

BAKED CHICKEN PASTA

Here's the deal, some (very cold) days are just better with a cheesy baked pasta dish. Try this dish with any kind of pasta or type of canned tomatoes (sauce, diced, crushed) that you have available. You can even switch up the meat. And of course top with any of your favorite cheeses! The process and coziness stay the same.



Ingredients

- 4 chicken thighs
- 1 tbsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 15 oz can tomato sauce
- 1 box spaghetti
- 2 oz cream cheese
- 4 oz mozzarella cheese

From your pantry

- 1 onion
- 10 sprigs parsley
- oil
- salt and pepper

Equipment:

- Medium pot for pasta
- Oven safe saute pan (or saute pan and baking dish)

PREPARATION: 20 MIN

COOKING: 30 MIN

READY IN: 50 MIN

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Directions

Read through entire recipe before getting started.

Wash and dry all produce. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

1. Bring 6 cups salted water to a boil in a medium pot. Small dice **onion** and dice small. Chop **parsley** leaves and stems. Cut **chicken** into ½" pieces. Combine **chicken, Italian seasoning, garlic powder,** salt, and pepper in a medium bowl and toss until distributed.

2. Add pasta to boiling water and cook for 8-10 min until al dente. Reserve ¾ cup pasta water. Strain and set pasta aside. Begin searing chicken.

3. Heat 1 tsp. oil in medium sauté pan over medium heat. Add **chicken and onions** and sear until golden brown 3-4 min.
*Chicken will not be fully cooked at this point.

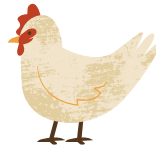
4. Add **tomato sauce** and ¾ cup reserved pasta water; bring to a simmer until chicken is fully cooked, about 6-8 min. Taste sauce and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper and/or sugar (sugar brings down the acidity in tomato-ey dishes)! Remove from heat and fold in **cream cheese** until melted.

5. Add spaghetti and toss until coated. Transfer mixture to baking dish if saute pan is not oven safe. Top with **mozzarella cheese** and bake for 10-12 min until cheese is bubbly. Garnish with parsley. Enjoy!

Bonus tip: try a 1/2 - 1 teaspoon baking soda in your tomato based dishes! Baking soda neutralizes some of the acidity much like sugar would balance it.

Tips, Tricks, and Terms

A CASE FOR CHICKEN THIGHS



Let's talk chicken thighs vs chicken breasts.

Flavor: Chicken thighs have more moisture and a little more fat. This translates to flavor when cooked. The fat content means thighs are great when cooked in sauces or stews because they absorb a lot of the flavor!

Price: the average price per lb of thighs is \$2.19 vs. the average price for breasts which is \$3.29

Environment: Chicken breast sales account for 57% of all chicken sales in the US. Chicken thighs are only 12.5%. Why does this matter? That means we produce a lot more chickens to fulfill the larger demand for chicken breasts. More than we need to when there are good thighs, drumsticks, wings, or ground meat to be enjoyed!

A little about...US!

We've had so much learning and creating these recipes for you at home. It has been an honor for us to be a part of your dinners. Thank you for taking us in and cooking with us. We hope the recipes have been yummy and you have learned a thing or two along the way!

We'd love to hear the things you enjoyed and see a pic of your food if you want to share!

Send your photos to info@eastsidetable.org or nicole@afcmn.org

*With so much love,
your recipe team.*



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