

one-pot cheesy cajun chicken and rice

BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS

Serves 4 to 6

Tools

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Wide pot/pan/skillet with a lid (you can use a baking sheet as a lid!)

Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 to 5 teaspoons cajun seasoning, divided
- 2 to 3 tablespoons neutral cooking oil (such as olive, grapeseed, avocado)
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 bell peppers (I used orange and red), diced
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 2 cups cauliflower rice
- 1 cup white rice (basmati or jasmine are my go-tos)
- 8 ounces (2 cups) grated sharp cheddar cheese
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup finely chopped parsley, plus more for garnish

Pat **4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts** dry with paper towels and season with **1/2 teaspoon cajun seasoning** per chicken breast - but do your thing! Cajun seasoning has some heat to it, so really lay it on thick for the spice lovers, and season it very lightly for anyone who doesn't love heat. You can make everyone's differently, just remember which chicken breast belongs to whom! Read the label of your cajun seasoning - if it doesn't have any salt in it, also season the chicken breasts with salt.

Let the chicken marinate at room temperature for at least 15 minutes.

Warm **2 tablespoons cooking oil** in a wide (12 inch preferably) pot, saucepan, or Dutch oven over medium-high heat for several minutes, until beginning to smoke. Add the chicken breasts, rough-side down, and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until golden-brown. Flip and cook for an additional 1 to 2 minutes, until golden-brown all over. Transfer chicken breasts to a holding plate.

If the pan has no oil left in it, add **1 tablespoon oil**. Add **1 diced yellow onion, 2 diced bell peppers, 1 to 3 teaspoons of cajun seasoning** (depending on how spicy you can handle it!), and **1 teaspoon garlic powder** to the pot and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes until slightly softened.

Stir in **2 cups low-sodium chicken stock, 2 cups cauliflower rice, and 1 cup white rice** and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce to the lowest heat possible, cover, and cook for 7 minutes. This timing is important so that the rice and chicken both cook perfectly, so set timers!

After those 7 minutes, uncover the pot, place the seared chicken breasts on top without overlapping them, and re-cover the pot. Cook for an additional 9 minutes.

After those 9 minutes, start checking the chicken for doneness every 1 minute. **DON'T YOU DARE OVERCOOK YOUR CHICKEN!** When it reaches 160°F internally, remove the chicken from the pot and place it on a cutting board to rest. It will continue cooking to reach 165°F.

Once the chicken is cooked through, taste the rice. When it's tender, remove the pot from heat and stir in **2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese and the juice of 1 lemon**. Taste and season with **salt and pepper** as needed - the amount needed will depend on the sodium level of your chicken stock. If the rice mixture is too thick, add another splash of stock! If it's too liquid-y, keep stirring and cooking! Stir in **1 cup finely chopped parsley**.

Slice the chicken breasts into 1/2-inch thick pieces on the bias. Serve immediately, garnished with additional parsley and pepper.