

Cajun Garlic Butter Steak Strips with Creamy Provolone Rigatoni

As a professional food writer for



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INGREDIENTS

12 oz Rigatoni Pasta: I prefer rigatoni because the large holes trap the creamy sauce.

1 lb Sirloin Steak: Cut into thin, bite-sized strips. Sirloin stays tender while getting a great sear.

4 tbsp Butter: Divided for searing the steak and building the sauce.

1 tbsp Olive Oil: Helps prevent the butter from burning at high heat.

5 cloves Garlic: Minced fresh for that pungent, aromatic base.

1 cup Heavy Cream & 1/2 cup Whole Milk: The foundation of our velvet sauce.

1 cup Shredded Provolone Cheese: The secret weapon for ultimate creaminess.

1/2 cup Grated Parmesan: For that salty, nutty finish.

Seasonings: Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, Italian seasoning, salt, and black pepper.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prep the : Pasta: Bring a large pot of water to a boil with 1 tbsp of salt. Cook the rigatoni according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside, but keep a splash of pasta water just in case you want to thin the sauce later.
2. SautØ the Garlic: In a large skillet, melt 2 tbsp of butter with the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the minced garlic and sautØ for 30 seconds until the kitchen smells amazing.
3. Sear the : Steak: Toss the steak strips into the skillet. Sprinkle with the Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Sear for 3-4 minutes. You want a dark crust but a juicy interior. Remove the steak to a plate.
4. Build the : Sauce: Lower the heat to medium. Melt the remaining 2 tbsp of butter. Pour in the heavy cream and milk, whisking gently.
5. Make it : Cheesy: Gradually stir in the provolone and Parmesan. Keep stirring until the cheese is fully melted and the sauce is bubbling softly.
6. Season: Whisk in the Italian seasoning, onion powder, and extra Cajun spice.
7. Combine: Fold the cooked rigatoni into the sauce, ensuring every tube is coated. Return the steak and any juices from the plate back into the pan. Toss gently.
8. Garnish: Finish with fresh parsley and an extra sprinkle of Parmesan.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Meat: If you aren't a fan of steak, this sauce works beautifully with blackened shrimp or chicken.

The Spice: Cajun seasonings vary in salt and heat content.

If you are sensitive to spice, start with 1 teaspoon and work your way up.

The Cheese: If you can't find provolone, a mild white cheddar or Fontina makes an excellent substitute.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overcook the Steak: Since the strips are thin, they cook fast.

A quick sear is all you need; they will continue to warm through once you add them back to the hot sauce.

Room Temp Dairy: To prevent the sauce from "breaking" or curdling, let your cream and milk sit on the counter for 10 minutes before adding them to the hot skillet.

The "Garnish" Factor: Never underestimate fresh parsley.

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