

## Better Than Restaurants: Cheesy Cajun Chicken Pasta with Garlic Alfredo

Cajun Chicken Pasta with Alfredo and Mixed Cheese



**TIME**  
**4-5 min**

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### INGREDIENTS

To Prepare the Cajun Chicken:

1.25 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning (choose your favorite brand)

1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika

Salt and black pepper to taste

For the Penne Pasta and 4-Cheese Sauce:

350 grams penne pasta

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup chicken broth

1 cup heavy cream

113 grams (4 oz) Velveeta cheese, cubed

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

1/2 cup Mozzarella cheese, shredded

1/2 cup Sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

1/2 cup reserved pasta water (as needed)

Optional Garnish:

Fresh parsley, chopped

Extra Parmesan cheese

A light dusting of Cajun seasoning

### DIRECTIONS

- 1. Boil the Pasta:** Start by bringing a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the penne and cook according to the package instructions until al dente. **Crucial Tip:** Before you drain the pasta, scoop out about half a cup of the starchy pasta water. This "liquid gold" is the secret to getting your sauce to the perfect consistency later. Drain the rest and set the pasta aside.
- 2. Sear the Cajun Chicken:** While the pasta is cooking, pat your chicken pieces dry with paper towels. Toss them in a bowl with the Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken in a single layer and cook until golden brown and cooked through (about 4-5 minutes). Remove the chicken from the pan and set it aside on a plate.
- 3. Build the Garlic Alfredo Base:** In the same skillet (don't wash it!), melt the butter. Stir in the minced garlic and cook for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Pour in the chicken broth and heavy cream. Use a wooden spoon to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan—that's where the flavor lives!
- 4. The Four-Cheese Melt:** Turn the heat down to medium-low. Add the Velveeta cubes first, stirring until melted. Once smooth, whisk in the Parmesan, Mozzarella, and Cheddar. Continue stirring until the sauce is thick, creamy, and bubbly. If it looks too thick, stir in a splash of that reserved pasta water. Add the red pepper flakes now if you want that extra kick.
- 5. Combine and Serve:** Toss the cooked penne into the cheese sauce, ensuring every tube is coated. Fold in

the cooked Cajun chicken. Let it sit for one minute so the pasta absorbs some of the sauce.

## SWAPS & NOTES

**The Pasta:** While I recommend penne for its ability to hold the thick sauce, you could easily swap this for fettuccine or even rotini.

If you prefer a more traditional Italian base, check out my classic spaghetti recipe.

**The Spice:** Cajun seasoning varies in salt content.

If your seasoning is very salty, reduce the extra salt added to the chicken.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**Don't Overcook the Garlic:** Garlic burns quickly and becomes bitter.

Only sauté it until you can smell it, then immediately add your liquids.

**Freshly Grated Cheese:** For the best melt, grate your Parmesan and Cheddar from a block.

Pre-shredded cheeses are coated in potato starch to prevent clumping, which can make your Alfredo sauce grainy.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/better-than-restaurants-cheesy-cajun-chicken-pasta-with-garlic-alfredo/>