

Rotel Pasta: The Ultimate Cheesy Weeknight Dinner Shortcut

Creamy Rotel Pasta Skillet: The Cheesy, Beefy Weeknight Hero



TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

Swaps and Notes:

Protein: Swap the ground beef for ground turkey, Italian sausage (adds great fennel flavor), or even shredded chicken (if you happen to have some leftover from making my Easy Cheesy Chicken Sliders with Marinara Garlic Butter).

Cheese: Sharp Cheddar is my favorite for flavor, but a Colby Jack blend or a Monterey Jack works great, too. For the ultimate creamy texture, use a block of Velveeta, cut into cubes, and melt that in instead of shredded cheese.

Spice Level: If you prefer it milder, use a can of diced tomatoes and one small can of diced green chilies separately. For more heat, add a pinch of cayenne pepper or a dash of your favorite hot sauce.

Directions (The Easy Way):

Cook the Pasta: Cook your pasta according to the package directions, but aim for slightly underdone (al dente). Drain the pasta and set it aside.

Brown the Beef: In a large skillet (I recommend a 12-inch cast iron or non-stick), cook the ground beef with the diced onion over medium-high heat until the beef is fully browned. Drain off any excess fat-this prevents a greasy sauce.

Add Aromatics: Stir in the minced garlic and cook for about 1 minute until fragrant.

Simmer the Base: Pour in the Rotel (undrained), the tomato sauce, chili powder, paprika, salt, and

pepper. Stir well and let the mixture simmer for 5 minutes. This allows the spices to bloom and the flavors to deepen.

Make it Creamy: Pour in the heavy cream and stir continuously until the sauce is smooth and combined. Reduce the heat to low.

Cheese Time: Add the shredded cheddar cheese (or cubed Velveeta) to the sauce. Stir until the cheese is completely melted and the sauce is lusciously creamy. Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary.

Combine and Serve: Toss the drained, cooked pasta into the creamy sauce until every piece is fully coated. Serve immediately, garnished with fresh parsley or sliced green onions.

DIRECTIONS

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SWAPS & NOTES

Pasta (penne, rotini, or favorite) 12 oz Cooked al dente-it

finishes cooking in the sauce.

Ground Beef (or Italian Sausage) 1 lb Drain the fat well for the best flavor.

Small Onion 1, diced Adds a necessary aromatic base.

Garlic 3 cloves, minced Do not skip the garlic!

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overcook the Pasta: Remember, the pasta will cook a little more once it's tossed into the hot sauce.

Pull it from the water when it's still firm to the bite.

Drain the Fat: This is a non-negotiable step.

If you leave the rendered fat from the beef, your final sauce will be slick, greasy, and just not as appetizing.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/rotel-pasta-the-ultimate-cheesy-weeknight-dinner-shortcut/>