

Chicken Pasta Bake: Creamy Tomato and Penne Casserole

Tender chicken and al dente penne in a velvety tomato cream sauce



PREP
15 min

COOK
30 min

TOTAL
50 min

SERVES
6 people

CALORIES
680 kcal

Ingredients

- 300 g penne pasta
- 1 tbsp olive oil, 15 ml
- 1 medium onion, diced (150 g)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp dried oregano, 2 g
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning, 2 g
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes, optional
- 500 g boneless skinless chicken breast, cut into 1.5-inch cubes
- 1 cup tomato passata, 240 ml
- 1 cup heavy cream, 240 ml
- 1/2 cup frozen peas, 80 g optional
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, 240 ml
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese, 120 g
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley, 6 g for garnish

Instructions

1. Boil the pasta: Preheat your oven to 175°C (350°F). Cook the penne in salted boiling water for 7–8 minutes until just al dente. You must undercook the pasta slightly so it does not become mushy during the final bake.

2. Sauté the aromatics: Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté the diced onion for 3–4 minutes until translucent. Stir in the garlic, oregano, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper for 30 seconds until fragrant.
3. Brown the chicken: Increase heat to medium-high and add the chicken cubes. Cook for 7–8 minutes until the meat is browned and no longer pink in the centre. Ensure the internal temperature reaches 74°C (165°F) for safety.
4. Simmer the sauce: Pour in the tomato passata and reduce heat to low. Let the mixture simmer for 5 minutes. This allows the flavours to meld and the sauce to deepen in colour.
5. Combine all ingredients: Stir in the heavy cream, frozen peas, and cooked pasta. Toss until everything is evenly coated and the sauce thickens slightly. This ensures every piece of pasta is enveloped in the creamy tomato base.
6. Bake the dish: Transfer the mixture to a baking dish and sprinkle with mozzarella and parmesan. Bake for 20–25 minutes until the cheese is bubbly and golden brown. Remove from the oven and let it rest for 5 minutes before garnishing with parsley.

Notes

What to serve with it Pair this bake with a fresh green salad dressed in lemon juice and olive oil to cut through the rich sauce. Serve warm, buttery garlic bread on the side for dipping. For a Mediterranean touch, drizzle each portion with extra-virgin olive oil and a sprinkle of dried oregano before serving.

Storing and reheating Keep leftovers in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 4 days or freeze in a freezer-safe dish for 3 months. Reheat in the oven at 175°C (350°F) until hot. This ensures the cheese maintains its texture without the pasta becoming soggy or dry.