

# JENNI MARIE'S TEST KITCHEN

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## Cajun Chicken Pesto Pasta

Serves 2 People

### Equipment:

- Measuring Cups & Spoons
- Cutting Board & Knife
- Small & Large Mixing Bowls
- Tongs, Rubber Spatula, Silicone Whisk
- Large Cast-Iron Skillet
- Large Stainless-Steel Skillet
- Large Saucepan
- Strainer
- Kitchen Scale

### Directions:

1). Gather all equipment & ingredients. Trim any unappetizing parts off the chicken. If you have any thick pieces, you may want to pound those out with a tenderizer so all the chicken cooks evenly. Rub chicken with a light drizzle of olive oil and season liberally with cajun seasoning OR seasoning of choice. Set aside to marinate while you prep the rest of the meal. Measure out 1 C. broth and set aside.

- **10-12 oz. Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast** (*I prefer the brand Just Bare*)
- **1 T. Olive Oil**
- **2 T. Cajun Seasoning** (*more or less, to taste*)
- **1 C. Low Sodium Chicken Broth** (*sub with plain water*)

2). **MAKE THE SAUCE** - Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Pour in half & half and bring to a simmer whisking frequently. Add salt, pepper, garlic replacer, and Italian seasoning and continue to simmer for 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium and add parmesan cheese, whisking constantly until fully incorporated. Reduce heat to med-low and whisk in the whipped cottage cheese. Sauce may appear to separate at this point, but keep whisking, and it should come back together. Add pesto and continue to whisk until fully incorporated. Sauce may seem to separate but keep whisking and it should come back together. If your sauce doesn't come back together, you can carefully put it in a blender or use an immersion blender to get smooth consistency back. Remove from heat, transfer to a bowl, cover and keep warm until ready to serve.

- **2 T. Salted Butter**
- **1.5 C. Half & Half** (*sub w/ heavy cream*)
- **1/4 t. Kosher Salt**
- **1/4 t. Black Pepper**
- **2 t. Low FODMAP Garlic Replacer** (*sub w/ 1/2 t. garlic powder or 2 cloves minced garlic - see notes below*)
- **1/2 C. (56g.) Fresh Grated Parmesan Cheese** (*Frijo Brand is my favorite*)
- **1/2 C. (112g.) Whipped Cottage Cheese** (*optional for protein*)
- **1/4 C. (56g.) Prepared Pesto** (*more or less, to taste*)

3). Cook pasta according to package directions. Strain and set aside while you cook the chicken. My general rule of thumb is 2 oz. of dry pasta per person. If you're feeding heavy eaters, you can do a little more, but I wouldn't exceed 3 oz. per person.

- **4-5 oz. (100g.) Barilla Protein Plus Thin Spaghetti** (*use whatever pasta you like best*)

4). **COOK THE CHICKEN** - Preheat a cast-iron or stainless-steel skillet on medium heat for about 3-4 minutes. Heat the broth in the microwave for about 40 seconds. Add a drizzle of olive oil to the hot pan, followed by the seasoned chicken breast pieces. Cook without disturbing for 4 minutes (set a timer!). When the timer beeps, flip your chicken breasts over and pour the broth into the skillet. Cover and let cook for another 4 minutes (set a timer - no peeking!). When the timer beeps, remove skillet from heat (keep covered - still no peeking!) and set a timer for 15 more minutes. When the final timer beeps, temp your chicken and if it's 165°F inside, transfer it to a cutting board and let rest while you plate up the pasta. Transfer pasta back to the saucepan and place on warm burner. Pour half of the alfredo sauce over pasta and give it a good stir (add more if needed - you can freeze extra sauce for future use). Slice chicken against the grain and serve immediately over the pasta. Garnish with shredded parmesan and fresh parsley. Enjoy!

- **Fresh Chopped Parsley & Parmesan for Garnish**

*\*If you use fresh garlic to make the sauce, you will want to sauté it for a few minutes in the butter before adding the half and half, but watch it closely, because garlic burns quickly if left unattended.*

*\*\*I use cottage cheese to add more protein to the dish. If you or your kids don't like chicken, you can nix it and still get a decent amount of protein with the pasta & sauce alone.*