



Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Panera Chicken Noodle Soup

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Tips and Time Savers

- Pasta is "al dente" when it's fork tender—not crunchy, but not mushy. Plus, the noodles will continue to cook in the broth a bit, so be careful not to overcook them in the first place.
- Feel free to cut the raw chicken breasts into bite-sized chunks before adding them to the broth so it cooks faster. You won't need to shred it.
- Sautéing the veggies caramelizes them and creates those flavorful brown bits at the bottom of your pot—don't skip this step! Make sure you scrape up all the brown bits with a wooden spoon after you deglaze the pot with the chicken stock.
- I recommend using low-sodium chicken broth if you buy it from the store since we also add salt to this recipe.
- Your chicken is done cooking when the internal temperature is 165 degrees F and the juices run clear.
- I like to add the cooked noodles to each bowl and pour the soup over, rather than putting all the noodles in at once. Do whichever you please!
- This is an easy recipe to make dairy-free and gluten-free—just use olive oil or vegetable oil instead of butter and gluten-free noodles!
- Portion out the leftover chicken soup into single-serving containers for a quick and easy lunch the next day.
- Make a double batch of chicken noodle soup to feed a crowd at your next family gathering, potluck, or game night party!

Variations

- Swap skinless chicken breasts with chicken thighs for an even richer, more savory broth.
- Have some leftover rotisserie chicken in your fridge? Cut down prep time and use it up in this homemade chicken noodle soup!
- Feel free to make your own chicken stock from scratch with the carcass of a rotisserie chicken or leftover chicken bones.
- In addition to thyme, bay leaves, fresh parsley, and black pepper, feel free to add other herbs, like rosemary or dill. Or, sprinkle in some red pepper flakes for spice!

Storage

Allow leftover Panera chicken noodle soup to cool to room temperature. Then, refrigerate it in an airtight container for up to four days.

If you have more than one day's worth of leftovers, store the extra cooked noodles in a separate container so they don't get mushy in the soup.

Homemade chicken noodle soup freezes really well, too! Transfer cooled leftovers into an airtight container and freeze for up to six months.

Thaw frozen chicken noodle soup in the refrigerator overnight. Then, reheat the leftover soup in a saucepan on medium heat until simmering, stirring frequently. You can also use the microwave for smaller portions.

FAQs

Why does my chicken noodle soup taste bland?

Because you skipped sautéing the veggies, didn't you? Those brown bits at the bottom of the pot are where the flavor lives. Deglaze and repent.

Can I use rotisserie chicken instead of raw chicken?

Yes ma'am. It's not cheating—it's resourceful. Shred it up and let the broth do the rest.

Do I have to use fresh herbs?

Nope. Fresh herbs are lovely, but dried thyme and parsley work just fine. Add a little more attitude and you'll never notice.

Can I make this dairy-free or gluten-free?

Sure can. Use olive oil instead of butter, grab gluten-free noodles, and suddenly you're the hero of allergy-friendly comfort food.

Does Panera use chicken thighs or breasts?

Breasts—but thighs bring more flavor. Your kitchen, your rules.

Can I make this in an Instant Pot?

Absolutely. Toss it in, hit the soup button, and feel smug while technology does the heavy lifting.

What are the best noodles for Panera's chicken noodle soup?

You can use wide egg noodles, thin egg noodles, flat ones, or curly egg noodles in homestyle chicken soup—whatever shape you prefer!

Nice to have

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👉 Restless Chipotle recommends: A sturdy Dutch oven is the backbone of good soup. This 6-quart enameled cast iron beauty (with lid and silicone accessories) goes from stovetop to oven up to 500°F without breaking a sweat. Perfect for simmering chicken noodle soup, baking crusty bread, or just looking fabulous in red on your stove. [Grab it here](https://www.restlesschipotle.com/copycat-panera-chicken-noodle-soup/)