

Chicken Bacon Ranch Pasta: Your New Go-To Creamy Dinner

Why This Recipe is a Favorite



TIME
6-8 min

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INGREDIENTS

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
6 strips bacon
2 cups uncooked pasta (rotini, penne, rigatoni, or bow tie)
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt and black pepper to taste
Sauce and Seasonings:
1 ½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
2 cups half and half or whole milk
2 tablespoons dry ranch dressing seasoning mix
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder (optional, for extra kick)
1/4 teaspoon onion powder (optional, for extra kick)
Fresh parsley or chives, chopped, for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Cook : Pasta:** Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside.
- 2. Cook : Bacon:** While the pasta is cooking, place the bacon strips in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook until crispy. Remove the bacon, place on a paper towel-lined plate to drain, and crumble once cooled. Leave about 1 tablespoon of bacon grease in the skillet for flavor.
- 3. Cook : Chicken:** Season the chicken breasts on both sides with salt and pepper. Place them in the same skillet with the bacon grease. Cook for 6-8 minutes per side, or until cooked through and golden brown. Remove from the skillet, let rest for a few minutes, then dice or shred.
- 4. Make the : Sauce:** Reduce the heat to low. Pour the half and half or whole milk into the skillet. Whisk in the dry ranch dressing seasoning mix, garlic powder, and onion powder (if using). Gently simmer for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly, until the sauce begins to thicken slightly.
- 5. Add : Cheese:** Gradually stir in the shredded cheddar cheese until it's completely melted and the sauce is smooth and creamy.
- 6. Combine & : Serve:** Return the cooked pasta, diced chicken, and crumbled bacon to the skillet with the sauce. Toss everything to combine and coat evenly. Let it simmer for another minute to heat through. Garnish with fresh parsley or chives if desired. Serve immediately.

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken: Boneless, skinless chicken thighs can be used for a more tender, juicier result.

A store-bought rotisserie chicken is also a great shortcut—just shred and add at the end.

Bacon: Thick-cut bacon adds more texture and flavor, but any bacon will do.

You can also use pre-cooked bacon bits to save time.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Cook in Stages: Don't try to cook everything all at once.

Cooking the bacon first and using some of its grease for the chicken adds a fantastic layer of flavor.

Don't Overcook the Sauce: The sauce will thicken as it cools, so don't feel the need to reduce it too much on the stove.

Shred Your Own Cheese: Freshly shredded cheese melts much better than pre-shredded cheese, which often contains anti-caking agents that can make the sauce grainy.

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