

Class #1 Healthy and Delicious!

PASTA WITH BEANS AND GREENS

1 t olive oil or ¼ c water or white wine*
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 28-oz can crushed tomatoes
1 16-oz package frozen spinach or other greens
(or one bunch fresh cooking greens)**
1 or 2 cans cannellini (white kidney) beans***
½ t salt
¾ lb whole wheat pasta, cooked *al dente*
Crushed red pepper and fresh lemon juice (optional)

In a large pot, sauté the onions and garlic in oil, water or wine till transparent. Add the tomatoes, then the frozen or fresh greens. Cook until greens are tender. (If you are using fresh greens, you may need to add a little water to prevent sticking.) Add the beans and salt. Separately, cook about 12 oz (¾ lb) pasta according to package directions. Add the pasta to the beans and greens.

If you like a little heat, add the crushed red pepper with the tomatoes. (Even if you don't think you like heat, a small amount of crushed pepper (1/8 t) can really "lift" the flavor of this dish.) A little fresh lemon juice added at the end really picks up the flavor as well. Serve hot, with Fake Fake.

*If you are following a no-oil diet, you can use water, wine, beer, citrus juice or vegetable broth to sauté the onions and garlic, to make a no-oil version of this and many other recipes. If you use vegetable broth with salt added, be sure to adjust or eliminate the salt elsewhere in the recipe.

**This recipe can be made easy with the use of frozen or pre-packaged greens, like the bags of chopped spinach and escarole. If you have the time, chop up a bunch of fresh greens, like kale, collards, or broccoli raab (rapini). Be sure to carefully wash any fresh greens.

**You are probably aware of the controversy surrounding BPA, which is found in the liners of most canned goods. If you eliminate meat and start consuming more beans, you may inadvertently find yourself increasing your BPA exposure. Only Eden brand of canned beans, found in natural food stores or sections of the supermarket, is BPA-free, but it is quite expensive.

For all recipes, t=teaspoon, T=tablespoon, c=cup.

To cook beans from scratch: Pour the beans into a pot and sort through to remove stones and shriveled beans. Cover with water 2-3 X the volume of the beans. Soak overnight to use them the next day, or at least soak them 3-4 hours before you want to start cooking them. To cook soaked beans: pour off any remaining water; add fresh water 2X the volume of the soaked beans. Cook 45 min. to 1½ hrs, depending on the type of bean (check after 45 min. to see if done, and check frequently to see if you need to add water). Lentils don't need to be soaked beforehand and cook in 45 min., or less for red lentils. VERY IMPORTANT: When cooking beans from scratch, do not add salt or anything acidic (such as tomatoes, citrus juice, or vinegar) to the beans until they are cooked to desired tenderness; then you can add any ingredients, including acidic ones. If you break this rule, your beans will never get soft!

Don't worry about using regular canned beans in moderation. By eating low on the food chain, you are already decreasing your toxic load considerably. A balance of canned beans and beans-from-scratch in your meals is fine.

FAKE FAKE

The derivation for the name goes like this: if store-bought vegan Parmesan is "fake," the homemade version is "fake fake." But of course it's real food. Two negatives make a positive, right? This is a nutritional powerhouse, containing walnuts, which are a source of omega-3's and correlated with heart health; flax seed (if you use it), also high in omega-3's and a source of cancer-fighting lignans; and nutritional yeast, full of B vitamins and minerals. Fake Fake is delicious on Beans and Greens, Minestrone, and pasta with tomato sauce, as well as on steamed vegetables and green salad.

¾ c walnuts
3 T nutritional yeast*
½ t garlic powder
¼ t salt
¼ c ground flax seed (optional)

Blend all ingredients in the food processor until crumbly.

*Nutritional yeast is a powder/flake substance available in bulk at natural food stores. It is one of the few vegetarian specialty products that is hard to find on the shelf, and it is worth the special trip to the health food store to get it. It can be added to cheesy sauces and sprinkled on popcorn, among other uses.

MINESTRONE

1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 28-oz can of crushed tomatoes
6 – 8 c water
2 carrots, diced
1 stalk celery, sliced
½ head green cabbage, chopped*
12 or more green beans, trimmed and sliced
½ t each basil, oregano, and salt
¼ t pepper
2 medium potatoes, diced**
1 can red or white beans, or equivalent cooked
½ c ditalini or other small pasta, cooked al dente
¼ c dry vermouth (optional)

For this recipe, there is no need to separately sauté the onion and garlic. Simply add everything to the pot. If you are making the dish well before dinner, add the diced potatoes close to the time of serving, about 20-30 minutes before; otherwise, if the potatoes cook too long, they will get mushy. For the same reason, add the pasta very late, about 10 minutes before serving; for an even better result, cook the pasta in a separate pot to *al dente* doneness, and add at the last minute. For the beans, see the note to the Beans and Greens recipe above: you can either use canned beans or cook from scratch; either way they can be added close to the end of the recipe. The vermouth gives a flavor lift to this and many other recipes. Serve hot with Fake Fake.

FREEDOM SALAD DRESSING

(You remember when French fries were called “Freedom Fries” to avoid calling them French? This is almost like French dressing (the real vinaigrette kind, not the orange stuff in a bottle). But it is “free” or almost free from oil.

Ingredient amounts are given in “parts” Use 1 T for each “part” to end up with a substantial amount of dressing.

1 part extra-virgin olive oil*
2 parts rice vinegar (regular, not seasoned)**
2 parts balsamic or red wine vinegar
2 parts soy sauce or Bragg’s Liquid Aminos
2 parts mustard, Dijon-style or spicy brown
3 parts ketchup
1 garlic clove, cut in half***

Place ingredients in a clean jar and shake until thoroughly blended. Store in refrigerator.

This recipe is very flexible; you can substitute other kinds of vinegar for the balsamic, and other kinds of mustard. The dressing can be used on things other than green salad, such as pasta salad or bean salad. Use this or variations on this salad dressing to marinate the cooked grains, potatoes or beans that will eventually make a cold salad; the hot food absorbs the flavors of the dressing.

*To make this recipe completely oil-free, leave out the oil and use 3 parts of rice vinegar.

**Rice vinegar is very mild and it “cuts” the acidity of the other vinegar, which makes it a good substitute if you are not using oil. Rice vinegar is essential to this recipe and you will find other uses for it, such as in Asian marinades and dishes. Wegmans has a store brand on the shelf with the other vinegars, and there are also natural food brands.

***You can keep the garlic in the jar for several “generations” of salad dressing. The garlic marinates, and at any point you can use it in a dish or just eat it—delicious!

OATMEAL BREAKFAST (1 serving)

1/3 c steel cut oats (1 part)*
1 2/3 c water (5 parts)
Blueberries, frozen or fresh
Cinnamon
2 T ground flax seed
1 T maple syrup

The night before, place the oats and 4 parts water in a small pot. Bring to a boil (watch carefully, it doesn’t take very long), turn off the heat, and add the 5th part of water; cover and let sit all night. VERY IMPORTANT: if you have an electric stove, wait 5 min. or so after turning off the heat before putting the cover on, or you will get a messy overflow on your stove.

The next morning, reheat and add the remaining ingredients, being sure to give the blueberries time to thaw if you have used frozen. You can also reheat in the microwave.

*Steel cut oats are available in bulk both in natural food stores and in some supermarkets.