Tomato/chicken pasta

INGREDIENTS

* 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts (or tenders)
* salt and pepper
* 1/4 cup olive oil
* 5–6 medium-sized tomatoes, diced (peeled first: mark an X on the top of the tomatoes, place the tomatoes in boiling water for a few minutes, remove and peel)
* 3 cloves garlic, minced
* one handful fresh basil, loosely packed, cut into ribbons (dried basil to taste works fine!)
* 1/4 cup salted butter (margarine also works fine!)
* 8 ounces pasta, like spaghetti, linguine, or bucatini

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cover the chicken with plastic wrap and pound each piece to an even thickness, about one inch or so in the thickest parts (this just helps it cook faster and more evenly). Remove the plastic and sprinkle each piece of chicken generously with sea salt and freshly ground pepper.
2. Prep the tomatoes, garlic, and basil and set aside. Make the pasta according to package directions.
3. Heat the olive oil in a large heavy skillet until a drop of water sizzles across the top. Add the chicken and pan-fry for several minutes on each side – the goal here is to get the chicken cooked AND get a nice browning on the outside. When the chicken is done, set aside.
4. Give the oil a few minutes to cool, add the tomatoes, and return to heat (if you add the tomatoes to the hot oil it will be a splatter-fest). Simmer to cook the tomatoes down into a chunky-sauce-like-mixture. Add the garlic and butter and stir to combine until the butter is melted. Add the chicken back in to soak in the sauce for a few minutes.
5. Just before serving, stir in the basil. Top servings of pasta with the chicken and the sauce.
6. Enjoy as is or with grated parmesan cheese, as desired.