Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Total time: 40 minutes
Intensity: Easy–Moderate (one-pan skillet cooking; requires attention when building the sauce)

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Ingredients

For the chicken:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 6 oz / 170 g each), pounded to an even ¾-inch thickness

- 1 tsp fine sea salt
- ½ tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 2 tbsp olive oil (for searing)

For the garlic butter cream sauce:

- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 8 cloves garlic, finely minced (about 3 tbsp)
- ½ cup dry white wine (or chicken broth)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

- ½ tsp dried Italian herbs
- ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for gentle heat)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

To finish:

- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- Extra Parmesan, for serving

Equipment

- Large heavy-bottomed skillet or cast-iron pan (12-inch)
- Meat mallet or rolling pin
- Instant-read thermometer
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula

Instructions

Step 1 — Prep the chicken (5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Pat the chicken breasts completely dry with paper towels — dry surface equals better sear. Pound each breast to an even ¾-inch thickness so they cook uniformly. Season both sides generously with salt, pepper, smoked paprika, and garlic powder. Let them sit at room temperature for 10 minutes while you mince the garlic and grate the Parmesan.

Step 2 — Sear the chicken (8–10 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

Heat the olive oil in the skillet over medium-high heat (about 375°F / 190°C) until it shimmers. Lay the chicken in the pan without crowding — work in two batches if needed. Sear undisturbed for 4–5 minutes per side until a deep golden crust forms and the internal temperature reaches 160°F (71°C). The chicken will finish cooking in the sauce. Transfer to a plate and tent loosely with foil. *Do not wipe the pan* — those browned bits are flavor.

Step 3 — Bloom the garlic (1–2 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Lower the heat to medium (325°F / 165°C). Add the butter to the pan and let it melt, scraping up the browned bits. Add the minced garlic and cook 60–90 seconds, stirring constantly, until fragrant and just barely golden. Watch closely — garlic goes from golden to bitter in under 30 seconds.

Step 4 — Deglaze (2 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Pour in the white wine and simmer 1–2 minutes, scraping the bottom of the pan, until reduced by half and the sharp alcohol smell cooks off. The pan should look glossy, not dry.

Step 5 — Build the cream sauce (5–7 minutes | Intensity: Medium-Low)

Stir in the chicken broth, then the heavy cream, Italian herbs, and red pepper flakes. Bring to a gentle simmer — do not boil hard, or the cream may split. Simmer 3–4 minutes until slightly thickened. Whisk in the Parmesan one handful at a time until fully melted and silky. Taste and adjust salt and pepper.

Step 6 — Finish the chicken (4–5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Return the chicken and any resting juices to the skillet. Spoon sauce over the tops and simmer gently 4–5 minutes until the chicken reaches 165°F (74°C) and the sauce coats the back of a spoon. If the sauce tightens too much, loosen with a splash of broth.

Step 7 — Rest and serve (3 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Off the heat, scatter fresh parsley over the top. Let the dish rest 3 minutes so the sauce settles. Serve over pasta, mashed potatoes, or crusty bread to catch every drop of sauce.

Chef’s Notes & Troubleshooting

- Sauce too thin? Simmer 1–2 minutes longer, or whisk in 1 tsp cornstarch slurried in 1 tbsp cold water.
- Sauce too thick? Add chicken broth 1 tbsp at a time.
- Sauce looks grainy? The heat was too high. Whisk vigorously off the heat; a splash of warm broth usually rescues it.

- Make-ahead: Sear the chicken up to 1 day ahead; refrigerate. Build the sauce fresh and reheat the chicken gently in it.

- No wine? Use equal parts chicken broth with 1 tsp lemon juice.

Nutrition (per serving — 1 chicken breast with sauce)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	~510 kcal
Protein	42 g
Total Fat	33 g
— Saturated Fat	18 g
Carbohydrates	6 g
— Fiber	0.5 g
— Sugars	1 g
Cholesterol	165 mg
Sodium	~720 mg