

Creamy Tuscan Salmon with Garlic Penne: An Italian-Inspired Feast

Tuscan Salmon with Creamy Garlic Penne: A Taste of Italy for Your Dinner Table



TIME
4-5 min

TEMP
145°F

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

INGREDIENTS

4 salmon fillets (skin-on or skinless, as preferred), about 6 oz each
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and black pepper, to taste
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
12 oz penne pasta
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 ½ cups heavy cream
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for a subtle kick)
1 cup fresh baby spinach
½ cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped (oil-packed, drained)
Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
Extra Parmesan, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** 1. Cook the Penne Pasta: Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a rolling boil. Add the 12 oz penne pasta and cook according to package instructions until al dente (cooked but still firm to the bite). Drain the pasta well and set aside. Reserve about ½ cup of the pasta cooking water, just in case you need to thin the sauce later.
- 2.** 2. Season and Sear the Salmon: While the pasta cooks, pat your salmon fillets very dry with paper towels. This helps ensure a crispy skin. Season both sides of the salmon generously with salt, black pepper, and 1 teaspoon of Italian seasoning. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large skillet (one that can comfortably fit all four salmon fillets) over medium-high heat. Once the oil is shimmering and hot, carefully place the salmon fillets in the skillet, skin-side down first (if using skin-on). Sear for 4-5 minutes per side, or until the salmon is golden brown, flaky, and cooked through. The internal temperature should reach 145°F (63°C). Remove the seared salmon from the pan and set it aside on a plate.
- 3.** 3. Prepare the Creamy Garlic Sauce Base: In the same skillet (no need to clean it, the leftover salmon bits add flavor!), reduce the heat to medium. Add the 3 tablespoons of unsalted butter and let it melt. Add the 4 cloves minced garlic and sauté for about 1 minute, stirring constantly, until fragrant. Be careful not to let the garlic burn.
- 4.** 4. Build the Cream Sauce: Pour in the 1 ½ cups heavy cream. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Stir in the 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese and the ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes (if using). Let the sauce simmer

gently for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until it has slightly thickened.

5. 5. Add Vegetables: Stir in the 1 cup fresh baby spinach and the ½ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes. Continue stirring until the spinach wilts down into the sauce.
6. 6. Combine with Pasta: Add the cooked penne pasta to the skillet with the creamy sauce. Toss everything together, using tongs or two large spoons, until the pasta is thoroughly coated in the rich Tuscan-style sauce. If the sauce seems too thick, add a tablespoon or two of the reserved pasta cooking water until it reaches your desired consistency.
7. 7. Serve: Carefully place the pan-seared salmon fillets on top of the creamy penne pasta in the skillet or on individual plates. Garnish generously with fresh chopped parsley and extra grated Parmesan cheese. Serve warm and savor every delicious bite!

SWAPS & NOTES

Salmon Fillets: Fresh or thawed frozen salmon fillets work well.

If using skin-on, ensure you get a good crisp on the skin during searing.

Other flaky white fish like cod or halibut could be substituted, but adjust cooking times.

Pasta: Penne is perfect for holding the creamy sauce, but fettuccine, rigatoni, or even spaghetti could be used.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Dry Salmon for Sear: Patting the salmon fillets very dry before seasoning ensures a beautiful, crispy sear.

Don't Overcook Salmon: Salmon cooks quickly.

Cook until it just flakes easily with a fork to keep it moist and tender.

Warm Broth for Pasta (if used for thinning): If you need to thin the sauce, use warm pasta cooking water.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/creamy-tuscan-salmon-with-garlic-penne-an-italian-inspired-feast/>