

Creamy Cajun Chicken Linguine with Mozzarella Garlic Sauce: Ultimate Comfort!

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TIME
6-8 min

TEMP
165°F

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SAVE
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INGREDIENTS

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 pound linguine pasta
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 cloves garlic, minced
... cup all-purpose flour
3 cups whole milk
1 cup chicken broth
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Optional: red pepper flakes for extra heat

DIRECTIONS

1. Season Chicken: In a medium bowl, toss the bite-sized chicken pieces with 2 tablespoons olive oil, 2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning, and 1 teaspoon smoked paprika. Ensure the chicken is evenly coated.
2. Cook Linguine: Cook the linguine pasta according to package instructions until al dente (cooked but still firm to the bite). Drain well and set aside.
3. Cook Chicken: While the pasta is cooking, heat a large skillet (one that can comfortably hold the pasta later) over medium-high heat. Add the seasoned chicken. Cook for about 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is golden brown on all sides and cooked through (internal temperature reaches 165°F / 74°C). Remove the chicken from the skillet and set it aside.
4. Start the Garlic Cream Sauce (Roux): In the same skillet (no need to clean it; the browned bits add flavor!), reduce the heat to medium. Add the 4 tablespoons of unsalted butter and let it melt. Add the 4 cloves minced garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Whisk in the ... cup all-purpose flour and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly, to create a roux. This will thicken your sauce and remove the raw flour taste.
5. Build the Cream Sauce: Gradually whisk in the 3 cups whole milk and 1 cup chicken broth until the mixture is smooth and lump-free. Bring the sauce to a gentle simmer, stirring occasionally, and let it cook for 3-5 minutes until it begins to thicken.
6. Add Cheeses to Sauce: Reduce the heat to low. Stir in the 8 ounces softened cream cheese until it is completely melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy.

Add 1 ½ cups of the shredded mozzarella cheese and the ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese. Stir constantly until the cheese is melted and fully incorporated, and the sauce is wonderfully creamy and smooth. Season the sauce generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Add optional red pepper flakes, if desired, for extra heat.

7. 7. Combine Pasta & Chicken: Add the cooked linguine and the cooked chicken back into the skillet with the creamy, cheesy sauce. Toss everything gently but thoroughly until the pasta and chicken are evenly coated with the luscious Cajun sauce.
8. 8. Prepare for Broiling: Transfer the pasta and chicken mixture into a large oven-safe serving dish or casserole dish. Sprinkle the remaining ½ cup of shredded mozzarella cheese evenly over the top.
9. 9. Broil (Optional Finish): Preheat your oven broiler. Place the dish under the broiler for 2-3 minutes, watching carefully, or until the cheese is melted, bubbly, and lightly golden brown.
10. 10. Serve: Serve immediately and savor the creamy, cheesy, and boldly Cajun delight!

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken: Boneless, skinless chicken breasts are great for quick cooking, but chicken thighs (cut into bite-sized pieces) can also be used for extra juiciness.

Cajun Seasoning: The spice level of Cajun seasoning can vary widely between brands.

Adjust the quantity to your preference.

For extra heat, add a pinch of cayenne pepper .

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Pound Chicken Evenly: If using thick chicken breasts, pounding them to an even $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thickness ensures quick and even cooking.

Whisk Roux Continuously: When adding flour and then liquids, whisk constantly to prevent lumps in your sauce.

Softened Cream Cheese: This is crucial for a smooth, lump-free cheese sauce.

Don't Overcook Pasta: Cook pasta to al dente as it will finish cooking in the hot sauce and during broiling.

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

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