- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 15 minutes
- Total Time: 25 minutes
- Yield: 4 servings
- Recipe Intensity (Difficulty): Easy / Beginner-Friendly
- Cooking Technique Intensity: Medium-High (Pan-Searing & Fast Sauté)

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Equipment Needed

- Large cast-iron skillet or heavy-bottomed stainless steel pan
- Tongs
- Instant-read meat thermometer
- Cutting board and sharp knife

Ingredients

For the Chicken:

- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1.5 lbs / 680g total), sliced horizontally to make 4 thin cutlets
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp smoked paprika

- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter

For the Tomatoes, Spinach & Sauce:

- 2 cups cherry or grape tomatoes, left whole or halved
- 4 cups fresh baby spinach leaves, rinsed and dried
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- ¼ cup high-quality balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp honey or maple syrup (optional, for added glaze richness)
- ¼ cup chicken bone broth or low-sodium chicken broth
- Fresh basil leaves, chiffonade (for garnish)

- 2 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese or crumbled feta (optional garnish)

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prepare and Season the Chicken

1. Place the chicken breasts flat on a cutting board. Lay your hand flat on top of one breast and carefully slice through the center horizontally using a sharp chef's knife to create two thinner cutlets. Repeat with the second breast. Pat all cutlets dry thoroughly with paper towels.

2. In a small bowl, combine the Italian seasoning, garlic powder, smoked paprika, salt, and black pepper.

3. Season both sides of the chicken cutlets evenly with the spice mixture.

Step 2: Sear the Chicken (Medium-High Heat)

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the butter is melted and shimmering.

2. Place the chicken cutlets in the skillet in a single layer. Sear for 4 to 5 minutes on the first side without moving them, allowing a deep, golden-brown crust to form.

3. Flip the cutlets with tongs and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes on the second side, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part reads 165°F (74°C).

4. Transfer the cooked chicken cutlets to a warm plate and tent loosely with aluminum foil to rest while preparing the vegetables and sauce.

Step 3: Blister the Tomatoes & Aromatics (Medium Heat)

1. In the same skillet (do not wipe it clean, as the browned bits on the bottom hold rich flavor), lower the intensity to medium heat.

2. Add the minced garlic and cherry tomatoes to the pan. Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the garlic becomes fragrant and the skins of the tomatoes begin to blister and burst slightly.

Step 4: Build the Balsamic Deglaze

1. Pour in the balsamic vinegar and chicken broth, using a wooden spoon to scrape up any browned bits stuck to the bottom of the skillet.

2. Stir in the honey (if using). Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes until the liquid slightly reduces and starts to thicken into a silky glaze.

Step 5: Wilt the Spinach & Assemble

1. Add the fresh baby spinach to the skillet in batches. Gently toss it with the simmering balsamic sauce and tomatoes using tongs for 1 to 2 minutes until the spinach just begins to wilt and turn bright green.

2. Nestled the seared chicken breasts and any accumulated juices from the plate back into the skillet. Spoon the warm balsamic tomato and spinach sauce over the top of each cutlet.

3. Let everything simmer together for 1 minute so the flavors marry completely. Remove from heat.

Step 6: Garnish & Serve

1. Sprinkle with fresh basil and optional grated Parmesan cheese or crumbled feta right before serving.

2. Serve warm straight from the skillet.

Chef’s Tips & Flavor Variations

- Thin Cutlets Cook Evenly: Slicing thick chicken breasts into thin cutlets ensures quick, even cooking without drying out the meat. If your cutlets are uneven in thickness, gently pound them between two sheets of parchment paper to a uniform ½-inch thickness.

- Choosing Balsamic Vinegar: Use a good-quality, slightly aged balsamic vinegar. Higher-quality balsamic has natural sweetness and density that thickens easily without becoming harsh or acidic.

- Make It Creamy: Stir in 2 tablespoons of heavy cream or full-fat coconut milk at Step 4

alongside the balsamic vinegar for a rich, creamy balsamic reduction.

- Add Mozzarella: Top each chicken cutlet with a slice of fresh mozzarella cheese during the last minute of cooking, covering the pan with a lid so the cheese melts beautifully over the meat.

Storage & Reheating

- Refrigeration: Store leftover chicken and vegetables together in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 to 4 days.

- Reheating: Reheat gently in a skillet over low-medium heat with a splash of water or broth until warmed through. Alternatively, microwave on medium power in 30-second intervals to avoid toughening the chicken.

- Freezing: This dish can be frozen in a meal prep container for up to 2 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator before reheating.

Nutritional Information

(Estimated per serving — based on 4 equal portions)

- Calories: 285 kcal

- Total Fat: 10g

    - Saturated Fat: 3.5g
    - Trans Fat: 0g
    - Unsaturated Fat: 5.5g
- Cholesterol: 95mg
- Sodium: 580mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 9g
    - Dietary Fiber: 2g
    - Sugars: 6g (natural sugars from tomatoes and balsamic)
- Protein: 39g
- Vitamin A: 45% DV
- Vitamin C: 35% DV
- Calcium: 8% DV
- Iron: 15% DV