

- Prep Time: 15 Minutes
 - Cook Time: 25 Minutes
 - Total Time: 40 Minutes
 - Servings: 6 Bowls
 - Calories: ~520 kcal per serving
 - Intensity Level: Easy / Beginner
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Ingredients

To achieve the perfect balance of flavor and texture, we use a combination of rich dairy and savory proteins. Here is what you will need:

The Base

- 6 slices Bacon: Chopped. We use this to render the fat for sautéing and as a crunchy topping.
- 1 tbsp Butter: Unsalted. (Use additional if your bacon is lean).
- 1 small Onion: Finely diced.
- 3 cloves Garlic: Minced.
- 4 cups Chicken Broth: Use a high-quality bone broth for extra collagen and flavor.
- 1 tsp Dried Parsley: For color and freshness.

The “Crack” Flavor Profile

- 8 oz Cream Cheese: Full-fat, block style. Softened to room temperature. Do not use fat-free; it won't melt properly.
- 1/2 cup Heavy Whipping Cream: This adds the velvety richness.
- 1 packet Ranch Seasoning Mix: Approximately 1 oz. (Check labels for hidden sugars; or make your own blend of dill, parsley, chives, garlic powder, and onion powder).
- 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder: For an extra flavor boost.
- 1/2 tsp Onion Powder:
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne Pepper: Optional, for a subtle kick of heat.
- Salt and Black Pepper: To taste.

The Protein & Cheese

- 4 cups Cooked Chicken: Shredded. Rotisserie chicken works perfectly for this to save time.
- 1 1/2 cups Sharp Cheddar Cheese: Shredded. White cheddar is great, but yellow is classic.

- 1/2 cup Parmesan Cheese: Grated. This helps thicken the soup and adds a salty umami punch.

Garnishes

- Fresh Chives or Green Onions: Chopped.
 - Extra Crispy Bacon: Reserved from earlier.
 - Extra Shredded Cheddar:
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Instructions

Phase 1: The Prep (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Prepare the Ingredients: If you haven't already, cook and shred your chicken. If using rotisserie, remove the skin and bones, and shred the meat into bite-sized pieces. Set aside.
2. Chop the Bacon: Cut the bacon slices into small pieces (lardons).
3. Dice the Veggies: Finely dice the onion and mince the garlic. Soften the cream cheese by leaving it on the counter for 30 minutes or microwaving it for 15 seconds.

Phase 2: The Sauté (Time: 10 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. **Crisp the Bacon:** In a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed soup pot, add the chopped bacon. Cook over medium heat until the bacon is crispy and the fat has rendered out. This should take about 5-7 minutes. Do not burn it.
2. **Remove Bacon:** Using a slotted spoon, remove the crispy bacon bits and set them aside on a paper towel-lined plate. Leave the bacon grease in the pot.
3. **Sauté Aromatics:** Add the butter to the bacon grease. Once melted, add the diced onion. Sauté for 3-4 minutes until translucent and soft.
4. **Add Garlic:** Stir in the minced garlic and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant. Be careful not to burn the garlic, or it will become bitter.

Phase 3: Building the Soup (Time: 15 Minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. **Deglaze:** Pour in the chicken broth. Use a wooden spoon to scrape the bottom of the pot to lift up all the flavorful browned bits (fond) from the bacon and onions. This is the secret to a deep flavor profile.
2. **Add the Cream Cheese:** Turn the heat down to low. Add the softened cream cheese in chunks. Whisk continuously until the cream cheese has completely melted into the broth. It should look creamy with no lumps.
3. **Season the Base:** Whisk in the heavy whipping cream, ranch seasoning packet, garlic

powder, onion powder, cayenne (if using), and dried parsley. Stir until well combined.

4. Add the Chicken: Stir in the shredded chicken. Let the soup simmer gently for 5-10 minutes to allow the chicken to absorb the flavors.

Phase 4: The Cheese & Finish (Time: 5 Minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Melt the Cheese: Turn off the heat (or keep it on the lowest setting). Add the shredded cheddar and parmesan cheese. Stir constantly until the cheese is fully melted and the soup is smooth.

- *Chef's Note:* Adding cheese at high heat can cause it to separate and become grainy. Keep the heat low!

2. Taste and Adjust: Taste the soup. Add salt and black pepper as needed. Depending on the saltiness of your broth and bacon, you may not need much salt.
3. Rest: Let the soup sit for 5 minutes. It will thicken up significantly as it cools slightly.

Serving Suggestions

Ladle the soup into bowls. Top with the reserved crispy bacon, a sprinkle of extra cheddar cheese, and fresh chives or green onions.

Keto-Friendly Dippers

- Cheese Crisps: Baked parmesan crisps are excellent for scooping.
 - Celery Sticks: For a fresh crunch.
 - Keto Bread: A slice of toasted almond flour bread is perfect for dunking.
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Storage and Reheating

This soup is fantastic for meal prep, but because it is dairy-heavy, it requires careful reheating.

- Refrigerator: Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.
- Freezer: We do not recommend freezing this soup. The cream cheese and heavy cream tend to separate and become grainy when thawed. It is best enjoyed fresh.
- Reheating: Reheat gently on the stovetop over low heat, stirring frequently. Avoid boiling, as this will cause the dairy to curdle. If the soup is too thick after refrigeration (it will thicken like a dip), add a splash of chicken broth to loosen it up.

Recipe Variations

- **Spicy Crack Chicken:** Add diced jalapeños with the onions, or stir in a teaspoon of sriracha or buffalo sauce before adding the cheese.
- **Veggie Boost:** Add a cup of chopped broccoli florets or cauliflower rice during the simmering phase to add bulk without adding carbs.
- **Slow Cooker Version:** Add chicken (raw or cooked), broth, cream cheese, ranch mix, and spices to a slow cooker. Cook on Low for 4 hours. Shred chicken, then stir in heavy cream and shredded cheese just before serving. Top with bacon.

Nutrition Information

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is calculated based on standard ingredients and estimates. Actual values may vary based on specific brands used.

Per Serving (1/6th of recipe):

- **Calories:** 523 kcal
- **Total Fat:** 38g

- Saturated Fat: 19g
- Cholesterol: 165mg
- Sodium: 1180mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 5g
- Dietary Fiber: 1g
- Sugars: 2g
- Protein: 36g
- Net Carbs: 4g