Chicken Broccoli Alfredo

Chicken broccoli Alfredo folds steamed broccoli and cooked chicken into a creamy penne dish. Add broccoli near the end of pasta cooking and toss gently so the florets stay intact.



Prep	Cook	Additional	Total	Servings
15 min	25 min	0 min	40 min	4

Ingredients

- 1 pound chicken breast / 450 g, diced
- 10 ounces dry penne / 285 g
- 3 cups broccoli florets / 270 g
- 1 tablespoon olive oil / 15 ml
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon butter / 14 g
- 3 garlic cloves / 9 g, minced
- 1 1/4 cups heavy cream / 300 ml
- 1/2 cup finely grated vegetarian hard cheese / 45 g
- 1/2 cup reserved pasta water / 120 ml, as needed

Instructions

1. Boil penne according to the package and add broccoli for the final 3 minutes. Reserve 1/2 cup water, then drain.

2. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Cook in oil in a skillet for 6 to 8 minutes, checking several large pieces for 165°F (74°C). Remove to a clean plate.

3. Melt butter over low heat; stir garlic for 30 seconds. Add cream and gently simmer 3 minutes.

4. Take off heat and stir in cheese. Fold in pasta, broccoli and cooked chicken.

5. Add reserved water a tablespoon at a time until the sauce coats everything. Serve hot.

Time, Temperature & Doneness

Cook every chicken portion to at least 165°F (74°C), measuring in the thickest meat without touching bone. Check several large pieces for diced chicken or wings. Reheated chicken mixtures and casseroles must reach 165°F (74°C) in the center. Color and stated times are not reliable safety substitutes.

Ingredient Notes & Substitutions

Broccoli: Similar-size florets cook evenly.

Pasta: Penne is specified.

Cheese: Grate finely.

Tips for Success

Keep broccoli slightly firm.

Check large chicken cubes.

Loosen sauce before serving.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Overcooking broccoli.

Adding cheese to a rolling boil.

Using uncooked chicken at the final toss.

Recipe Variations

Frozen broccoli: Add according to its package cooking needs.

Pasta: Use rigatoni with package timing.

Serving Suggestions

Serve the penne, chicken and broccoli together; the vegetables are already part of the recipe.

Storage

Refrigerate promptly in shallow containers within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 90°F (32°C). Keep at 40°F (4°C) or below and use within 3 to 4 days. When starting with cooked chicken or rice, use the oldest ingredient’s original storage deadline; reheating does not restart it.

Freezing

For best texture, freeze cooked filling or chicken separately from pasta, biscuits or pastry where possible. Cool promptly, pack airtight at 0°F (-18°C), use within 2 months for best quality, and thaw in the refrigerator. Dairy sauces can separate and pasta may soften.

Reheating

Reheat the chicken mixture gently, covered, until several spots reach 165°F (74°C), adding a splash of water or broth if thick. Reheat biscuits or pastry separately when possible; avoid prolonged boiling of dairy sauces.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use frozen broccoli?
Yes; ensure it is fully heated and not waterlogged before mixing.

Why is sauce thick?
Pasta absorbs liquid; loosen with reserved water.

Can I use leftover chicken?
Use safely stored cooked chicken and reheat the finished dish to 165°F (74°C).

Recipe & Sources

View the recipe on HowToCookChickenRecipes.com

Budget Bytes - cream sauce technique reference

FoodSafety.gov - poultry and leftover temperature guidance

FoodSafety.gov - refrigerated food storage limits

FoodSafety.gov - clean, separate, cook and chill