

## Creamy Jalapeño Popper Chicken Pasta Bake - Spicy, Cheesy & Family-Friendly

If jalapeño poppers and baked mac and cheese had a love child, it would be this dish.



**OVEN**  
**375°F**

**TIME**  
**7 min**

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### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb chicken breast, diced
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup jalapeños, diced (fresh or pickled)
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb pasta, cooked (penne, rotini, or shells work great)
- 1 cup milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup bread crumbs
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil

#### Optional Add-Ins & Swaps:

Add bacon bits or crushed red pepper flakes for extra popper vibes

Swap cheddar with pepper jack for more heat

Use rotisserie chicken to save time

Stir in a handful of spinach or corn for added texture

#### Instructions:

Preheat the oven Set to 375°F (190°C) and grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.

Cook the chicken In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Season diced chicken with salt and pepper. Cook until browned and cooked through, about 5-7 minutes.

Add jalapeños and garlic Stir in jalapeños and minced garlic. Cook for another 2 minutes until fragrant.

Make the sauce Add cream cheese and milk to the skillet. Stir until cream cheese is melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy.

Combine with pasta Add the cooked pasta to the skillet and mix until everything is evenly coated.

Assemble the casserole Transfer the mixture to the baking dish. In a small bowl, mix cheddar cheese, Parmesan, and bread crumbs. Sprinkle over the pasta.

Top with butter & bake Dot the top with small pieces of butter. Bake uncovered for 20-25 minutes, or until the top is golden and bubbly.

Serve hot Garnish with fresh herbs or sliced jalapeños if desired and serve warm!

Tips for Success:

Let cream cheese soften fully before cooking for smooth sauce

Use pickled jalapeños for tang or fresh for more spice

If sauce thickens too much, stir in a splash of pasta water or milk

Broil for the last 2-3 minutes for an extra crispy topping

Serving Suggestions & Pairings:

Crockpot Nacho Dip for a party-style appetizer

Sheet Pan Quesadillas to double the Tex-Mex fun

Blueberry Lemonade for a refreshing contrast

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven: Set to 375°F (190°C) and grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.
2. Cook the chicken: In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Season diced chicken with salt and pepper. Cook until browned and cooked through, about 5-7 minutes.
3. Add jalapeños and garlic Stir in jalapeños and minced garlic. Cook for another 2 minutes until fragrant.
4. Make the sauce: Add cream cheese and milk to the skillet. Stir until cream cheese is melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy.
5. Combine with pasta: Add the cooked pasta to the skillet and mix until everything is evenly coated.
6. Assemble the casserole: Transfer the mixture to the baking dish. In a small bowl, mix cheddar cheese, Parmesan, and bread crumbs. Sprinkle over the pasta.
7. Top with butter & bake: Dot the top with small pieces of butter. Bake uncovered for 20-25 minutes, or until the top is golden and bubbly.
8. Serve hot: Garnish with fresh herbs or sliced jalapeños if desired and serve warm!
9. Tips for Success: Let cream cheese soften fully before cooking for smooth sauce
10. Use pickled jalapeños for tang or fresh for more spice
11. If sauce thickens too much, stir in a splash of pasta water or milk
12. Broil for the last 2-3 minutes for an extra crispy topping
13. Serving Suggestions & Pairings: Pair this creamy, spicy casserole with:

14. Crockpot : Nacho Dip for a party-style appetizer
15. Sheet : Pan Quesadillas to double the Tex-Mex fun
16. Blueberry : Lemonade for a refreshing contrast
17. Cheesy : Hot Dip Inspired by a Classic Sandwich for another bold, cheesy favorite
18. Chocolate : Chip Cookie Bites for dessert
19. Storage & Leftovers: Fridge: Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days
20. Reheat: Microwave individual servings or bake at 350°F until warmed through
21. Freeze: Freeze unbaked pasta (without topping) for up to 2 months. Add topping and bake when ready
22. More Recipes You'll Love: If you love cheesy, spicy comfort food casseroles, try these next:
23. Cheesy : Hot Dip Inspired by a Classic Sandwich
24. Sheet : Pan Quesadillas
25. Crockpot : Nacho Dip

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Let cream cheese soften fully before cooking for smooth sauce Use pickled jalapeños for tang or fresh for more spice If sauce thickens too much, stir in a splash of pasta water or milk Broil for the last 2-3 minutes for an extra crispy topping

**More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)**

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/creamy-jalapeno-popper-chicken-pasta-bake-spicy-cheesy-family-friendly/>