Shredded Chicken Breast Recipes

Shredded chicken breast starts with gentle poaching in seasoned broth. Keep the liquid barely simmering, stop once the chicken reaches 165°F (74°C), then pull the warm meat apart with two forks. A little cooked broth keeps the shreds moist for later meals.



Prep	Cook	Additional	Total	Servings
10 min	20 min	5 min	35 min	4

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts / 680 g
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth / 720 ml
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 small bay leaf
- 1 garlic clove / 3 g, lightly crushed

Instructions

1. Place chicken in a saucepan in a single layer. Add broth, salt, pepper, bay leaf and garlic. Add a little water only if needed to nearly cover the meat.

2. Bring just to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to low and partially cover.

3. Poach for about 12 to 20 minutes, depending on thickness. Avoid a vigorous rolling boil.

4. Check the thickest part of each breast for 165°F (74°C). Move finished pieces to a clean plate while others finish.

5. Rest for 5 minutes, then use two forks to pull the warm chicken into shreds.

6. Discard the bay leaf and garlic. Moisten the shreds with 2 to 4 tablespoons of the fully cooked poaching broth.

7. Serve promptly or portion into shallow containers and refrigerate. If keeping the remaining broth, cool and refrigerate it promptly too.

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

Broth: A narrow saucepan needs less liquid than a wide pan.

Bay leaf: Remove before serving.

Shredding: Warm chicken separates more easily than cold chicken.

Yield: The cooked quantity varies, but this batch usually provides roughly 3 to 4 cups of shreds.

Tips for Success

Keep the simmer gentle.

Check each breast separately.

Use clean forks and a clean plate.

Add cooked broth gradually rather than soaking the shreds.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Boiling hard until the meat toughens.

Shredding before checking internal temperature.

Leaving a large warm batch on the counter to cool slowly.

Recipe Variations

Taco version: Add 1 teaspoon cumin to the poaching liquid.

Herb version: Replace the bay leaf with a small thyme sprig.

Plain version: Use water instead of broth and omit garlic and bay leaf.

Serving Suggestions

Use the cooked shreds in tacos, soups, wraps, pasta or chicken salad. Chill before combining with cold salad ingredients.

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 cooked shreds with a little broth in airtight meal-sized portions for up to 3 months for best quality. Thaw in the refrigerator.

Reheating

Warm covered with a splash of broth until the chicken reaches 165°F (74°C), stirring so the shreds heat evenly.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I shred chicken while it is warm?
Yes. After a short rest, warm cooked chicken pulls apart more easily.

Can I use a mixer?
A mixer can shred cooked boneless chicken, but two forks give more control and less mess.

How much shredded chicken does this make?
About 3 to 4 cups is a useful estimate; cooking losses and shred size change the yield.

Can I freeze portions?
Yes. Pack with a little cooked broth and freeze in meal-sized amounts.

Recipe & Sources

View the recipe on HowToCookChickenRecipes.com

Well Plated - poaching and shredding technique reference

FoodSafety.gov - safe minimum internal temperatures

FoodSafety.gov - cold food storage chart

FoodSafety.gov - prompt chilling and cross-contamination prevention