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Description

This Grilled Chicken & Broccoli Rice Bowl with Creamy Garlic Parmesan Sauce is a delicious, satisfying meal that combines juicy grilled chicken, tender broccoli, fluffy rice, and a rich homemade garlic Parmesan sauce. Every bite offers a balance of savory grilled flavor, fresh vegetables, and creamy, cheesy goodness.

Perfect for busy weeknights, meal prep, or a comforting lunch, this chicken rice bowl uses simple ingredients to create a restaurant-inspired meal at home. The chicken provides plenty of protein, broccoli adds color and fiber, and rice supplies carbohydrates for energy. The creamy garlic Parmesan sauce brings everything together with a smooth texture and bold flavor.

You can easily customize this bowl by choosing brown rice, adjusting the sauce thickness, or adding extra vegetables. Whether you are looking for a high-protein dinner, a practical meal-prep option, or a flavorful family meal, this recipe is easy to make and satisfying to serve.

Can This Grilled Chicken & Broccoli Rice Bowl Support Weight Loss Goals?

This rice bowl can fit into a balanced eating plan because it combines lean protein, vegetables, and a portion of carbohydrates in one meal. Chicken helps provide protein, which supports muscle maintenance and can contribute to feelings of fullness. Broccoli adds fiber and volume, while rice supplies energy.

The creamy garlic Parmesan sauce is delicious but can add calories and saturated fat, depending on the amount of cream, butter, and cheese used. You can adjust the portion of sauce, use a lighter dairy option, or choose a moderate serving of rice to suit your needs.

Weight management depends on your overall eating pattern and portion sizes, not on a single recipe. This bowl is flexible enough to adapt to different preferences without sacrificing its comforting flavor.

Does This Recipe Fit a High-Protein Lifestyle?

Yes, this chicken and broccoli rice bowl is naturally suitable for a high-protein eating pattern because chicken breast is a lean source of protein. Parmesan cheese and dairy in the sauce contribute additional protein, although the sauce also adds fat and calories.

Broccoli supplies fiber and several important micronutrients, while rice contributes carbohydrates. For a lower-carb version, reduce the rice portion or replace some of it with cauliflower rice.

For meal prep, divide the chicken, broccoli, rice, and sauce into individual portions. This makes it easier to plan balanced lunches and dinners throughout the week.

My Personal Experience

- The grilled chicken adds incredible flavor.
Seasoning the chicken with garlic, paprika, and black pepper creates a savory crust that pairs beautifully with the creamy sauce.
- Broccoli balances the richness.
Tender-crisp broccoli adds freshness, color, and a slight bite that prevents the bowl from feeling too heavy.
- The sauce brings everything together.
Garlic and Parmesan create a creamy, savory sauce that coats the chicken and rice without needing complicated ingredients.
- It is ideal for meal preparation.
Cooking the main ingredients ahead of time makes it easy to assemble a satisfying lunch or dinner whenever you need one.

Perfect For

- High-protein meals
- Chicken dinner recipes
- Healthy-inspired rice bowls
- Easy weeknight dinners
- Meal-prep lunches
- Family-friendly meals
- Broccoli recipes
- Comfort food with balanced ingredients

- Low-carb adaptations using cauliflower rice
- Gym-friendly meal planning

Why You'll Love This Recipe

- Juicy, flavorful chicken.
A simple seasoning blend gives the chicken a savory grilled flavor without requiring a long ingredient list.
- Creamy garlic Parmesan sauce.
Garlic, cream, and Parmesan combine to create a rich sauce that makes the bowl taste indulgent.
- A balanced combination of ingredients.
Chicken, broccoli, and rice provide protein, vegetables, and carbohydrates in one convenient meal.
- Easy to customize.
You can use brown rice, add extra vegetables, or adjust the sauce according to your preferences.
- Great for meal prep.
The components can be cooked ahead and portioned into containers for convenient meals.
- Simple ingredients, satisfying results.
This recipe uses familiar ingredients to create a flavorful dish without complicated cooking techniques.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Overcooking the chicken.
Chicken breast can become dry if cooked too long. Use evenly sized pieces and cook until the thickest part reaches 165°F (74°C).
2. Overcooking the broccoli.
Boiling it for too long can make it mushy and dull in color. Steam or sauté it until tender-crisp.
3. Using high heat for the Parmesan sauce.
Excessive heat can cause the dairy to separate or the cheese to become grainy. Keep the sauce over low heat and add the Parmesan gradually.
4. Adding too much liquid to the sauce.
A thin sauce may not cling well to the chicken and rice. Let it simmer gently until slightly thickened before adding the cheese.

5. Serving the rice too wet or undercooked.

Follow the rice package instructions and allow the cooked rice to rest briefly before fluffing it with a fork.

6. Adding all the sauce at once.

Start with a moderate amount and add more to taste. This keeps the rice bowl flavorful without overwhelming the other ingredients.

Required Equipment

- Grill pan or outdoor grill — creates a flavorful sear on the chicken.
- Medium saucepan — cooks the rice evenly.
- Large skillet — prepares the creamy garlic Parmesan sauce.
- Steamer basket or small saucepan — cooks the broccoli until tender-crisp.
- Meat thermometer — checks that the chicken reaches a safe internal temperature.
- Whisk — combines the sauce ingredients smoothly.
- Cutting board and sharp knife — make preparing the chicken and broccoli easier.
- Measuring cups and spoons — help maintain consistent ingredient proportions.
- Meal-prep containers — keep portions organized for later meals.

Storage Instructions

- Refrigeration: Store leftovers in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 3–4 days.
- Separate the sauce when possible: Keeping it in a small separate container can help preserve the texture of the rice and chicken.
- Reheating: Heat until the food reaches 165°F (74°C). Add a small splash of milk or broth to the sauce if it has thickened.
- Meal prep: Cool the cooked components promptly and refrigerate within 2 hours of cooking.
- Freezing: The chicken, broccoli, and rice can be frozen, although the creamy sauce may separate after thawing. For the best texture, prepare the sauce fresh when possible.
- Avoid repeated reheating: Reheat only the portion you plan to eat.

Recipe Details

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 25 minutes
- Total Time: 40 minutes
- Yield: 4 servings

- Difficulty: Easy
- Cuisine: American-inspired
- Course: Lunch or dinner
- Method: Grilling, stovetop cooking, and steaming

Short Description

Juicy grilled chicken, tender broccoli, and fluffy rice come together in this satisfying bowl topped with a creamy garlic Parmesan sauce. It is an easy, protein-rich meal for weeknight dinners or meal prep.

Ingredients

For the Chicken

- 1½ pounds (680 g) boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¾ teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

For the Rice and Broccoli

- 1 cup uncooked long-grain white rice
- 2 cups water, or as directed on the rice package
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 1 teaspoon olive oil or butter
- Pinch of salt and black pepper

For the Creamy Garlic Parmesan Sauce

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup heavy cream

- ¼ cup milk
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, optional

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Chicken

Pat the chicken breasts dry with paper towels. If they are very thick, slice them horizontally or gently pound them to an even thickness so they cook uniformly.

In a small bowl, mix the olive oil, garlic powder, paprika, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and lemon juice. Rub the seasoning mixture over the chicken and let it rest for about 10 minutes while you prepare the other ingredients.

Step 2: Cook the Rice

Rinse the rice under cool water until the water runs mostly clear. Add it to a saucepan with the water and cook according to the package directions.

Once the rice is tender, remove it from the heat and let it rest, covered, for about 5 minutes. Fluff it gently with a fork.

Step 3: Grill the Chicken

Preheat a grill or grill pan over medium-high heat and lightly oil the cooking surface.

Cook the chicken until browned and cooked through, turning as needed. Cooking time varies with thickness, but evenly sized chicken breasts commonly take around 5-7 minutes per side.

Check the thickest part with a food thermometer. It must reach 165°F (74°C). Transfer the chicken to a clean plate and allow it to rest for 5 minutes before slicing.

Step 4: Cook the Broccoli

Steam the broccoli florets for about 4–6 minutes, or until bright green and tender-crisp.

Alternatively, sauté them in a skillet with a little olive oil or butter. Season lightly with salt and black pepper. Avoid cooking the broccoli until it becomes mushy.

Step 5: Start the Garlic Parmesan Sauce

Melt the butter in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add the minced garlic and cook for about 30–60 seconds, stirring frequently, until fragrant.

Add the flour and whisk for about 1 minute to create a smooth paste. Do not allow the garlic to brown excessively.

Step 6: Add the Cream and Milk

Gradually whisk in the heavy cream and milk. Continue stirring over low to medium-low heat until the sauce begins to thicken slightly.

Keep the heat gentle to prevent scorching. If the sauce becomes too thick, add a small splash of milk.

Step 7: Stir in the Parmesan

Reduce the heat to low and add the grated Parmesan a little at a time, whisking until melted and smooth.

Season with black pepper and taste before adding extra salt, as Parmesan is naturally salty. Stir in the parsley if desired.

Step 8: Assemble the Rice Bowls

Divide the cooked rice among four bowls. Add sliced grilled chicken and broccoli to each bowl.

Spoon the creamy garlic Parmesan sauce over the chicken and rice, or serve it on the side for

easier portion control.

Step 9: Garnish and Serve

Finish with extra Parmesan, freshly ground black pepper, or chopped parsley. Serve immediately while the chicken is juicy, the rice is warm, and the sauce is creamy.

Approximate Nutrition Information

Estimated per serving, assuming four servings and all ingredients listed above. Actual values vary by ingredient brands, chicken size, and the amount of sauce used.

Nutrient	Approximate Amount
Calories	650 kcal
Total Fat	27 g
Saturated Fat	13 g
Cholesterol	165 mg
Sodium	650 mg
Potassium	900 mg
Total Carbohydrates	53 g
Dietary Fiber	3 g
Net Carbohydrates	50 g
Total Sugars	4 g
Protein	49 g
Calcium	220 mg

Helpful Notes

- Use evenly sized chicken pieces: This helps the chicken cook at a similar rate and stay juicy.
- Grate Parmesan fresh: Freshly grated cheese generally melts more smoothly than some pre-shredded varieties.

- Keep the sauce on low heat: Gentle heat helps prevent separation and keeps the cheese creamy.
- Cook broccoli to your preferred texture: Tender-crisp broccoli gives the bowl more color and texture.
- Adjust the sauce consistency: Add a little milk to thin it or let it simmer gently to thicken it.
- Try brown rice: Brown rice adds a nuttier flavor and more fiber, although its cooking time is usually longer.
- Make it lower in carbohydrates: Replace some or all of the rice with cauliflower rice and adjust the sauce ingredients as needed.
- Prep ingredients in advance: Season the chicken and cut the broccoli ahead of time, keeping raw chicken refrigerated until cooking.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I use chicken thighs instead of chicken breasts?

Yes. Boneless, skinless chicken thighs work well and often produce a juicier result because they contain more fat. Cook them until the thickest part reaches 165°F (74°C).

2. Can I use frozen broccoli?

Yes. Frozen broccoli is convenient and works well in this bowl. Cook it according to the package directions, drain any excess water, and avoid overcooking it.

3. Can I make the garlic Parmesan sauce without heavy cream?

You can use a mixture of milk and a little extra flour, or use evaporated milk for a lighter sauce. The result will be less rich, and the thickening method may need adjustment.

4. Why did my Parmesan sauce become grainy?

The sauce may have been too hot when the cheese was added, or the cheese may not have melted smoothly. Lower the heat before adding freshly grated Parmesan and stir gently until combined.

5. Is this chicken rice bowl good for meal prep?

Yes. Divide the rice, chicken, and broccoli into individual containers and store the sauce separately when possible. Refrigerate promptly and use within 3–4 days.

6. How can I make this recipe lower in carbohydrates?

Replace the white rice with cauliflower rice or use a smaller rice portion and more broccoli. You can also adjust the sauce ingredients, but the carbohydrate content will depend on the products used.

7. Can I make this recipe higher in protein?

The recipe already provides a substantial amount of protein from chicken. To increase it further, adjust the chicken portion or serve the bowl with an additional protein-rich side, while considering your overall serving needs.

8. Can I prepare the sauce ahead of time?

Yes. Refrigerate it in an airtight container and reheat gently over low heat, whisking frequently. Add a small splash of milk if needed to restore its creamy consistency.

9. What other vegetables work in this rice bowl?

Bell peppers, spinach, zucchini, asparagus, green beans, and mushrooms all pair well with grilled chicken and garlic Parmesan sauce.

10. How do I keep the chicken from drying out?

Pound thick breasts to an even thickness, avoid overcooking, and let the chicken rest briefly before slicing. A thermometer is the most reliable way to check doneness without cooking the meat longer than necessary.