

Spicy Cajun Chicken Pasta Recipe

Spicy Cajun chicken pasta recipe brings together tender chicken, perfectly cooked pasta, and a smoky, creamy sauce with just the right amount of heat. It's bold, flavorful, and incredibly comforting, making it the perfect meal for spice lovers. This one-pot pasta dish is easy to make, saves on cleanup, and feels like something you'd order at a restaurant. With Cajun seasoning, garlic, and Parmesan blended into a silky sauce, it's a recipe you'll want to make again and again.

Building Flavor with Cajun Spices

Why Cajun Seasoning Works

Cajun seasoning is a blend of paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, cayenne, and herbs that delivers both heat and depth. It flavors the chicken while also creating a smoky base for the sauce. Using it twice, once on the chicken and again in the sauce, ensures every bite is bold. Adjusting the amount of seasoning lets you control the spice level, so it can be as fiery or as mild as you prefer. This flexibility makes it ideal for family meals.

Creating a Smoky Balance

The heat from Cajun seasoning is balanced by the creamy sauce made with butter, garlic, and heavy cream. Parmesan cheese brings umami and richness, while chicken broth lightens the sauce so it's not too heavy. Smoked paprika deepens the flavor with a subtle smokiness. This balance of heat and creaminess is what makes Cajun pasta stand out. The result is a dish that warms you up but also feels smooth and satisfying, perfect for any weeknight dinner.

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

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Description

A bold and creamy Cajun pasta made with juicy chicken, smoky spices, and Parmesan in one pot. Easy, flavorful, and perfect for weeknight dinners.

Ingredients

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Scale

- ☐ 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
 - ☐ 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - ☐ 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
 - ☐ Salt and pepper, to taste
 - ☐ 12 oz penne, fettuccine, or spaghetti
 - ☐ Salt, for the pasta water
 - ☐ 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 - ☐ 4 cloves garlic, minced
 - ☐ 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
 - ☐ 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
 - ☐ 1 cup heavy cream
 - ☐ ½ cup chicken broth
 - ☐ ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
 - ☐ Fresh parsley, chopped (optional)
 - ☐ **Cook Mode** Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Season chicken with Cajun seasoning, salt, and pepper. Heat olive oil in a skillet and cook chicken for 6–7 minutes per side, until golden and cooked through. Remove and slice.
2. Cook pasta in salted water until al dente. Reserve 1 cup pasta water before draining.

3. In the skillet, melt butter. Add garlic and sauté until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Stir in Cajun seasoning and smoked paprika to bloom.
4. Pour in cream and chicken broth. Simmer for 4–5 minutes until slightly thickened. Stir in Parmesan until smooth.
5. Add pasta to the sauce, tossing to coat. Add reserved pasta water if needed.
6. Return chicken to the skillet, toss with pasta, and garnish with parsley.

Notes

Swap chicken for shrimp or sausage.

Add bell peppers, spinach, or mushrooms for more nutrition.

Use thighs for juicier chicken.

Reheat gently with broth or cream to keep the sauce creamy.

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 25 minutes
- Category: Dinner
- Method: Stovetop
- Cuisine: Cajun

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 plate
- **Calories:** 520
- **Sugar:** 3g
- **Sodium:** 690mg
- **Fat:** 23g
- **Saturated Fat:** 10g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 11g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 40g
- **Fiber:** 3g
- **Protein:** 38g
- **Cholesterol:** 115mg

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Cooking the Chicken

Seasoning Generously

Chicken breasts become flavorful and juicy when seasoned well. A rub of Cajun seasoning, salt, and pepper on both sides ensures the flavor goes all the way through. Olive oil helps the seasoning stick and allows the chicken to sear beautifully. The spices create a savory crust during cooking, locking in moisture. For even more flavor, chicken thighs can be substituted, offering a juicier option while still absorbing the Cajun blend perfectly.

Getting the Perfect Sear

Cooking chicken in a hot skillet with olive oil gives it a golden, slightly crisp crust. Each breast cooks for about six to seven minutes per side, reaching an internal temperature of 165°F. This ensures the chicken is safe to eat while staying juicy inside. Resting the chicken for a few minutes before slicing keeps it tender. Cut into strips or bite-sized pieces, it's ready to be tossed back into the pasta later, where it soaks up the sauce.

Pasta and Texture

Choosing the Pasta Shape

Penne is a great choice for Cajun chicken pasta because its ridges trap sauce. Fettuccine works well too, offering wide noodles that cling to creamy sauces. Spaghetti is an option but doesn't hold onto sauce as effectively. Cooking pasta until al dente ensures it stays firm when tossed in the hot sauce. Always salt the pasta water generously because it seasons the noodles from within, an important step that boosts overall flavor.

Pasta Water Magic

Before draining pasta, always reserve a cup of the cooking water. The starch in pasta water helps the sauce cling better, creating a smooth texture. When the cooked pasta is added to the Cajun cream sauce, small amounts of this water can be mixed in to loosen the sauce if it's too thick. This step ensures the pasta absorbs the sauce instead of just sitting in it. The final result is pasta that is evenly coated and creamy.

Making the Cajun Sauce

Building Layers of Flavor

The Cajun sauce starts with butter melted in the same skillet used for the chicken. Garlic is added, releasing fragrance and flavor. Then, Cajun seasoning and smoked paprika are stirred in, blooming in the butter to deepen the spice. This creates a powerful base that's both smoky and savory. These steps are quick but essential for developing the rich Cajun taste. They transform the sauce from something simple into a dish full of character and complexity.

Creamy Perfection

After blooming the spices, heavy cream and chicken broth are poured in, combining richness with a lighter touch. The sauce simmers for several minutes until it thickens slightly. Parmesan is then stirred in until melted, adding body and salty depth. This creamy, velvety sauce coats the pasta beautifully. Taste and adjust with salt, pepper, or more Cajun seasoning, depending on your preference. This final step ensures that the sauce is bold, balanced, and completely irresistible.

Bringing It All Together

Tossing Pasta and Sauce

The cooked pasta goes straight into the skillet with the Cajun cream sauce. Tossing it thoroughly ensures the noodles soak up the flavor and are evenly coated. If the sauce thickens too much, add a splash of pasta water to smooth it out. This blending step makes the pasta more cohesive, preventing it from tasting like separate ingredients. Instead, every bite feels complete, combining creamy sauce, smoky spices, and perfectly cooked noodles.

Adding Chicken Back In

Once the pasta is tossed, the sliced chicken is added back to the skillet. The chicken absorbs some of the sauce while distributing evenly through the pasta. Tossing again brings everything together into one cohesive dish. Garnish with parsley for freshness and a sprinkle of extra Parmesan for a salty finish. Served straight from the skillet, the final result is spicy, creamy, and satisfying. It's the type of dish that's impressive yet easy to make.

Creative Variations

Adding Vegetables

This pasta is delicious as-is, but vegetables make it more colorful and nutritious. Bell peppers add sweetness, spinach brings freshness, and mushrooms add heartiness. Sauté them in the skillet before making the sauce so they absorb Cajun spices. Vegetables not only make the dish healthier but also add variety in flavor and texture. They turn the pasta into a complete meal, offering balance to the richness of the sauce and protein of the chicken.

Trying Other Proteins

Shrimp is a classic Cajun ingredient that works wonderfully in this recipe. It cooks quickly and pairs well with the spicy, creamy sauce. Sausage is another great choice, adding smokiness and heartiness. For a lighter option, turkey or tofu can be used. Each protein variation offers a new twist while keeping the Cajun theme alive. This adaptability means you can make the recipe again and again without it ever feeling repetitive or boring.

Serving and Storage

Serving Suggestions

Spicy Cajun chicken pasta is filling on its own, but it pairs well with simple sides. Garlic bread adds crunch and is perfect for scooping up extra sauce. A fresh salad with vinaigrette balances the

creaminess with brightness. Garnish the pasta with fresh parsley or a squeeze of lemon juice to cut through the richness. For presentation, serve it directly from the skillet for a rustic feel or plate it individually for a restaurant-style touch.

Storage and Reheating

Leftovers keep well in the fridge for up to three days. To reheat, warm gently on the stove with a splash of broth or cream to bring back the sauce's texture. Avoid overheating, which can dry out the chicken or make the pasta mushy. For longer storage, freeze the chicken separately and reheat before tossing with fresh pasta and sauce. These tips make the dish practical, ensuring you can enjoy it again without losing quality.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make this less spicy?

Yes, use less Cajun seasoning and skip red pepper flakes. The creamy sauce will still taste flavorful but with a gentler kick.

What pasta shape works best?

Penne and fettuccine are ideal because they hold onto the creamy sauce. Spaghetti works but doesn't capture as much flavor.

Can I replace the cream?

Half-and-half works for a lighter sauce. For dairy-free, use coconut cream, but expect a slight sweetness in the flavor.

What's the best way to reheat?

Reheat gently on the stove with a splash of broth or cream to keep the sauce silky. Avoid microwaving for too long.

Is it similar to other baked chicken dishes?

It shares comfort and richness with recipes like [Baked Melt In Your Mouth Chicken](#), though Cajun pasta offers bolder spice and smoky flavors.

Conclusion

Spicy Cajun chicken pasta recipe delivers the perfect balance of heat and creaminess. The Cajun seasoning builds layers of flavor, the cream sauce smooths out the spice, and Parmesan ties it all together. It's versatile, working with chicken, shrimp, or sausage, and it adapts easily with vegetables. Best of all, it's a one-pot dish that saves time without sacrificing flavor. This pasta proves that comfort food can be exciting, bold, and easy enough to make on any weeknight.