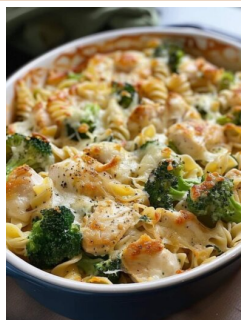


Cheesy Chicken and Broccoli Pasta Bake: Easy & Creamy

Chicken and Broccoli Pasta Bake



OVEN
375°F

TIME
2 min

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Recipe Card

SAVE
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INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound chicken tenders, cut into bite-size pieces
- 3 cups fresh broccoli florets (about 1 medium head)
- 1 1/2 cups dry small shaped pasta (like penne, rotini, or medium shells)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Kosher salt and fresh black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 3/4 cup chicken broth (low sodium recommended)
- 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese
- 4 ounces cream cheese, cut into cubes, softened
- 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided

DIRECTIONS

1. Let's get this delicious : Chicken and Broccoli Pasta Bake assembled and baked!
2. Cook : Pasta & Broccoli: Following the package directions, cook the 1 1/2 cups dry small shaped pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water until al dente. During the last 2 minutes of the pasta's cooking time, stir in the 3 cups fresh broccoli florets. This ensures the broccoli is tender-crisp. Drain the pasta and broccoli thoroughly when done and set aside.
3. Season : Chicken: While pasta cooks, in a bowl, toss the 1 pound chicken tenders (cut into bite-size pieces) with 1 teaspoon paprika, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder, 1/2 teaspoon onion powder, and kosher salt and fresh black pepper to taste.
4. Sear : Chicken: In a large sauté pan or skillet, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, add the seasoned chicken to the pan and sear for a couple of minutes until browned on the outside. The chicken doesn't need to be fully cooked through at this stage.
5. Prepare : Creamy Sauce: Pour in 3/4 cup chicken broth into the sauté pan with the chicken and allow it to come to a simmer. Add the 4 ounces cubed cream cheese once the broth is simmering and stir well with a whisk or wooden spoon until the cream cheese is completely melted and incorporated into the broth, creating a smooth sauce. Then, add 3/4 cup of the shredded mozzarella cheese. Stir well until the mozzarella is melted and the sauce has slightly thickened.
6. Combine : All in Skillet: Turn the heat off the sauté pan. Gently toss in the cooked pasta and broccoli mixture with the chicken and sauce. Stir everything

together until well combined and coated.

7. **Bake:** Transfer the entire chicken and broccoli pasta mixture from the skillet into a baking dish (a 9x13-inch dish works well). Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil. Place in a 375°F (190°C) preheated oven and bake for about 20 minutes to allow the flavors to meld and the casserole to heat through.
8. **Final : Cheese Topping:** Remove the baking dish from the oven. Uncover it. Sprinkle the remaining 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese and the 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese evenly over the top of the casserole. Return to the oven and continue to bake for another 3 minutes, uncovered, until the cheese has melted and is bubbly and lightly golden.
9. **Rest & : Serve:** Before serving, allow the chicken and broccoli pasta to rest for about 5 minutes. This allows the sauce to set slightly and makes for easier serving.

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken: Chicken tenders are ideal for quick cooking.

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces, also work well.

Broccoli: Fresh broccoli florets are recommended.

If using frozen, add them directly to the pasta during the last 2 minutes of cooking; no need to thaw.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Al Dente Pasta: Cook the pasta just until al dente, as it will continue to cook and absorb sauce in the oven.

Don't Overcook Chicken: Sear the chicken tenders until just browned; they will finish cooking in the sauce and oven.

Softened Cream Cheese: Use softened cream cheese for a smoother, lump-free sauce.

Whisk Sauce Smoothly: Whisk constantly when melting cream cheese and mozzarella into the broth for a silky sauce.

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

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