

Chicken Bacon Ranch Pasta

This Chicken Bacon Ranch Pasta is an easy dinner idea that you can make on the stovetop or bake as a casserole! You'll love the cheesy, creamy pasta with seasoned bites of chicken and crispy bacon.



Prep Time	Cook Time	Total Time
10 mins	40 mins	50 mins

Course: Main Course Cuisine: American Servings: 6 people Calories: 552kcal

Author: Stephanie

Ingredients

- 2 cups cheddar cheese shredded
- 6 strips bacon
- Salt/Pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 2 small boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 2 cups uncooked pasta I used rotini
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon garlic minced
- 2 cups half and half
- 2 tablespoons dry ranch dressing seasoning mix

Instructions

Cook the Bacon

1. **Cook the bacon** in a large skillet over low heat (low and slow is best for bacon). Set aside and pour bacon drippings into a small bowl. Carefully wipe the skillet clean. Roughly chop the bacon once cooled.

Prepare the Chicken

1. **Cut the chicken breasts into thinner slices**, 2-3 slices each. They will plump up more when cooked. **Pat dry** and **season each side** with a light sprinkling of salt/pepper, as well as onion powder and Italian seasoning.
2. **Heat 2 Tbsp. bacon drippings** in the skillet over medium-high heat. Olive or vegetable oil may also be used in lieu of drippings.
3. **Sear the chicken** on each side for 3-4 minutes, until a golden brown crust has developed. Set aside on a plate once cooked through. Let it rest for 5 minutes, then cut into cubes of desired size.

Boil the Pasta

1. Now is a good time to **boil salted water and cook the pasta**. Drain once finished. Prepare the sauce while the pasta boils.

Make the Sauce

1. **Melt butter in the same skillet** over medium heat. **Sauté the garlic** for 1 minute. Add the flour and use a silicone spatula to stir continuously for 1 more minute.
2. **Temper the half and half** by heating in the microwave for 40 seconds. **Add it to the skillet** in splashes, stirring as you do so. **Bring it to a gentle bubble**, then **reduce heat to low**.
3. **Add the Ranch seasoning** and stir to combine. Gradually **stir in the cheese**. (Note: It will continue to thicken upon standing.)

Combine the Pasta/Chicken/Bacon

1. **Add the pasta** to the skillet and use a silicone spatula to carefully combine with the sauce. **Add the chicken** and allow it to heat back up a bit. **Garnish with bacon** or stir it right into the sauce and serve!

Notes

Pro Tips:

- **Heavy cream can be used instead of half and half.**
- If possible, **shred the cheese from a block** instead of using bagged shredded cheese as it will melt and taste much better. I use Cracker Barrel Sharp Yellow Cheese in this recipe.
- **Thick Cut bacon** will produce more drippings for you to cook the chicken in.
- **Leftover chicken** can also be used in this recipe.
- **Any kind of pasta can be used** for this recipe, I prefer Rotini as it clings onto this sauce really well. Penne, Bowtie Pasta, Cavatappi, or Cellentani all work well too.
- **Sliced smoked sausage** would make a nice addition to this meal instead of chicken.
- **Frozen mixed vegetables** can be added to make it a complete meal as well.
- Garlic Bread with Cheese makes a great side dish!

Casserole Method

- Prepare recipe as outlined, be sure to cook the pasta until just al dente.
- Transfer to a 9 x 13 casserole dish (or leave in an oven-safe skillet).
- Top with 1.5 cups additional shredded cheddar cheese.
- Cover and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Make Ahead Method

- Cook pasta for 1 minute less than al dente, follow all other instructions as outlined.
- Transfer to a 9 x 13 casserole dish (or leave in an oven-safe skillet).
- Top with 1.5 cups additional shredded cheddar cheese.
- Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.
- When ready to serve, Bake (covered) at 350° for 40 minutes.
- Remove cover and bake for 5 more minutes.

Nutrition

Calories: 552kcal | Carbohydrates: 25g | Protein: 34g | Fat: 35g | Saturated Fat: 18g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 3g | Monounsaturated Fat: 11g | Trans Fat: 1g | Cholesterol: 137mg | Sodium: 893mg | Potassium:

525mg Fiber: 1g Sugar: 1g Vitamin A: 758IU Vitamin C: 2mg Calcium: 375mg Iron: 1mg
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