

Treasure Barrel

Easy Garlic Parmesan Chicken Pasta Recipe for Healthy Dinner

10 min Prep time	**20 min** Cook time	**30 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Easy** Difficulty	**Italian-American** Cuisine

Ingredients

For the Pasta and Chicken

- [ ] 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch cubes
- [ ] 8 oz fettuccine or your favorite pasta
- [ ] 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- [ ] 1 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- [ ] 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish

For the Garlic Parmesan Sauce

- [ ] 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- [ ] 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- [ ] 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- [ ] 1 cup reserved starchy pasta water
- [ ] 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for a little warmth)

Instructions

1. First, let's get the pasta water going. Fill a large pot with water, salt it generously—it should taste like the ocean—and bring it to a rolling boil. Once it's boiling, add your pasta and cook according to the package directions until it's al dente, which means it still has a little bite. Before you drain it, make sure to scoop out at least 1-2 cups of that starchy water. It's the secret ingredient for our sauce! This step feels like the foundation for all simple suppers.

2. While the pasta is happily cooking away, we'll turn our attention to the chicken. Pat your chicken cubes completely dry with a paper towel, then season them generously with salt and pepper. In a large skillet or pan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter with the olive oil over medium-high heat. Once the butter is foaming, add the chicken in a single layer. Let it cook without moving it for a few minutes to get a beautiful golden crust, then flip and cook the other side until it's cooked through. Remove the chicken from the pan and set it aside on a plate for later.

3. Now, in that same skillet, reduce the heat to medium-low and add the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter. Once it's melted, add your sliced garlic and the optional red pepper flakes. Let the garlic toast gently for about a minute or two, stirring constantly. You want it to become incredibly fragrant and just barely golden, not brown. If it burns, it'll be bitter, so keep a close eye on it. This is the moment the whole kitchen starts to smell like pure comfort.

4 Time to build the sauce! Add about 1 cup of the reserved pasta water to the skillet with the garlic butter, bringing it to a gentle simmer. Using tongs, transfer the cooked pasta directly into the skillet. Remove the pan from the heat completely, then add the grated Parmesan cheese. Toss everything together vigorously—this is what creates the creamy, emulsified sauce. The cheese will melt into the pasta water, creating a glossy coating for the noodles. Add the cooked chicken back into the pan, toss once more to combine, and garnish with fresh parsley before serving.

Nutrition per serving

580 kcal	38 g	50 g	25 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- Don’t be shy with the pasta water! It seems simple, but the starches in the water are essential for creating a smooth, creamy sauce that clings to the pasta beautifully. It’s always better to reserve more than you think you’ll need. You can add it splash by splash until the sauce reaches your desired consistency.
- The quality of your Parmesan cheese really shines through in this simple dish. I find that grating a block of Parmigiano-Reggiano myself results in a much smoother, more flavorful sauce compared to the pre-shredded kind. It melts like a dream and gives the dish that authentic, nutty flavor we all love.
- Feel free to adjust the amount of garlic to your personal taste. I love a strong garlic flavor, but you can definitely scale it back to 3 or 4 cloves if you prefer a more subtle hint. The key is to slice it thinly and toast it gently in the butter to bring out its sweetness without any bitterness.