A Recipe For:

 

# **Chicken and Bacon Pasta with Spinach**

**From the Kitchen of:** Michelle

**Servings:** 4

**Prep Time:** 20 minutes **Bake Time:** 20 minutes **Bake Temp:**

**Ingredients:**

* 2 Tbsp olive oil
* 1 lb chicken breasts or tenderloins
* 1 teas paprika
* 1 teas Italian seasoning (thyme, oregano, basil- combined
* 5 tomatoes (medium, chopped in large cubes)
* 1 cup spinach cooked
* 5 garlic cloves minced
* ¼ teas red pepper flakes, crushed
* 6 bacon strips, COOKED, DRAINED OF FAT AND CHOPPED
* 1 1/3 cups half and half
* 1 1/3 cups Parmesan cheese, shredded
* 10 oz penne pasta (for gluten-free version, use gluten-free brown-rice penne)
* ½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded for serving

**Instructions:**

1. In a large skillet, on high heat, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil until hot. Add chicken and cook on one side on high heat for 1 minute. While tit cooks, sprinkle the uncooked sides of the chicken with paprika and Italian seasoning. Flip the chicken over and cook on the other side for 1 minute on high heat. Reduce heat to medium. Flip chicken over a gain ad cook, covered, for several minutes until no longer pink in the center. Remove chicken from the pan and keep chicken warm.
2. To the same pan (but without the chicken) add chopped tomatoes, spinach, garlic, crushed red pepper, 1/3 of the chicken (sliced into small strips) and half the bacon (already cooked and drained of fat). Mix everything.
3. Add half and half and bring to boil. Only after half and half starts boiling, add shredded Parmesan cheese – immediately reduce to simmer and stir, while simmering, until the cheese melts and makes the sauce creamy, only about 1 minute (at most 2 minutes). Then immediately remove from heat. Season with more crushed red pepper and salt, if needed.
4. In the meantime bring a large pot of water to boil, add pasta and cook it according to instructions. Drain the pasta, rinse with cold water and drain again.
5. Add pasta to the skillet with the sauce. Add remain half of bacon. Season with more salt if necessary. Slice the remaining 2/3 of chicken into thin strips. To serve, top the pasta with chicken strips and shredded Parmesan cheese.