

Prep time: 15 minutes | Cook time: 25 minutes | Total time: 40 minutes

There are chicken recipes, and then there is *this* chicken recipe. If you are searching for a dish that lives up to a name like “Melt-in-Your-Mouth,” look no further. This recipe transforms simple chicken breasts into a succulent, flavor-packed main course that genuinely falls apart at the touch of a fork.

The secret lies in a three-part technique: a gentle pounding to ensure even cooking, a quick pan-sear to lock in the juices, and a luscious, creamy garlic-parmesan sauce that finishes the chicken in the oven. The result is a restaurant-quality meal that is surprisingly simple to prepare on a weeknight. Serve it over pasta, rice, or mashed potatoes to soak up every drop of the incredible sauce.

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Ingredients

For the Chicken:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 6 oz each)
- 1 teaspoon salt

- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

For the Creamy Garlic-Parmesan Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup chicken broth (low sodium)
- ¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for a hint of heat)

- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
 - Salt and pepper to taste
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Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Chicken (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Begin by patting the chicken breasts dry with paper towels. This is crucial for achieving a good sear. Place each breast between two pieces of plastic wrap or inside a zip-top bag. Using a meat mallet or the bottom of a heavy skillet, gently pound the chicken to an even thickness of about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. This ensures they cook quickly and evenly without drying out. Season both sides generously with salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and smoked paprika.

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

Heat the olive oil in a large, oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Once the oil is shimmering, carefully add the chicken breasts. Sear for 2-3 minutes per side, until a beautiful golden-brown crust forms. The chicken will not be cooked through yet. Remove the chicken from the skillet and set aside on a plate. Do not wipe out the skillet; those browned bits are pure flavor.

Step 3: Build the Sauce (Time: 4-5 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

Reduce the heat to medium. Add the butter to the same skillet. Once melted, add the minced garlic and sauté for about 30-60 seconds until fragrant—be careful not to burn it. Pour in the chicken broth and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Let the broth simmer and reduce slightly, about 2 minutes. Stir in the heavy cream and red pepper flakes, if using, and bring to a gentle simmer.

Step 4: Combine and Bake (Time: 15-18 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C). Stir the grated Parmesan cheese into the sauce until it melts and the sauce thickens slightly. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper. Return the seared chicken breasts to the skillet, nestling them into the creamy sauce. Spoon some of the sauce over the top of each breast. Transfer the entire oven-safe skillet to the preheated oven and bake for 15-18 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).

Step 5: Rest and Serve (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Carefully remove the skillet from the oven (the handle will be hot!). Let the chicken rest in the sauce for 5 minutes. This allows the juices to redistribute. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley. Serve immediately, spooning the generous amount of sauce over the chicken and your chosen side dish.

Recipe Notes & Tips

- **Even Thickness is Key:** Pounding the chicken is non-negotiable for this recipe. It guarantees that the thickest part is cooked at the same time as the thinnest, preventing dry edges.
- **Freshly Grated Parmesan:** Please avoid the pre-shredded stuff in a can. Freshly grated Parmesan melts smoothly into the sauce, creating a silky texture rather than a grainy one.
- **No Oven-Safe Skillet?** No problem. After searing the chicken, transfer it to a baking dish. Prepare the sauce in the skillet, then pour it over the chicken in the baking dish before baking.
- **Sauce Consistency:** If the sauce seems too thin after baking, you can remove the

chicken, place the skillet over medium heat, and simmer for a few minutes until it thickens to your liking.

- **Make it a Full Meal:** This chicken is phenomenal served with angel hair pasta, creamy mashed potatoes, or fluffy white rice. A side of steamed green beans or a crisp Caesar salad rounds it out perfectly.

Nutrition Information (per serving)

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is an estimate and will vary based on specific ingredients used. This calculation is for the chicken and sauce only and does not include any side dishes.

- Calories: 520
- Total Fat: 36g
- Saturated Fat: 18g
- Cholesterol: 185mg
- Sodium: 780mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 3g

- Dietary Fiber: 0g

- Total Sugars: 1g

- Protein: 42g