

Buttered Tomato, Basil & Chicken Orzo Bake

**Gather
& Feast**

By Ashley Alexander

Here's a warm, comforting one-pot meal that is so easy to prepare with little hands-on time. It's the perfect weeknight meal. The orzo is smooth and almost creamy, pairing perfectly with the chunks of perfectly marinated chicken and bursts of sweet cherry tomatoes. It's like a cozy, wintry bowl that captures the taste of summer with those cherry tomatoes, fresh basil, and lemon zest. It's so good!

SERVES 4-6 | **PREP TIME** 15 min (+ optional marinating) | **COOK TIME** 30 min | **TOTAL TIME** 45 min

INGREDIENTS

Chicken

- 6 chicken thighs, cut into roughly 2-inch-sized pieces
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed or freshly grated
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon smokey paprika
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Generous pinch of salt

Risoni/orzo bake

- 50g butter
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed or freshly grated
- 1 1/2 cups dry orzo/risoni
- 2 cups chicken broth/stock
- 200-250g cherry tomatoes (2 punnets)
- 2 large handfuls fresh baby spinach
- 2 large handfuls fresh basil leaves
- Small handful of freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano or grana padano
- Sea salt to taste
- Freshly cracked black pepper to taste



METHOD

1. Mix the chicken, olive oil, garlic, oregano, smokey paprika, lemon zest, and salt together in a bowl until the chicken is well coated.
2. If you're short on time skip the following step and cook the chicken right away.
3. If you're preparing this in advance allow the chicken to marinate in the fridge overnight. I will often prepare the chicken in the morning and allow to marinate in the fridge throughout the day before I serve it later that night. The chicken can be left for up to 2 days marinating in the fridge.
4. Preheat your oven to 180°C/350°F.
5. Place a large ovenproof saucepan or cast iron pan onto medium to high heat.
6. Sear the chicken until golden brown on both sides, remove from the pan, and set aside in a bowl (the chicken doesn't need to be cooked through at this stage as it will continue to cook in the oven).
7. Turn down the heat to medium and to the pot add half of the butter along with the onion, then sauté for a minute or two, until the onion is soft.
8. Add the garlic and stir to combine.
9. Next, add the orzo and fry off for a minute or two in the butter, onions, and garlic.
10. Now add back in the browned chicken along with any juices, the cherry tomatoes, and stir to combine.
11. Next, add the stock along with the baby spinach and basil.
12. Stir to combine and until the spinach has wilted slightly.
13. Add the remaining butter and freshly grated parmesan, then stir through until the butter has melted.
14. Spread the mixture out evenly and place into the oven (without a lid) for 20 minutes at 180°C/350°F.
15. Remove from the oven and allow to sit for 5 minutes before serving.

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Find the recipe and watch the video online:

<https://www.gatherandfeast.com/buttered-tomato-basil-chicken-orzo-bake>

Let me know if you make the recipe! x **@gatherandfeast**