# Chicken Pasta Primavera: Italian Vegetable Pasta

Fresh spring vegetables and creamy garlic sauce for a balanced dinner



| PREP | COOK | TOTAL | SERVES | CALORIES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 min | 25 min | 42 min | 4 servings | 640 kcal |

## Ingredients

- 2 cups penne pasta
- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite--size cubes
- 2 tbsp extra--virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup sliced zucchini, about 1 small zucchini
- 1 cup chopped asparagus, about 6 spears
- 1 cup frozen or fresh peas
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 tsp smoked paprika, optional

## Instructions

1. Cook the pasta: Boil a large pot of salted water. Cook the penne according to package instructions until al dente so the pasta retains a firm bite. Drain the pasta and reserve 1/2 cup of the water to adjust the sauce consistency later.
2. Sear the chicken: Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium--high heat. Season the chicken cubes with salt and pepper. Cook for 5--6 minutes, turning occasionally, until the meat is golden brown and cooked through.

3. Sauté the aromatics: Remove the chicken from the skillet. Add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil, then stir in the sliced onion and minced garlic. Sauté for 2 minutes until the onion softens and the garlic becomes fragrant.
4. Cook the vegetables: Add the zucchini, asparagus, and peas to the skillet. Stir occasionally for 4--5 minutes. Stop when the vegetables are tender but remain bright green and slightly crisp to preserve their colour and texture.
5. Thicken the sauce: Return the chicken to the skillet. Stir in the heavy cream and Parmesan. Simmer for 2--3 minutes until the sauce thickens slightly to coat the ingredients properly.
6. Combine and finish: Season with smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Toss in the drained penne and cook for one more minute. The pasta must be evenly coated in the creamy sauce to ensure a balanced flavour in every bite.
7. Rest the dish: Remove the skillet from the heat. Let the meal rest for a minute or two. This allows the residual heat to finish the vegetables and lets the flavours meld together.

## Notes

What to serve with itPair this meal with a crusty loaf of bread to soak up the creamy sauce. A simple green salad or garlic bread provides a balanced meal. For a bright finish, drizzle lemon-infused olive oil over the finished plate or top with toasted pine nuts for a crunchy contrast and extra protein.

Storing and reheatingKeep leftovers in the refrigerator. Do not store this dish at room temperature. To reheat, place individual portions in the microwave for 2-3 minutes. Stir the pasta halfway through the process to ensure the sauce is heated evenly throughout. Use frozen portions within 2 months for the best quality.

Getting the texture rightReserve 120 ml (1/2 cup) of pasta water before draining. Use this starchy liquid to thin the sauce if the cream reduces too much during the simmer. This ensures the sauce coats the penne smoothly. Let the dish rest for two minutes before serving to allow the flavours to meld.

Choosing the cutUse 450 g (1 lb) of boneless, skinless chicken breast cut into bite-size cubes. Sear the meat quickly over medium-high heat for 5-6 minutes. Avoid overcooking the chicken during the initial brown, as the meat will finish cooking when you return it to the simmering cream sauce later.