

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
  - Cook Time: 20 minutes
  - Total Time: 30 minutes
  - Course: Main Course
  - Cuisine: Italian-American
  - Servings: 4 people
  - Calories: ~620 kcal per serving
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## Table of Contents

- ◆
- [Ingredients](#)
- [Equipment](#)
- [Instructions](#)
- [Recipe Notes & Tips](#)
- [Nutrition Information \(Per Serving, Based on 4 Servings\)](#)

## Ingredients

For the Pasta & Protein:

- 12 oz (340g) penne pasta (regular or gluten-free)
- 2 medium boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 lb / 450g), sliced into ½-inch strips
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tbsp olive oil, divided

For the Vegetables & Sauce:

- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 8 oz (225g) cremini (baby bella) mushrooms, sliced
- 1 bunch (about 1 lb / 450g) asparagus, woody ends trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

- 3 cloves garlic, minced
  - ½ cup dry white wine (or low-sodium chicken broth)
  - 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
  - 1 cup heavy cream
  - ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
  - ¼ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
  - 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
  - Salt and pepper to taste
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## Equipment

- Large pot for pasta
- Large skillet or sauté pan (12-inch)
- Colander

- Wooden spoon or spatula
  - Measuring cups and spoons
  - Tongs
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## Instructions

Step 1: Boil the Pasta (Time: 8–10 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Add the penne and cook according to package directions until *al dente* (usually 8–10 minutes). Before draining, reserve  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the pasta water. Drain the penne and set aside.

Step 2: Season and Sear the Chicken (Time: 5–6 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

Pat the chicken strips dry with a paper towel. In a small bowl, mix the salt, pepper, and garlic powder, then sprinkle evenly over the chicken. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the chicken in a single layer (work in batches if needed) and cook for 2–3 minutes per side until golden brown and cooked through (internal temperature 165°F/74°C). Transfer the chicken to a plate and set aside. Do not wipe out the pan.

Step 3: Sauté the Mushrooms (Time: 4–5 minutes | Intensity: Medium-High)

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and the butter to the same skillet. Once the butter melts, add the sliced mushrooms. Cook, stirring occasionally, until they release their moisture and turn golden brown, about 4–5 minutes. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.

Step 4: Blanch the Asparagus (Time: 2–3 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Push the mushrooms to one side of the pan and add the asparagus pieces to the empty side. Cook for 2–3 minutes, tossing occasionally, until the asparagus is bright green and crisp-tender. (If your pan is small, remove the mushrooms first, then sauté the asparagus, and return the mushrooms.) Add the minced garlic and red pepper flakes (if using) and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant.

**Step 5: Deglaze and Build the Sauce (Time: 3–4 minutes | Intensity: Medium)**

Pour in the white wine (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup broth) and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Let the liquid bubble and reduce by half, about 1–2 minutes. Add the chicken broth and bring to a gentle simmer. Pour in the heavy cream and stir to combine. Simmer for 2 minutes—do not let it boil vigorously.

**Step 6: Combine and Finish (Time: 2 minutes | Intensity: Low)**

Reduce the heat to low. Stir in the grated Parmesan cheese until melted and smooth. Return the cooked chicken and any juices to the pan, along with the drained penne. Toss everything together until the pasta is well-coated. If the sauce seems too thick, add a splash of the reserved pasta water (1 tablespoon at a time) until it reaches a silky consistency. Taste and adjust salt and pepper.

**Step 7: Serve (Time: 1 minute | Intensity: Low)**

Divide the pasta among four bowls. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley and extra Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

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## Recipe Notes & Tips

- Don't overcook the asparagus: It should retain a slight crunch. It will continue to soften slightly when tossed with the hot sauce.
- Use freshly grated Parmesan: Pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents that prevent it from melting smoothly into the sauce.

- Wine substitution: If you prefer not to use wine, replace it with an equal amount of low-sodium chicken broth and add 1 teaspoon of lemon juice for brightness.
- Make it gluten-free: Use your favorite gluten-free penne. The cooking time may vary slightly.
- Storage: Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently on the stovetop with a splash of broth or water to loosen the sauce. Do not freeze—the cream sauce may separate.

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## Nutrition Information (Per Serving, Based on 4 Servings)

*Note: Nutritional values are estimates and will vary based on specific ingredients and portion sizes.*

- Calories: 620 kcal
- Total Fat: 32g
- Saturated Fat: 15g
- Trans Fat: 0.5g
- Cholesterol: 135mg

- Sodium: 580mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 48g
- Dietary Fiber: 5g
- Total Sugars: 4g
- Protein: 38g
- Vitamin D: 0.5mcg
- Calcium: 180mg
- Iron: 3.5mg
- Potassium: 650mg