

Chicken Parmesan Pasta Bake

If you like chicken parmesan, you'll love this simplified baked pasta version that comes together in an 8x8 pan. Full of melty mozzarella, tender chicken, classic marinara sauce, and topped with crunchy garlic-herb breadcrumbs, this is a weeknight dinner the whole family will love.



| Prep Time | Cook Time | Total Time |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 20 mins | 20 mins | 40 mins |

★★★★★
4.34 from 3 votes

Course: Main Dish, Pasta Cuisine: Italian
Keyword: easy chicken recipe, easy freezer meal Servings: 4 Calories: 556kcal
Author: Jess Smith via Inquiring Chef Cost: \$10.50

Equipment

- 8x8 baking dish
- Stockpot

Ingredients

Pasta Bake

- 8 oz Pasta (use any fun shape like macaroni / elbows, cavatappi, or penne)
- 2 cups Marinara Sauce (homemade or use a high-quality store-bought version)
- 1 1/2 cups Cooked and Chopped Chicken
- 8 oz Fresh Mozzarella Pearls (sub any fresh mozzarella, chopped into small pieces)

Topping

- 3/4 cup Panko Breadcrumbs (see note)
- 1 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 1/2 tsp Italian Seasoning
- 2 cloves Garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup Parmesan Cheese, grated

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Spray an 8" x 8" baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Bring a large stockpot of salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook according to package directions. (Be sure to pull the pasta out of the water right when it is tender but still has a bit of a chewy texture; you don't want it to be overcooked.) Drain and set aside to cool.
4. Combine cooked pasta, marinara sauce, and chicken in a large bowl. If the pasta looks at all dry, add 1/2 cup of additional marinara sauce. (Some pasta shapes seem to soak up the sauce more than others, so if in doubt, add the additional sauce.)
5. Pour half of the pasta into the prepared baking dish. (See note below about reusable aluminum baking pans.) Scatter half of the mozzarella pearls over top. Add remaining

pasta and then top with remaining mozzarella pearls, pressing them gently into the top of the pasta.

6. Cover pasta bake with foil and transfer to the oven. Bake until the pasta is warmed through and cheese is melted, about 15 minutes.
7. While pasta bakes, make topping by combining panko, olive oil, Italian seasoning, garlic, and parmesan cheese.
8. After the initial bake time, remove pasta from oven and remove foil from the top. Turn on the oven's broiler (use the low setting if available).
9. Scatter topping evenly over the pasta.
10. Return pasta to the oven and broil, uncovered, until topping is light golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes.
11. Serve immediately.

Notes

- Look for panko breadcrumbs in the Asian / international aisle. These are larger and crunchier than Italian-style breadcrumbs.
- Most 8" x 8" baking dishes have taller sides than the reusable aluminum baking dishes shown in the photos above that you might use to take this meal to someone else. If using a reusable aluminum baking dish, you may need to divide the pasta bake between two pans or just fill one to the top and reserve the remaining pasta to eat later.
- This dish can be made ahead and refrigerated or frozen before baking. (Combine the topping ingredients and keep them in a separate container.)
- If you're delivering this meal to someone else or planning to freeze it for later, attach this label to the top so that anyone can easily serve it!

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To serve:

- 1) Preheat oven to 425°F.
- 2) Cover tightly with foil and bake until heated all the way through, 20 to 25 min (this may take a few minutes longer if the dish was in the fridge right before baking).
- 3) Remove foil and cover pasta with panko breadcrumb topping.
- 4) Turn on the oven's broiler (use the low setting if possible).
- 5) Place pasta under broiler and broil until topping is crisp and golden, 2 to 3 minutes more.
- 6) Serve immediately.

If you prefer to save this meal for later, cover tightly with foil and freeze for up to 6 months.

Date Frozen: _____

To bake from frozen:

- 1) Defrost - for 24 to 48 hours in the refrigerator.
- 2) Preheat oven to 425°F.
- 3) Cover tightly with foil and bake until heated all the way through, 20 to 25 min (this may take a few minutes longer if the dish was still very cold right before baking).
- 4) Remove foil and cover pasta with panko breadcrumb topping.
- 5) Turn on the oven's broiler (use the low setting if possible).
- 6) Place pasta under broiler and broil until topping is crisp and golden, 2 to 3 minutes more.
- 7) Serve immediately.

Serve with: Green / Caesar Salad, Garlic Bread

Nutrition

Serving: 1cup | Calories: 556kcal | Carbohydrates: 59g | Protein: 29g | Fat: 23g | Saturated Fat: 10g | Cholesterol: 64mg | Sodium: 1198mg | Potassium: 635mg | Fiber: 4g | Sugar: 8g | Vitamin A: 990IU | Vitamin C: 9.4mg | Calcium: 415mg | Iron: 3.1mg