

Creamy Garlic Shells with Chicken Recipe (the “Template” recipe)

I call this the template recipe, as it’s a perfect menu for lots of great choices. Just swap out the noodle side dish, with any other flavor of pasta or rice sides, and add chicken or beef, and you’ve got a multitude of flavors to choose from! This serves 2 easily, and adding the weight of all ingredients puts you right at the 2lbs for 2 people weight for dinner, a nice “lightweight” and tasty option for the backcountry!

- 1 - 4.9 ounce Italian Sides, by Knorr, “Creamy Garlic Shells”
- 1 - 7 ounce Chunk Chicken Breast, in a foil pack.
- 1 – small can of sliced button mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon sweet basil
- 1 tablespoon butter, or margarine
- 1 tablespoon garlic salt (or more to your taste)
- 1/6 cup powdered milk
- 2 ounces olive oil

AT HOME

Pack the basil, garlic salt, and olive oil in small plastic screw top containers that can be found at just about any outdoor retailer, like REI. Take the 1/6 cup powdered milk, and put this in a ziplock sandwich baggie, and write on the outside of the baggie, “add 4oz water” so you will remember in the field how much will make a ½ cup of milk. (At least, for me, mister forgetful, this works well...) Cut off a 1 tablespoon chunk of butter from a stick, and wrap it in tinfoil, and place in the freezer until it’s time to head out. Oh, and...Don’t forget the can opener!!! Using your prized knife to pry open a tin can is not beneficial to the blade. And, rocks don’t work so well, either...

IN CAMP

Pour the olive oil into small fryingpan, add mushrooms, garlic salt, basil, and chunk chicken breast, and let simmer until golden brown, then set aside. Add 4oz water to your baggie with the powdered milk, and mix. Now, in a 1.5 or 2 liter cookpot, bring to boil 1 ½ cups of water, add the now ½ cup milk, the butter, and add noodles. Directions say this should take only 7 minutes, but I’ve found that 10 to 12 minutes on a Jetboil stove is ideal. Once the noodles are just about done, add the meat and mushrooms, stir in, and let set for about a minute. Serves two.

Still hungry, or need a bigger meal? How about this.

1 pkg of Idahoan Instant mashed potatoes and roasted garlic, 4 oz package. (Here, too, you can pick the flavor that best suits your tastes, as there are many options). Boil 2 cups water; then pour in a double lined 1 gal. Zip lock freezer bag, knead with your hands, (might need gloves, it gets hot!) then, let set for a couple minutes. Next, pull out the inside liner with the spuds, cut off a corner, and squeeze out your portion like a frosting bag, works well, no mess, no fuss!!!

Even better! If it’s in season, and you know your wild mushrooms, you can replace the canned button mushrooms with fresh, wild, savory mushrooms, like Chantrelle, King Boletus, Hedgehogs, etc...