

# Jerk Chicken Rasta Pasta

## Ingredients

Boneless chicken thighs .....	2 lbs.	Green bell pepper .....	1
Jerk seasoning .....	5 Tbsp.	Green onions .....	1 bunch
Better Than Bouillon chicken ...	1 Tbsp.	Vegetable oil .....	2 Tbsp.
Water .....	1 cup	Heavy cream .....	1/2 cup
Onion, small .....	1	Parmesan cheese .....	1/2 cup
Garlic cloves .....	7	Cilantro .....	1/4 cup
Fresh thyme sprigs .....	2	Salt .....	to taste
Penne pasta .....	16 oz.	Black pepper .....	to taste
Red bell pepper .....	1		
Yellow bell pepper .....	1		

## Directions

Preheat Instant Pot — Quarter **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Smash 4 **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Mince remaining 3 **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Slice **bell peppers** into strips; combine in *Medium Bowl #1* — Slice **green onions**; set aside in *Small Bowl #4* — Grate **Parmesan cheese**; set aside in *Small Bowl #5* — Chop **cilantro** roughly; set aside in *Small Bowl #6*

1. Coat **chicken thighs** thoroughly with 3 Tbsp. **jerk seasoning**, rubbing it in well.
2. Add **water** and **Better Than Bouillon** to Instant Pot and stir to combine.
3. Place seasoned **chicken** in the broth and add quartered **onion**, 4 smashed **garlic cloves**, and **thyme** sprigs.
4. Seal the Instant Pot and cook on High Pressure for 15 minutes, followed by a 10-minute natural release.
5. Remove **chicken** to *Large Bowl #1* and shred using two forks. Reserve 1/4 cup of the cooking broth in *Small Bowl #7* and stir 2-3 Tbsp. back into the shredded **chicken** (*Large Bowl #1*) to keep it moist.
6. Cook **pasta** in salted water according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside in *Large Bowl #2*.
7. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** over medium-high heat. Add **bell peppers** (*Medium Bowl #1*) and half the **green onions** (*Small Bowl #4*), sautéing for 3-4 minutes until peppers begin to soften but remain crisp.

8. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #3*) and cook for *30 seconds* until fragrant.
9. Sprinkle in remaining 2 Tbsp. **jerk seasoning** and stir to coat vegetables.
10. Pour in the reserved **chicken broth** ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup, *Small Bowl #7*) and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **heavy cream**. Bring to a simmer.
11. Reduce heat to medium-low and let sauce simmer for *3-4 minutes* until it begins to thicken.
12. Stir in the **Parmesan cheese** ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, *Small Bowl #5*) until melted and sauce is smooth.
13. Add shredded **jerk chicken** (*Large Bowl #1*) and cooked **pasta** (*Large Bowl #2*), tossing to coat evenly with the sauce. Season with **salt** and **black pepper** to taste.
14. Serve immediately, garnished with remaining **green onions** (*Small Bowl #4*) and chopped **cilantro** (*Small Bowl #6*).

## Equipment Required

- Instant Pot or pressure cooker
- Large pasta pot (6-8 quart)
- Colander
- Large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp chef's knife
- Cutting board
- Box grater or microplane for cheese
- Two forks for shredding chicken
- Medium bowl for shredded chicken
- Small bowl for reserved broth

## Mise en Place

- Measure all seasonings and spices before beginning
- Allow heavy cream to come to room temperature
- Prepare all vegetables before starting to cook
- Grate cheese while chicken cooks in Instant Pot
- Have all ingredients within arm's reach before beginning sauce
- Keep pasta water heating while preparing the chicken

## Ingredient Tips

- Boneless chicken thighs provide more flavor and moisture than breast meat
- Store-bought jerk seasoning works well, but use a high-quality brand for authentic flavor
- For homemade jerk seasoning, combine allspice, thyme, cayenne, garlic powder, onion powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, brown sugar, and salt
- Freshly grated Parmesan is crucial - pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents

- For extra heat, add 1-2 teaspoons of minced scotch bonnet or habanero pepper
- Bell peppers can be substituted with poblano for a slightly spicier version

## Preparation Tips

- Allow a full natural release if time permits - it keeps the chicken more tender
- Reserve more cooking broth than called for in case the sauce needs thinning
- Don't overcook the pasta - it will continue to absorb liquid in the sauce
- For bell peppers, aim for softened but still slightly crisp for best texture
- If sauce becomes too thick, add a splash of reserved cooking broth
- If sauce is too thin, simmer a few extra minutes before adding pasta
- Keep pasta very al dente as it will continue cooking in the hot sauce

## Make Ahead & Storage

- Chicken can be prepared up to 2 days ahead and refrigerated
- Complete dish keeps well refrigerated for up to 3 days
- When reheating, add a splash of chicken broth or cream to revive the sauce
- Reheat gently on stovetop over medium-low heat
- Microwave reheating works but may cause pasta to become slightly rubbery
- Freeze portions without pasta, then prepare fresh pasta when reheating
- Garnish with fresh cilantro only just before serving

## Serving Suggestions

- Serve with fried plantains for an authentic Caribbean pairing
- A simple green salad with lime vinaigrette balances the rich pasta
- Garlic bread made with Caribbean-style butter is an excellent side
- For a complete meal, add a tropical fruit salad as a refreshing dessert
- Offer extra jerk seasoning at the table for those who prefer more heat
- Jamaican Red Stripe beer or a fruity rum punch complement the flavors
- For a colorful presentation, serve in a large white bowl to highlight the vibrant peppers