Chicken Pesto Alfredo

Fettuccine, seared chicken, basil pesto, toasted pine nuts, and a gentle cream sauce.

SERVES 4	PREP 15 min	COOK 25 min	EXTRA 5 min



Ingredients

- 1 lb (450 g) chicken breast, sliced
- 12 oz (340 g) fettuccine
- 1/3 cup (80 g) basil pesto made with vegetarian-rennet hard cheese
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) pasta water, reserved
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts
- 2 tbsp chopped basil
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp (28 g) unsalted butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

SOURCE REVIEW: The method calls for grated vegetarian-rennet cheese in the Alfredo sauce, but the ingredient list does not give a separate amount. The listed pesto already contains vegetarian-rennet cheese. Confirm whether additional cheese is intended before publishing.

Method

1. Cook fettuccine in salted water until al dente. Reserve 1/2 cup pasta water, then drain. Season chicken with salt and pepper.

2. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Sear chicken until golden and 165°F (74°C) at the thickest part. Rest on a clean plate, then slice.

3. Lower the heat. Melt butter, briefly cook garlic until fragrant, then add cream and heat gently. The source method calls for grated vegetarian-rennet cheese but does not specify an amount; see the source review note.

4. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in basil pesto. Toss fettuccine with sauce and enough pasta water to coat. Add sliced chicken and toasted pine nuts; finish with fresh basil and serve promptly.

Doneness & safe handling

Cook chicken to at least **165°F (74°C)** at its thickest part. Use a food thermometer; timing varies by appliance and cut. Keep raw poultry separate from ready-to-eat food and clean hands, tools, and surfaces after handling raw chicken.

Cook’s notes

Stir pesto in off heat to preserve its fresh basil aroma. Check packaged pesto labels for cheese cultures/rennet and other ingredients. Keep raw and cooked chicken separate.

Storage, freezing & reheating

Refrigerate: Refrigerate promptly in shallow, covered containers within 2 hours (within 1 hour above 90°F / 32°C). Keep at 40°F (4°C) or below and use cooked poultry leftovers within 3–4 days.

Freeze: Cool promptly, package airtight, and freeze at 0°F (-18°C) for best quality. Cream sauce and pasta texture may change; thaw in the refrigerator.

Reheat: Reheat covered in a pan over low heat or in the microwave, stirring until the center reaches 165°F (74°C). Add broth or water to loosen. Do not reheat in a slow cooker.

Quick questions

• When should pesto be added? Stir it into the sauce off heat to preserve its basil aroma.

• Can I use store-bought pesto? Yes; check the label for cheese made with vegetarian rennet.

Recipe references: Budget Bytes — One Pot Creamy Pesto Chicken Pasta; Lauren’s Latest — Chicken Pesto Alfredo Pasta. Safety guidance: USDA FSIS Safe Temperature Chart and Leftovers and Food Safety; FoodSafety.gov Cold Food Storage Chart.