

TOMATO, BASIL, AND MOZZARELLA CHICKEN

Tomato, basil, and mozzarella just go together. This recipe is a healthier twist on chicken parmesan because the chicken isn't breaded. You definitely won't miss the breadcrumbs in this easy dish that's ready in 20 minutes and packed with flavor. The tomatoes help keep the chicken moist and juicy, the basil packs a flavorful punch, and the cheese is gooey and wonderful. Spaghetti, angel hair, ziti, or your favorite pasta will also work as will fresh tomatoes.

- **Yield:** serves 4
- **Prep Time:** 5 minutes
- **Cook Time:** about 15 minutes
- **Total Time:** about 20 minutes

- 8 ounces pasta (I used rotini; spaghetti, angel hair, ziti, etc. may be substituted)
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - about 1.25 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, thinly sliced
 - salt and pepper, for seasoning chicken
 - one 14.5-ounce can petite diced tomatoes
 - 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper, or to taste
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt, optional and to taste
 - about 4 ounces mozzarella cheese (shredded or thinly sliced from a block; fresh mozzarella may also be used)
 - 1/4 to 1/3 cup fresh basil leaves (loosely packed when measuring), torn or chopped into small pieces
1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside. While pasta is cooking, start the chicken.
 2. To a large skillet, add the oil, chicken, season with salt and pepper, and cook over medium-high heat for about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Cooking time will vary based on the thickness of the chicken. Chicken should be about 80 to 90% cooked through.
 3. Add the tomatoes and juice to the skillet. Try to pour the tomatoes next to the chicken and in between pieces, rather than directly on top.
 4. Evenly sprinkle the oregano, pepper, optional salt (some brands of canned tomatoes are already salty enough, some aren't; add salt to taste) and allow mixture to boil for about 3 to 5 minutes, or until some of the liquid from the tomatoes has evaporated.
 5. Turn the heat to low, evenly add the mozzarella to the top of each chicken breast, and cover the skillet until the cheese has melted, about 1 to 2 minutes.
 6. Evenly sprinkle the basil, stir gently to incorporate it into the tomatoes, and wait about 1 minute or until basil has wilted slightly.
 7. Plate the chicken and tomatoes on top of the pasta. Dish is best warm and fresh but will keep airtight in the fridge for up to 5 days.