

# Creamy Chicken Orzo with Sage–Tried & True Recipes

Serves: 4 | Cook time: 45 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

- 12 sage leaves, divided
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1 large shallot, peeled and diced
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 teaspoon silk chili flakes or use a pinch of crushed red pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 8 ounces dry orzo
- 1 parmesan rind
- 4–6 cups water or vegetable stock, plus more if needed (See note below)
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 5 ounces baby spinach
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/3 cup neutral oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Grated parmesan, for garnish

## METHOD

### Prepare the sage:

1. Set aside 8 sage leaves. Finely mince the remaining 4 sage leaves.

### Cook the chicken:

1. Heat the 1 tablespoon olive oil in a wide pot over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and cook for 10–12 minutes, breaking it up as it cooks. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Add the shallot to the chicken and cook for 4–5 minutes until it begins to soften. Add the minced garlic, minced sage, and silk chili flakes and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.

### Toast the orzo:

1. Melt the butter into the chicken. Once melted and bubbly, add the orzo and cook for 1–2 minutes until it begins to toast lightly. Season with salt and pepper.

### Simmer the orzo:

1. Pour in the water and stir to lift any orzo stuck to the pot. Bring to a boil, add the parmesan rind if using, and then reduce heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes or until the orzo is al dente. Stir often to prevent the orzo from sticking, and add more water as needed if the orzo absorbs too much liquid.

### Finish the orzo:

1. Taste the orzo and add more salt and pepper if needed. Pour in the heavy cream and turn the heat to medium. Once the liquid is bubbling, add the baby spinach and juice from 1 lemon and cook for 5 minutes until wilted. Taste and season, and then turn off the heat.

### Fry the sage leaves:

1. As the orzo simmers, fry the sage leaves. Heat 1/3 cup neutral oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Once shimmering and hot, add 6 of the smallest sage leaves. Cook for 45 seconds until crispy. Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to a paper towel-lined plate.
2. Take the remaining 2 sage leaves and bruise the leaves by squeezing them between your fingers and then tear the leaves in half. Add to the oil, stir once, and turn off the heat. Let stand for 3–5 minutes, stirring occasionally, to fully infuse the oil with the sage flavor. Remove and discard the leaves.

### To serve:

1. Spoon the cooked orzo between bowls. Crumble the crispy sage leaves on top and drizzle with the reserved sage oil. Enjoy!