

The Ultimate Slow Cooker Cheesy Chicken and Broccoli Pasta

The Ultimate Crockpot Chicken & Broccoli Pasta and Cheese



TIME
30 min

METHOD
Slow cooker

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INGREDIENTS

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast: Cut into 1-inch cubes for even cooking.

5 cups fresh broccoli florets: Bite-sized pieces work best.

8 oz small shell pasta: Shells are perfect for "catching" the cheese sauce.

8 oz shredded cheddar cheese: I recommend sharp cheddar for the best flavor.

4 oz cream cheese: This provides that ultra-creamy, velvety finish.

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups whole milk: For a rich, luscious sauce.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth: Adds savory depth and helps cook the pasta.

1 packet Ranch seasoning: The secret ingredient for a boost of herbs and tang.

1 tbsp minced garlic: Fresh is best, but jarred works in a pinch.

1 tsp dry mustard powder: This cuts through the richness and enhances the cheese flavor.

Swaps and Notes:

The Chicken: You can substitute chicken thighs for an even juicier result. If you are in a massive rush, you can even use pre-cooked rotisserie chicken-just add it in the last 30 minutes of cooking.

The Greens: If you don't have fresh broccoli, frozen works too! Just be aware that frozen broccoli may release more water, so you might want

to reduce the chicken broth by a tablespoon or two.

The Cheese: While cheddar is king here, a blend of Monterey Jack and cheddar makes for an incredible "cheese pull."

Step-by-Step Directions:

1. Prepare the Crockpot:
2. Combine Ingredients:
3. Cook to Perfection:

Low Heat: 4-5 hours

High Heat: 2-3 hours You'll know it's ready when the chicken is opaque and tender, and the pasta has absorbed the liquid to create a thick sauce.

4. The Final Stir:

Tips for Success:

Don't Overcook the Pasta: Every slow cooker runs at a different temperature. Start checking the pasta at the 2-hour mark (on high) or 4-hour mark (on low) to ensure it stays "al dente."

Even Cubing: Make sure your chicken cubes are roughly the same size so they cook at the same rate.

Freshly Shredded Cheese: If you have the time, shred your own cheese from a block. Pre-shredded cheese is coated in potato starch to prevent clumping, which can sometimes make slow cooker sauces slightly grainy.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information (Per Serving):

Calories: ~400 kcal

Protein: 28g

Carbohydrates: 32g

Fat: 18g

Servings: 6

Storage and Leftover Tips:

Fridge: Store leftovers in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Reheating: Pasta tends to soak up sauce as it sits. When reheating, add a splash of milk or water before microwaving to bring back that creamy consistency.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Prepare the Crockpot:** Spray the inside of your slow cooker with non-stick cooking spray. This is a crucial step for cheesy pasta dishes to ensure cleanup is a breeze later on.
2. **Combine Ingredients:** In the slow cooker, add the cubed chicken, broccoli florets, small shell pasta, shredded cheddar cheese, cream cheese, whole milk, chicken broth, Ranch seasoning, minced garlic, and dry mustard powder. Give everything a vigorous stir to ensure the Ranch seasoning and cream cheese are distributed.
3. **Cook to Perfection:** Cover the slow cooker and set your timer.
4. **Low :** Heat: 4-5 hours
5. **High :** Heat: 2-3 hours You'll know it's ready when the chicken is opaque and tender, and the pasta has absorbed the liquid to create a thick sauce.
6. **The Final Stir:** Once the time is up, give the mixture a good stir. The cream cheese will have melted into the milk and broth to form a decadent sauce. For an extra touch of indulgence, sprinkle a little more cheddar on top, replace the lid for 5 minutes, and let it melt.
7. **Tips for Success:** **Don't Overcook the Pasta:** Every slow cooker runs at a different temperature. Start checking the pasta at the 2-hour mark (on high) or 4-hour mark (on low) to ensure it stays "al dente."
8. **Even :** **Cubing:** Make sure your chicken cubes are roughly the same size so they cook at the same rate.
9. **Freshly :** **Shredded Cheese:** If you have the time, shred your own cheese from a block. Pre-shredded cheese is coated in potato starch to prevent clumping, which can

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10. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This dish is a powerhouse on its own, but it pairs beautifully with a light side. I love serving this alongside a crisp garden salad or some crusty garlic bread.
11. **If you're hosting a game day or a larger gathering,** this creamy pasta fits right in with other crowd-pleasing favorites like these Hot Chicken Enchiladas or a side of Crockpot Nacho Dip.
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19. **Freezing:** I do not recommend freezing this specific recipe, as the dairy-based sauce and pasta can change texture significantly once thawed.
20. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you enjoyed the convenience of this slow cooker meal, you have to try these other kitchen favorites:
21. **Instant : Pot Lasagna:** For when you want comfort food even faster.
22. **Sheet : Pan Quesadillas:** The ultimate way to feed a crowd with zero stress.
23. **Final Thoughts:** This Crockpot Chicken & Broccoli Pasta and Cheese has become a staple in my household, and I'm confident it will become one in yours too. It's the perfect blend of convenience and classic comfort.
24. **Did you try this recipe?** I'd love to hear how it turned out! Leave a comment below or share your photos with me on social media. Don't forget to follow Chefmaniac for more easy, delicious recipes delivered straight to your inbox!

SWAPS & NOTES

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Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/the-ultimate-slow-cooker-cheesy-chicken-and-broccoli-pasta/>