

Brazilian Garlic Butter Tilapia

Servings: 2 | **Prep Time:** 5 minutes | **Cook Time:** 10 minutes | **Total Time:** 15 minutes

This Brazilian garlic butter tilapia is a simple, vibrant fish dish inspired by the bright, fresh flavors of Brazilian home cooking. Tender tilapia fillets are pan-seared until flaky, then finished with a buttery garlic sauce, fresh lemon juice, and cilantro for a light yet satisfying meal.

Why You'll Love This Recipe

- Ready in 15 minutes from start to finish
- One-pan recipe with minimal cleanup
- Light but flavorful — buttery without feeling heavy
- Naturally gluten-free
- Easy to customize with different fish or sides

Ingredients

- 2 tilapia fillets
- 2 Tbsp butter, divided
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- Salt & black pepper, to taste

Ingredient Notes & Substitutions

- **Tilapia:** Mild and fast-cooking. Substitute cod, halibut, mahi-mahi, or snapper.
- **Butter:** Unsalted butter allows better salt control.
- **Garlic:** Fresh garlic gives best flavor.
- **Cilantro:** Traditional and bright; parsley works if preferred.

Instructions

Step 1: Season the fish

Pat fillets dry and season both sides with salt and pepper.

Step 2: Sear the tilapia

Heat skillet over medium heat, melt 1 Tbsp butter, and cook fish 3–4 minutes per side until flaky.

Step 3: Make garlic butter

Lower heat, add remaining butter and garlic, and cook 30–60 seconds until fragrant.

Step 4: Add lemon

Drizzle lemon juice over fish and let sauce bubble gently 30 seconds.

Step 5: Finish

Remove from heat, sprinkle with cilantro, and spoon sauce over fish.

Tips for Best Results

- Do not overcrowd the pan; cook in batches if needed.
- Keep heat moderate so garlic does not burn.
- Add 1 extra minute per side for thicker fillets.
- Taste sauce and adjust salt before serving.

What to Serve With Tilapia

- Steamed white rice or garlic rice
- Mashed or roasted baby potatoes
- Quinoa or couscous
- Green salad or sautéed spinach
- Roasted asparagus or cherry tomatoes

Variations & Add-Ins

- Add heat with cayenne or red pepper flakes
- Add lemon zest for extra brightness
- Toss spinach or asparagus into pan at the end
- Use olive oil instead of butter for dairy-free

Storage & Reheating

Refrigerator: Store leftovers in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Reheat: Warm gently in a skillet over low heat or microwave briefly to avoid drying out.