Lemon Pepper Chicken Breast Recipes

Lemon pepper chicken breast uses fresh lemon zest, cracked black pepper and a short skillet cook. A small broth-and-butter pan sauce carries the lemon flavor without a bottled seasoning blend. Cook thin cutlets to 165°F (74°C) and add the lemon juice after reducing the broth.



Prep	Cook	Additional	Total	Servings
10 min	15 min	3 min	28 min	4

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts / 680 g, sliced into 4 cutlets
- 1 tablespoon olive oil / 15 ml
- 1 lemon: 2 teaspoons zest and 2 tablespoons juice / 30 ml
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/3 cup low-sodium chicken broth / 80 ml
- 1 tablespoon butter / 14 g
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Instructions

1. Pat 1/2-inch (1.3 cm) cutlets dry. Combine lemon zest, pepper, salt and garlic powder and rub evenly over the chicken.

2. Heat oil over medium heat in a wide skillet. Cook the cutlets for about 3 to 4 minutes per side, working in batches if necessary.

3. Check the thickest part of each cutlet for 165°F (74°C), then transfer to a clean plate to rest for 3 minutes.

4. Pour broth into the skillet and scrape the browned bits. Simmer for 2 minutes to reduce slightly.

5. Turn off the heat and stir in butter, lemon juice and parsley. Spoon the sauce over the chicken and serve.

Time, Temperature & Doneness

Cook every chicken portion to 165°F (74°C) in its thickest part. Use an instant-read thermometer; exterior browning, meat color and clear juices are not reliable substitutes. Listed cooking times are estimates and vary with thickness and equipment.

Ingredient Notes & Substitutions

Lemon zest: Grate only the yellow skin; white pith can taste bitter.

Pepper: Freshly cracked pepper gives a stronger aroma than old pre-ground pepper.

Seasoning: This version makes its own lemon-pepper mix and does not add a salted commercial blend.

Tips for Success

Zest the lemon before juicing it.

Use equal-thickness cutlets.

Keep the pepper coating from scorching by using medium heat.

Add lemon juice after the broth reduction.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Using thick whole breasts with cutlet timing.

Grating bitter white lemon pith.

Adding a salted seasoning blend on top of the measured salt.

Recipe Variations

Mild version: Reduce pepper to 1/2 teaspoon.

Herb version: Replace parsley with chopped dill.

Creamy version: Stir 2 tablespoons heavy cream into the reduced broth before finishing.

Serving Suggestions

Serve with rice, roasted asparagus or a simple pasta side and spoon the pan sauce over the chicken.

Storage

Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly in shallow containers within 2 hours, or within 1 hour when exposed to temperatures above 90°F (32°C). Keep at 40°F (4°C) or below and use within 3 to 4 days.

Freezing

Freeze promptly cooled cooked portions airtight at 0°F (-18°C) or below for up to 3 months for best quality. Label with the date and thaw in the refrigerator. Continuous freezing preserves safety longer, but texture can decline.

Reheating

Reheat covered in a 350°F (175°C) oven with a small splash of water or broth until the center reaches 165°F (74°C). Check more than one spot; heat thin pieces only as long as needed.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need bottled lemon pepper seasoning?
No. Fresh zest, pepper and measured salt supply the flavor here.

Can I use bottled lemon juice?
It works for the sauce, but fresh lemon is still needed for zest in this version.

Why is the sauce bitter?
Too much white pith or scorched zest can cause bitterness.

Can I bake it instead?
Yes, season equal-thickness breasts and bake at 425°F (220°C) to 165°F (74°C); the skillet sauce is a separate step.

Recipe & Sources

View the recipe on HowToCookChickenRecipes.com

Budget Bytes - quick cutlet and pan sauce technique reference

FoodSafety.gov - safe minimum internal temperatures

FoodSafety.gov - cold food storage chart

FoodSafety.gov - prompt chilling and cross-contamination prevention