

Creamy Bacon Chicken & Broccoli Pasta: Easy One-Pan Meal

Few dishes deliver on the promise of comfort and flavor quite like a creamy pasta, and this



TIME
3 min

TEMP
165°F

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

INGREDIENTS

- 2 chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 8 slices of bacon, chopped
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup chicken broth (low sodium preferred)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 12 oz pasta (penne or fettuccine works well)
- 2 cups broccoli florets (fresh or frozen)
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Swaps and Notes:

Chicken: Boneless, skinless chicken thighs can be used instead of breasts for even juicier results. You could also use pre-cooked rotisserie chicken for a shortcut; add it with the sauce in the "Combine Everything" step to just warm through.

Bacon: For convenience, you can use pre-cooked bacon bits, though cooking fresh bacon adds more flavor to the pan.

Pasta: Penne or fettuccine are excellent choices as they hold the creamy sauce well. Other shapes like rotini, shell pasta, or farfalle would also work.

Broccoli: Fresh broccoli florets are ideal. If using frozen, add them directly to the boiling pasta during the last few minutes of cooking. You can also use asparagus or spinach (add spinach at the very end with the cooked pasta to wilt).

Cheese: Freshly grated Parmesan cheese melts smoother and has superior flavor. For the mozzarella, good quality shredded cheese makes a difference. You can adjust the cheese blend to your liking.

Seasoning: Adjust salt, pepper, paprika, and Italian seasoning to your preference. A pinch of red pepper flakes can add a subtle kick to the sauce.

Chicken Broth: Low sodium chicken broth allows you to control the overall saltiness of the dish.

Instructions:

Cook the Pasta and Broccoli: Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the 12 oz pasta and cook according to the package instructions until al dente (firm to the bite). During the last 3 minutes of the pasta's cooking time, add the 2 cups of broccoli florets to the boiling pasta water. This allows them to cook together until tender-crisp. Drain the pasta and broccoli well and set them aside.

Prepare the Bacon: In a large skillet or Dutch oven, cook the 8 slices of chopped bacon over medium heat until it's wonderfully crispy. This usually takes about 8-10 minutes. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and place it on a paper towel-lined plate to drain and cool. Leave about 2 tablespoons of flavorful bacon fat in the skillet.

Cook the Chicken: Season the bite-sized chicken pieces with salt, pepper, and paprika. In the same skillet with the bacon fat, add the 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Increase the heat to medium-high. Add the seasoned chicken and cook until it's no longer pink and cooked through, about 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the cooked chicken from the skillet and set it aside.

Make the Sauce: In the same skillet (don't clean it-those browned bits and bacon fat are full of flavor!), add the 3 cloves of minced garlic and cook for about 1 minute until fragrant, being careful not to let it burn. Pour in the 1 cup of chicken broth and 2 cups of heavy cream, stirring to combine everything. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer, then let it cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, allowing it to thicken slightly.

Add the Cheese: Reduce the heat to low. Gradually add the 1 cup of grated Parmesan cheese and 1 cup of shredded mozzarella cheese to the sauce, stirring continuously until all the cheese has melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy. Season

the sauce with Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper to taste, adjusting as needed.

Combine Everything: Add the cooked pasta, broccoli, cooked chicken, and the crispy bacon (reserving a little for garnish if desired) to the skillet with the creamy sauce. Toss everything together gently until the pasta, chicken, and broccoli are well-coated with the luscious sauce.

Serve: Transfer the creamy bacon, chicken, and broccoli pasta to serving bowls. Garnish generously with chopped fresh parsley and any reserved crispy bacon. Serve immediately and enjoy this comforting, flavorful meal!

Tips for Success:

Crispy Bacon is Key: Cook the bacon until it's very crispy; it adds a crucial textural contrast and a ton of flavor.

Don't Overcook Chicken: Chicken breasts can dry out quickly. Cook until just done (internal temp of 165°F / 74°C).

Al Dente Pasta: Cook the pasta only until al dente. It will continue to cook slightly when combined with the hot sauce.

Don't Overcook Broccoli: Adding broccoli in the last few minutes of pasta cooking ensures it's tender-crisp, not mushy.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Cook the : Pasta and Broccoli:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the 12 oz pasta and cook according to the package instructions until al dente (firm to the bite). During the last 3 minutes of the pasta's cooking time, add the 2 cups of broccoli florets to the boiling pasta water. This allows them to cook together until tender-crisp. Drain the pasta and broccoli well and set them aside.
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6. Combine : Everything: Add the cooked pasta, broccoli, cooked chicken, and the crispy bacon (reserving a little for garnish if desired) to the skillet with the creamy sauce. Toss everything together gently until the pasta, chicken, and broccoli are well-coated with the luscious sauce.
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11. Don't : Overcook Broccoli: Adding broccoli in the last few minutes of pasta cooking ensures it's tender-crisp, not mushy.
12. Low : Heat for Cheese: When adding the cheeses, keep the heat low and stir constantly to ensure a smooth, creamy sauce and prevent the cheese from clumping or separating.
13. Taste and : Adjust: Always taste your sauce before combining everything and adjust seasonings (salt, pepper, hot sauce) to your preference.
14. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: This Creamy Bacon, Chicken, and Broccoli Pasta is a complete, hearty meal on its own. However, it pairs beautifully with simple sides:
15. A crisp side salad with a light vinaigrette to cut through the richness.
16. Warm, crusty garlic bread or breadsticks for soaking up every last bit of delicious sauce.
17. A glass of dry white wine like : Chardonnay or Pinot Grigio.
18. For other fantastic comforting pasta and casserole meals, you might also enjoy:
19. My Classic : Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce for another timeless Italian favorite.
20. My This : Cajun Chicken Sausage Gumbo is My Favorite Bowl of Southern Comfort for an incredibly hearty and flavorful soup.
21. Storage and Leftover Tips: Leftover Creamy Bacon, Chicken, and Broccoli Pasta can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. The pasta will continue to absorb the sauce and thicken upon standing. To reheat, gently warm individual portions in the microwave or in a skillet

over low heat, adding a splash of milk or chicken broth to loosen the sauce and restore creaminess.

22. More Recipes You Will Love: If you loved the easy, comforting, and incredibly cheesy nature of this pasta dish, you'll find similar satisfaction in these other fantastic recipes:
23. For another easy weeknight solution, check out my This Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole is My Favorite One-Pan Dinner That's Always a Hit.
24. If you enjoy simple, crowd-pleasing comfort food, my This Dorito Casserole is My Favorite Weeknight Dinner Shortcut is a fantastic option.
25. And for a truly impressive yet simple pasta bake, check out This Instant Pot Lasagna is My Favorite Way to Make Comfort Food Fast.

SWAPS & NOTES

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Al Dente Pasta: Cook the pasta only until al dente.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/creamy-bacon-chicken-broccoli-pasta-easy-one-pan-meal/>