

Easy Weeknight Dinner: Creamy Pesto Chicken Pasta Bake in Under 30 Minutes

There's nothing quite like a



CREAMY PESTO
CHICKEN PASTA BAKE

OVEN
375°F

TIME
20 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb pasta (penne or rotini work best)
- 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken
- 1 cup pesto sauce
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Preheat the Oven:
2. Cook the Pasta:
3. Mix the Creamy Pesto Sauce:
 - Shredded chicken
 - Pesto sauce
 - Heavy cream
 - Garlic powder
 - Italian seasoning
 - Salt and pepper
4. Assemble the Pasta Bake:
5. Bake Until Golden & Bubbly:
6. Serve & Enjoy:

Pro Tips for the Best Pesto Chicken Pasta Bake:

Use high-quality pesto - A good, fresh pesto (or homemade) makes a big difference in flavor.

For extra cheesiness, mix some mozzarella into the pasta before baking.

Want a crispy top? Broil the dish for the last 2-3 minutes for an extra golden finish.

Make it ahead of time - Assemble everything in the baking dish, cover, and refrigerate for up to 24 hours before baking.

Swap the protein - Try shrimp, Italian sausage, or even roasted veggies for a different twist.

What to Serve with This Pasta Bake:

A simple side salad with balsamic vinaigrette

Garlic bread to scoop up all that creamy pesto goodness

Roasted vegetables like zucchini, asparagus, or cherry tomatoes

FAQs (From My Kitchen to Yours):

Why You Need to Make This Pasta Bake Tonight:

DIRECTIONS

1. **Preheat the Oven:** I preheat my oven to 375°F (190°C) so it's ready when the pasta goes in.
2. **Cook the Pasta:** While the oven heats, I cook the pasta according to package instructions, making sure to keep it slightly al dente since it will continue cooking in the oven. Once done, I drain it and set it aside.
3. **Mix the Creamy Pesto Sauce:** In a large mixing bowl, I combine:
 4. Shredded chicken
 5. Pesto sauce
 6. Heavy cream
 7. Garlic powder
 8. Italian seasoning
 9. Salt and pepper
10. I stir everything together, then toss in the cooked pasta, making sure it's well coated with the creamy pesto mixture.
11. **Assemble the Pasta Bake:** I transfer the pesto pasta mixture into a greased baking dish and spread it out evenly. Then, I sprinkle the shredded mozzarella and Parmesan cheese on top to create that irresistible cheesy crust.
12. **Bake Until Golden & Bubbly:** I bake for 20-25 minutes, until the cheese is melted, bubbly, and slightly golden on top.
13. **Serve & Enjoy:** After pulling it out of the oven, I let the pasta bake rest for 5 minutes before serving. For an extra touch, I garnish with fresh basil leaves or a sprinkle of red pepper flakes for a little heat.
14. **Pro Tips for the Best Pesto Chicken Pasta Bake:** Use

high-quality pesto - A good, fresh pesto (or homemade) makes a big difference in flavor.

15. For extra cheesiness, mix some mozzarella into the pasta before baking.
16. Want a crispy top? Broil the dish for the last 2-3 minutes for an extra golden finish.
17. Make it ahead of time - Assemble everything in the baking dish, cover, and refrigerate for up to 24 hours before baking.
18. Swap the protein - Try shrimp, Italian sausage, or even roasted veggies for a different twist.
19. What to Serve with This Pasta Bake: This dish is satisfying on its own, but if you want to round out your meal, I love pairing it with:
 20. A simple side salad with balsamic vinaigrette
 21. Garlic bread to scoop up all that creamy pesto goodness
 22. Roasted vegetables like zucchini, asparagus, or cherry tomatoes
23. FAQs (From My Kitchen to Yours): Q: Can I use a different type of pasta?A: Absolutely! Short pastas like fusilli, rigatoni, or farfalle work just as well.
24. Q: Can I make this dish lighter?A: Yes! Swap the heavy cream for half-and-half or Greek yogurt for a lighter version.
25. Q: Can I freeze leftovers?A: Definitely! Store leftovers in an airtight container and freeze for up to 3 months. Reheat in the oven at 350°F (175°C) until warm.

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

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/easy-weeknight-dinner-creamy-pesto-chicken-pasta-bake-in-under-30-minutes/>