- Preparation Time: 15 minutes
- Cooking Time: 55-60 minutes
- Resting Time: 10 minutes
- Total Time: 1 hour 20 minutes
- Yield: 6-8 servings
- Skill Level: Beginner
- Cuisine: Italian-American
- Intensity: Low to Moderate

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Why You’ll Love This Recipe

- Incredibly Moist and Flavorful: Ground chicken can be dry, but the addition of Parmesan, sautéed vegetables, and a touch of milk keeps this loaf perfectly tender and juicy.
- Packed with Garlic and Parmesan: This is not a subtle recipe. It’s a celebration of bold,

nutty Parmesan and aromatic garlic. The flavor is complex and deeply satisfying.

- Lighter Comfort Food: By using ground chicken instead of beef or pork, you significantly reduce the fat content without sacrificing any of the comfort-food appeal.
- Perfect for Meal Prep: This meatloaf slices beautifully and reheats wonderfully. Make it on Sunday for a week of delicious lunches or easy dinners.
- Family-Friendly: Even the pickiest eaters will love the mild, cheesy flavor. The “frosting” of Parmesan cheese on top is an irresistible selling point.

Ingredients

For the Meatloaf:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 lbs (900g) ground chicken (you can also use ground turkey)
- 1 cup Panko breadcrumbs
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for topping
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup whole milk (or 2% milk)

- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the Glaze (Optional but Recommended):

- 1/2 cup marinara sauce (your favorite store-bought or homemade)
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey or brown sugar

Equipment

- Large skillet
- Large mixing bowl
- Loaf pan (9×5-inch)
- Rimmed baking sheet (optional, for easier cleanup)

- Aluminum foil
- Meat thermometer (highly recommended)

Step-by-Step Instructions

Part 1: The Prep Work (Time: 15 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Preheat Your Oven: Position a rack in the center of your oven and preheat to 350°F (175°C). If using, line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil for easy cleanup.

2. Sauté the Vegetables: Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and red bell pepper. Sauté for 5-7 minutes, until the vegetables have softened and the onion is translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for another 30-60 seconds, until fragrant. Be careful not to burn the garlic. Remove the skillet from the heat and let the mixture cool slightly. This step is crucial for building a deep flavor base and ensuring the vegetables are tender in the final loaf.

3. Prepare the Pan: Lightly grease a 9×5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray or a little olive oil. Alternatively, you can shape the meatloaf free-form on the prepared baking sheet.

4. Combine the Dry Ingredients: In a large mixing bowl, combine the Panko breadcrumbs, 1 cup of grated Parmesan cheese, parsley, oregano, garlic powder, onion powder, red pepper flakes (if using), salt, and pepper. Mix well to ensure the seasonings are evenly distributed.

Part 2: Assembling the Loaf (Time: 5 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Add the Wet Ingredients: To the dry ingredients, add the ground chicken, beaten eggs, and milk. Add the cooled sautéed vegetable mixture.

2. Gently Mix: Using your hands or a sturdy spatula, gently mix everything together until

just combined. Be careful not to overmix. Overmixing will result in a tough, dense meatloaf. Stop as soon as all the ingredients are incorporated.

3. Shape the Loaf: Transfer the meat mixture to the prepared loaf pan. Gently press it into an even layer, making sure there are no large air pockets. If using a baking sheet, shape the mixture into a firm, even loaf about 9 inches long and 4 inches wide. Smooth the top with the back of a spoon or your hands.

Part 3: The Bake and Glaze (Time: 55-60 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

1. Initial Bake: Place the meatloaf in the preheated oven and bake for 35 minutes.

2. Prepare the Glaze: While the meatloaf is baking, whisk together the marinara sauce, balsamic vinegar, and honey (or brown sugar) in a small bowl. Set aside.

3. Apply the Glaze and Topping: After 35 minutes, carefully remove the meatloaf from the oven. It will have started to set and shrink slightly from the sides. Spoon the glaze evenly over the top of the loaf. Then, generously sprinkle the top with an extra 1/4 to 1/2 cup of grated Parmesan cheese.

4. Finish Baking: Return the meatloaf to the oven and continue to bake for another 20-25 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F (74°C) on a meat thermometer. The top should be golden brown and the cheese melted and bubbly.

5. Crucial Resting Period: Remove the meatloaf from the oven and let it rest in the pan for at least 10-15 minutes. Do not skip this step! Resting allows the juices to redistribute throughout the loaf, ensuring it stays moist and slices cleanly.

Part 4: Serving and Storing (Time: 10 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Slice and Serve: Carefully run a knife around the edges of the loaf pan to loosen it, then invert it onto a serving platter or cutting board. Slice into thick, hearty pieces.

2. Serving Suggestions: Serve with creamy mashed potatoes, roasted vegetables, a simple

arugula salad, or over a bed of spaghetti with extra marinara sauce.

3. Storage: Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. To reheat, place slices in a microwave-safe dish, cover with a damp paper towel, and heat until warmed through. You can also reheat slices in a 350°F oven for 10-15 minutes. This meatloaf also freezes beautifully. Wrap the cooled, sliced loaf tightly in plastic wrap and then foil, and freeze for up to 3 months.

Nutrition Information (Per Serving)

Disclaimer: Nutritional information is an estimate and will vary based on the exact ingredients and brands you use. This calculation is for 1 of 8 servings.

- Calories: 345 kcal
- Total Fat: 16g
- Saturated Fat: 6g
- Cholesterol: 165mg
- Sodium: 680mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 12g
- Dietary Fiber: 1g
- Total Sugars: 4g
- Protein: 38g