated Parmesan cheese until the sauce is smooth and melted.
7. Add the drained pasta and the cooked chicken back to the skillet. Toss to combine, coating everything in the sauce. If the sauce is too thick, add a splash of the reserved-pasta-water to reach your desired consistency.
8. Serve immediately, garnished with fresh parsley and extra Parmesan cheese if desired.

Notes

For a richer sauce, use all heavy cream instead of the broth/cream combination.

Add a pinch of red pepper flakes with the garlic for a subtle kick of heat.

Stir in a cup of fresh spinach at the end until it wilts for added nutrients.

- Prep Time: 10 min
- Cook Time: 20 min
- Category: Dinner
- Method: Skillet
- Cuisine: American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 serving
- **Calories:** 590 kcal
- **Sugar:** 3 g
- **Sodium:** 550 mg
- **Fat:** 30 g
- **Saturated Fat:** 16 g
- **Carbohydrates:** 45 g
- **Fiber:** 3 g
- **Protein:** 38 g
- **Cholesterol:** 115 mg

Did you make this recipe?

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Ingredient Highlights & Substitutions

Essential Ingredients

At the very heart of this **Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta** are a few key, high-quality components. Boneless, skinless chicken breasts provide the lean, juicy protein, cut into bite-sized pieces for incredibly fast cooking. The sauce's luxurious, velvety texture comes from heavy cream, while real, freshly grated Parmesan cheese adds the essential nutty, salty, and savory depth. A few cloves of fresh garlic create the aromatic foundation. Finally, a short pasta shape, such as penne or fusilli, is ideal as its nooks and crannies are perfect for capturing every drop of the delicious sauce.

Smart Substitutions

Worried you don't have every single item? This recipe is wonderfully flexible. If you are out of heavy cream, a combination of half-and-half and a tablespoon of butter can work in a pinch. For a richer flavor, you can easily substitute boneless, skinless chicken thighs for the breasts. No Parmesan? Pecorino Romano will provide a similar salty, savory kick, though it is a bit sharper. You can also boost the veggie content by adding steamed broccoli florets, sautéed mushrooms, or a handful of sundried tomatoes along with the garlic.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Prep Phase

Your first and most important step is to get all your ingredients prepped and ready to go, a process chefs call *mise en place*. This recipe moves very quickly, so you'll want everything within arm's reach. Start by bringing a large pot of water to a rolling boil, adding a generous amount of salt. While the water is heating, chop your chicken into uniform 1-inch cubes and season them well. Mince your garlic and grate your Parmesan cheese. Have your cream and any other seasonings measured and ready by the stove.

Cooking Phase

Once your water is boiling, add the pasta and cook according to the package directions until it is just *al dente*. While the pasta cooks, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the seasoned chicken pieces in a single layer, being careful not to crowd the pan. Cook for 3-4 minutes per side, until a deep golden-brown crust forms and the chicken is cooked through. Remove the chicken from the pan and set it aside. In the same skillet, reduce the heat to medium, add the minced garlic, and cook for 30-60 seconds until fragrant.

Pro Tips for Perfect Results

Technique Secrets

The most critical secret to achieving an ultra-creamy, non-greasy sauce is to use your starchy pasta water. Just before you drain your pasta, reserve at least one full cup of the cloudy, hot water. This water is liquid gold; it's full of starches that act as an emulsifier and thickener, helping the cream and cheese bind together into a silky-smooth sauce that won't break. Also, when adding the

Parmesan, always lower the heat or remove the pan from the heat entirely. Adding cheese to a boiling-hot sauce can cause it to curdle and become grainy.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

The most common mistake is overcooking your pasta. Remember, the pasta will continue to cook for another minute or two after you add it to the hot sauce. Always pull it from the boiling water when it is just *al dente*, meaning it still has a firm bite. Another error is not seasoning the chicken generously. The chicken is a primary flavor component, not just a filler, so it needs to be well-seasoned on its own. Finally, never rinse your pasta after draining it. This washes away the starches that are essential for helping that beautiful sauce cling to every piece.

Serving Ideas & Pairings

Presentation & Plating

To serve this **Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta**, add the drained pasta and the cooked chicken directly into the skillet with your simmering cream sauce. Use tongs to toss everything together gently but thoroughly, ensuring every piece of pasta and chicken is fully coated. If the sauce seems too thick, add a splash of your reserved pasta water, one tablespoon at a time, until it reaches the perfect, luscious consistency. Ladle the pasta into warm, shallow bowls. Garnish each serving with a generous sprinkle of freshly chopped parsley and an extra dusting of grated Parmesan cheese for a professional finish.

Pairing Suggestions

This is a rich and comforting dish, so it pairs best with side dishes that are simple, bright, and acidic. A crisp green salad tossed in a sharp, zesty lemon vinaigrette is an excellent choice to cut through the creaminess. For a vegetable side, consider steamed or roasted asparagus with a squeeze of fresh lemon juice or some simple, sautéed green beans with garlic. For a heartier meal, you can never go wrong with a side of warm, crusty garlic bread, which is the perfect tool for soaking up any leftover sauce in the bowl.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1? Can I make this dish with a different kind of pasta? Answer: Absolutely. While penne or fusilli are great for catching the sauce, this recipe works beautifully with almost any pasta shape. Fettuccine or linguine will give it a classic Alfredo feel, while larger shapes like rigatoni are also excellent.

Question 2? How do I store and reheat leftovers? Answer: Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Cream sauces can thicken and separate when chilled. The best way to reheat is gently in a skillet over low heat, adding a splash of milk or chicken broth to loosen the sauce and bring it back to a creamy consistency.

Question 3? How can I make this dish even richer? Answer: If you want to elevate the decadence, you can substitute the heavy cream with a mix of cream and a 1/4 cup of cream cheese, stirred in until melted. You could also add 1/4 cup of dry white wine to the pan after the garlic, letting it reduce, for a more complex, restaurant-style flavor.

Conclusion

This **Quick Creamy Chicken Pasta** truly is the ultimate simple dinner solution. It perfectly balances the rich, indulgent flavors of a gourmet meal with the speed and convenience required by our busy, modern lives. In just 30 minutes, you can craft a comforting, deeply satisfying, and family-approved dish that feels both practical and special. This recipe is a testament to the idea that you don't need a lot of time or a complicated pantry to create something truly delicious. It's a recipe you'll find yourself turning to again and again.

For another fast and flavorful idea, check out this [Viral Cajun Chicken Pasta: The Quick Weeknight Dinner You've Been Missing!](#)

Timing Breakdown

Step	Time
Prep Time	10 min
Cook Time	20 min
Total Time	30 min
<i>Servings</i>	<i>4 people</i>