

Real Life with Alyssa

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Crispy chicken Parmesan

WITH FRESH GARLIC PARMESAN BROCCOLI



AI-generated serving image.

A complete dinner, two ways

Serves 4 | Boneless, skinless chicken thighs | Fresh, unfrozen broccoli

Stovetop meal: about 40-50 minutes **Oven meal:** about 45-55 minutes

Golden Parmesan-panko chicken with marinara and melted mozzarella, paired with garlicky broccoli. Serve with 4 slices of your favorite crusty bread.

Choose your route

No oven: use the covered-skillet chicken method and the skillet broccoli method. Two skillets and two burners let both dishes finish together.

Oven available: bake both dishes at **425°F (220°C)** on separate pans. The timing guide on page 4 brings everything together.

Before you start: You need an instant-read thermometer, three shallow breading bowls, tongs, and a clean plate. For the oven route, use two rimmed sheet pans; for the stovetop route, use a large skillet with a lid plus a second skillet.

The chicken

CRISPY THIGH PARMESAN | 4 SERVINGS

Prep: 20 minutes **Stovetop:** 15-20 minutes per batch

Oven: 23-30 minutes, plus preheating. Times assume evenly flattened thighs.

Ingredients - use for either method

1½ lb (680 g)	4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, about 6 oz each
½ cup	All-purpose flour
2 large	Eggs, beaten with 1 tablespoon water
1 cup	Panko breadcrumbs
½ cup	Finely grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon each	Garlic powder, Italian seasoning and paprika
½ teaspoon each	Fine salt and black pepper
1 cup	Marinara sauce, warmed separately
1 cup (4 oz)	Shredded low-moisture mozzarella
For stovetop	¼ cup neutral cooking oil, plus up to 2 tablespoons if needed
For oven	2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
Optional	2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or parsley

Prep for both methods

1. Flatten and dry. Unfold thighs, trim excess fat, and flatten between sheets of parchment to an even ½-inch thickness. Pat dry. Do not rinse raw chicken.

2. Bread. Put flour in one bowl and beaten eggs with water in a second. In a third, mix panko, Parmesan, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, paprika, salt and pepper. Coat each thigh in flour, then egg, then crumbs, pressing to adhere. Discard leftover breading that touched raw chicken.

A. Stovetop - no oven needed

3. Fry. Heat ¼ cup neutral oil in a large skillet over medium heat until shimmering, about 325-350°F if measured. Add thighs in a single layer without crowding. Fry 5-7 minutes per side, adjusting heat to prevent burning. Cook in batches if needed; add reserved oil between batches.

4. Check, then top. Check the thickest part of every thigh from the side: it must reach **165°F (74°C)**. If short, reduce to medium-low and continue cooking, turning as needed. Spoon ¼ cup warm marinara onto each thigh, leaving edges exposed, then add ¼ cup mozzarella.

5. Melt. Reduce heat to low, cover 2-3 minutes until cheese melts, then uncover promptly. Rest 3 minutes and garnish if desired. Brief covering preserves more crunch than simmering the chicken in sauce.

B. Oven - bake until golden

3. Bake. Preheat to **425°F (220°C)**. Grease a rimmed sheet pan with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Arrange breaded thighs with space between them; drizzle the remaining tablespoon over the coating. Bake 20-25 minutes, flipping gently halfway through.

4. Top and finish. Check every thigh for **165°F (74°C)**; continue baking if needed. Top each with ¼ cup warm marinara and ¼ cup mozzarella. Bake another 3-5 minutes until melted. Rest 3 minutes; garnish if desired.

The broccoli

FRESH GARLIC + PARMESAN | 4 SIDE SERVINGS

Prep: 10 minutes **Stovetop:** 10-13 minutes **Oven:** 18-23 minutes

Ingredients - use for either method

1½ lb (680 g)	Fresh broccoli, about 2 medium heads; cut into even 1½-inch florets. Peel and thinly slice tender stems.
2 tablespoons	Olive oil, divided
4 cloves	Fresh garlic, finely minced (about 1 tablespoon)
1/3 cup	Finely grated Parmesan cheese
½ teaspoon	Fine salt, or less if your Parmesan is salty
¼ teaspoon	Black pepper
1 tablespoon	Fresh lemon juice (optional)
1/8 teaspoon	Red pepper flakes (optional)
Stovetop only	3 tablespoons water

Prep for both methods

Rinse the broccoli and dry it well. Keep florets a similar size so they finish evenly. Measure garlic and cheese before cooking; garlic goes in near the end so it stays fragrant.

A. Stovetop - tender with browned edges

- 1. Brown.** Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add broccoli in a single layer as much as possible; let it cook 3-4 minutes, stirring once or twice, until browned in spots.
- 2. Steam.** Carefully add 3 tablespoons water and cover. Reduce to medium; cook 3-4 minutes, until bright green and just fork-tender. Uncover and let remaining water evaporate, 1-2 minutes. If the pan dries before stems soften, add 1 tablespoon water and cover briefly again.
- 3. Add garlic.** Reduce to medium-low. Push broccoli aside, add the remaining tablespoon oil and minced garlic to the open space, and stir 30-60 seconds until fragrant. Toss with broccoli, salt, pepper and optional red pepper flakes.
- 4. Finish.** Remove from heat. Toss with Parmesan and optional lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve immediately for the best texture.

B. Oven - roasted and crisp at the edges

- 1. Season.** Preheat to **425°F (220°C)**. Toss dry broccoli with 1½ tablespoons olive oil, salt, pepper and optional red pepper flakes. Spread on a rimmed sheet pan with room between florets.
- 2. Roast.** Roast 15-18 minutes, tossing halfway, until nearly tender and browned at the edges. Mix garlic with the remaining ½ tablespoon oil, toss through broccoli, then roast 3-5 minutes more. Watch closely so garlic does not burn.
- 3. Finish.** Remove from the oven and toss with Parmesan and optional lemon juice. Taste and serve hot. Add cheese after roasting so it coats the broccoli without scorching.

Bring it all together

COORDINATED MEAL TIMING

These are practical schedules, not doneness guarantees. Pan size, burner strength and thigh thickness change timing. The stovetop schedule assumes all 4 thighs fit without crowding; allow 15-20 extra minutes if a second batch is needed.

All-stovetop dinner | about 40-50 minutes

0-10 minutes	Prep broccoli, mince garlic and measure ingredients. Set out bread. Prep vegetables before handling raw chicken.
10-20 minutes	Flatten and bread chicken; wash hands and sanitize the work surface. Heat the chicken skillet near the end.
20-34 minutes	Fry chicken 5-7 minutes per side. Around minute 24, start broccoli in the second skillet: brown, steam and evaporate the water.
34-40 minutes	Check every thigh for 165°F; allow extra cooking time if needed. Warm marinara in a small pan or microwave. Add sauce and cheese, then cover chicken 2-3 minutes. Finish broccoli with garlic, Parmesan and lemon.
40-45+ minutes	Rest chicken 3 minutes. Plate both dishes and serve with bread. If chicken needs longer, finish broccoli closer to serving time.

All-oven dinner | about 45-55 minutes

0-20 minutes	Preheat to 425°F. Prep broccoli, then flatten and bread chicken. Use separate rimmed pans and separate utensils for raw chicken.
20 minutes	Put chicken on the upper-middle rack. Keep broccoli on a separate rack above any exposed raw chicken juices; swap rack positions only after chicken is cooked if needed.
25 minutes	Put broccoli into the oven. Flip chicken at its halfway point, about minute 30-32. Toss broccoli halfway through its roasting time.
40-45 minutes	Check chicken for 165°F. Warm marinara separately. When chicken is safe, add sauce and mozzarella; return for 3-5 minutes. Add garlic-oil mixture to broccoli after its first 15-18 minutes.
45-53 minutes	Remove chicken when cheese melts; rest 3 minutes. Remove broccoli after its final 3-5 minutes, toss with Parmesan and optional lemon, and serve with bread.

Crunch, safety and serving

Keep the crust crisp: use warm sauce sparingly on top, leave breaded edges visible, and serve soon after melting the cheese. Extra marinara can be warmed and served on the side.

Use a thermometer: every thigh must reach **165°F (74°C)** in its thickest part before serving. Insert the probe from the side into the center; golden breading and melted cheese do not establish doneness.

Food-safety reference: [USDA FSIS - Safe Minimum Internal Temperature Chart](#). Cooking times are estimates.