

Chicken Pasta With Red Sauce: Italian Tomato Pasta

Tender chicken and penne tossed in a thick savoury tomato base



PREP
10 min

COOK
25 min

TOTAL
35 min

SERVES
4 servings

CALORIES
480 kcal

Ingredients

- 250 g dry penne pasta, 8 oz
- 450 g boneless skinless chicken breast, 1 lb, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 240 ml crushed tomatoes, 1 cup, from 28 oz can
- 8 oz tomato sauce, 1 cup, from 28 oz can
- 120 ml low-fat milk or water, 1/2 cup, to adjust thickness
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp dried Italian seasoning, basil, oregano, thyme blend
- 1/2 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp black pepper, or to taste
- 50 g grated Parmesan cheese, 1/2 cup, plus extra for serving

Instructions

1. Cook the pasta: Boil a large pot of water with 2 tbsp of sea salt. Cook the penne for 8–10 minutes until al dente. Drain the pasta but reserve one cup of the starchy water to help emulsify the sauce later.
2. Brown the chicken: Pat the chicken dry and season it with salt and black pepper. Heat olive oil and butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté the pieces for 5–6 minutes until they reach an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) and look golden brown.

3. Sauté the aromatics: Remove the chicken from the skillet to keep it warm. Add the diced onion and cook for 3–4 minutes until translucent. Stir in the minced garlic for 30 seconds until fragrant to avoid burning the garlic, which creates a bitter taste.
4. Simmer the sauce: Stir in the crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, red pepper flakes, and Italian seasoning. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 8–10 minutes. This allows the flavours to concentrate and the sauce to thicken.
5. Combine the elements: Return the cooked chicken to the skillet and stir in half the Parmesan cheese. Add a splash of the reserved pasta water if the sauce feels too heavy. This loosens the texture so the sauce clings better to the pasta.
6. Finish and serve: Toss the drained pasta into the skillet and warm together for 2 minutes. This ensures the pasta reabsorbs some moisture for a cohesive flavour. Serve hot with extra Parmesan and fresh basil leaves.

Notes

What to serve with it Serve this pasta with toasted ciabatta or baguette spread with garlic butter. For a more balanced meal, add a side of roasted Brussels sprouts or sautéed spinach. You can also drizzle the pasta with a light olive oil vinaigrette and place it over mixed greens to add freshness and colour.

Storing and reheating Place leftovers in an airtight container and refrigerate within 2 hours. Consume the dish within 4 days. For long term storage, use a freezer-safe bag or container for up to 3 months. Thaw the pasta overnight in the fridge before reheating to maintain the texture of the chicken.