Kitchen Cheat Sheet: Herb Baked Chicken with Cream Gravy

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Tips and Time Savers

- You don't need to add olive oil or any grease to the pan before baking. The chicken will release juices that will prevent it from sticking. Doesn't hurt to give it a spritz of cooking spray.
- Always pat chicken dry with a paper towel before cooking with it.
- Scrape the bottom of the pan well to get all the browned bits of chicken drippings out. This is what adds the most flavor to your delicious gravy.
- If you don't have a kitchen thermometer, baking is done when the juices of the chicken run clear (rather than pink or red.) However, this method is trickier, not as accurate as measuring by temperature, and often results in drier meat.
- Let the milk and half and half come to room temperature while the chicken cooks. Avoid adding ice-cold milk to the gravy mixture.

Storage

Pack up the chicken breasts into an airtight container. A single layer is best to preserve the herby crust, but it's fine to layer them, too.

Refrigerate the chicken for four to five days, or freeze it for up to three months. Let it thaw (if frozen) then just use the microwave to warm it up!

You can also store the brown gravy, but I'd do so separately from the chicken. Pour any remaining room-temperature gravy into an airtight container and refrigerate for two or three days at the most. Otherwise, freeze it for a few months.

To rewarm the gravy, let it thaw in the fridge if frozen. Then, place it in a small pan and warm it over low heat, stirring occasionally.

Variations

- You can make this herb-baked chicken recipe with pork chops. Use an instant-read thermometer to make sure the chops reach at least 145 degrees F (the cooking time may be less than chicken.)
- Using skin-on chicken? If you have a few minutes, you can sear it in a few tablespoons of hot oil, first, for extra crispy skin.
- Feel free to swap the garlic powder for onion powder, if you prefer.
- You can add diced onions to the butter (in the gravy portion of the recipe) and then proceed as written to make a tasty onion gravy!
- Accidentally toss your chicken drippings? No worries—use some chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth instead.

FAQs

Is this the same thing as smothered chicken?
Close cousins, different personalities. Smothered chicken is usually cooked on the stovetop, while this baked chicken with cream gravy lets the oven do the heavy lifting. Same cozy payoff, less hovering.

Can I use chicken breasts without them drying out?
Yes—if you don't overbake them. Bake just until they hit about 160°F, then let them rest while you make the gravy. They'll finish cooking gently and stay juicy instead of turning into poultry jerky.

What kind of gravy is this?
This is a creamy white gravy made from pan drippings, butter, flour, milk, and a splash of cream. No packets. No weird shortcuts. Just real gravy doing what it's supposed to do.

Can I make baked chicken with cream gravy ahead of time?
You can bake the chicken ahead, but the gravy is happiest when it's fresh. If you do make it early, reheat it slowly and whisk like you're trying to save a relationship.

What should I serve with baked chicken and gravy?
Mashed potatoes, rice, biscuits, green beans, fried cabbage—anything that appreciates gravy and knows its role. This is not the time for a dry side dish with opinions.

Can I use thighs instead of chicken breasts?
Absolutely. Boneless thighs work beautifully and stay extra juicy. Just keep an eye on cooking time and trust your thermometer, not vibes.

Nice to Have

As an Amazon Associate, I earn commission from qualifying purchases.

If you don't have a roasting rack I totally recommend this one - I love mine. This Circulon nonstick roasting pan with rack is my go-to when I want chicken, turkey, and other roasts to roast evenly and release without a dramatic struggle. It's roomy, sturdy, and the nonstick actually works—so you get all those good pan drippings without chiseling them off afterward. Big enough for weeknight dinners, tough enough for Sunday supper, and easy to clean, which frankly makes it a kitchen hero. It comes with a rack which is actually easy to lift out of the pan. See it here.