Easy Pasta Recipes

Pasta dishes with maximum flavour & minimum effort

The Cooking Coach
Love Food, Live Healthy

www.thecookingcoach.eu

Karen at The Cooking Coach offers healthy cooking lessons, food shopping tours and much more. To find your culinary way around Amsterdam have a look at her website or contact her at karen[at]thecookingcoach[dot]eu.
**Pesto**
A classic, I used to make kilos of this every week when I had my delicatessen, its really easy and sooooo much better than shop bought. Did you know that often in the little pots of pesto you buy from the shops they put things like potatoes in them to thicken them up? They also substitute pine nuts for peanuts and basil for parsley! Anyway, here is the recipe:

**Ingredients**
› 2 large bunches of fresh basil.
› 75 gr of freshly grated parmesan reggiano (this is the aged parmesan)
› 50 gr of freshly grated pecorino romano (this is an aged pecorino)
› 100 gr of toasted pine nuts
› About 3 x dessert spoons of Extra Virgin Olive Oil

**Cooking instructions**
1. Toast the pine nuts in a non-stick frying pan, just to give them a nice brown colour - be careful this can happen quickly.
2. Put the basil (stalks and all) into a food processor with the olive oil and whizz it for a couple of seconds.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients and whizz for another few seconds.
4. And thats it - hey presto - pesto!

All you do with this is mix it through your pasta - sometimes I mix through some chopped fresh tomato as well, about 1 medium per person. Note that you can make this in large quantities and freeze it in portions. Because it is so fresh you can keep it in the fridge for only about 4 days - it will start to discolour quite quickly (although there is no harm in this, it does not look so nice), so I always either use it straight away or freeze it.

You may want to use a little more or less olive oil to give you the texture you want. And of course you can adjust the other ingredients to your taste - its also nice to keep a few of the pine-nuts back and sprinkle them over the plates of pasta before serving.

You can use other sorts of hard mature cheese as well for this recipe and sometimes I make a version with rocket and parsley with some mature Dutch cheese or cheddar using the same method.

You can also serve this with some nice sea bass - kind of like we did with the tomato sauce and halibut.

**Mushroom Pasta**
I usually save this for mushroom season (autumn) when there are lots of different kinds around, and use a mix of whatever I feel like. Please avoid the white button mushrooms, they have very little flavour - at least use the chestnut mushrooms. To clean your mushrooms, do this with a dry clean cloth, not with water as they tend to absorb the water.

All I do is add a dessert spoon of olive oil to the pan, add LOADS of finely chopped garlic and cook on a medium heat for a couple of minutes, then add lots and lots of chopped mushrooms, probably about 2 handfuls per person, cook them until they are a little softer, but not mushy, then I add LOADS of black pepper, some salt and chopped flat leaf parsley.

I mix this through my pasta, or even better serve it over some toasted brown crusty bread. I sometimes add some chopped baby spinach instead of the parsley. You can also add a spoonful or 2 of crème fraîche (or the light version) at the end of cooking. This works with yogurt as well - it will just bring your sauce together.
**Chorizo & Pepper**

**Ingredients**
- 100 gr Chorizo Sausage chopped into small cubes
- 1 x shallot chopped finely
- 2 x cloves of garlic chopped finely
- Half a teaspoon of mild smoked or sweet paprika powder
- 2 x red peppers chopped in strips
- 1 x yellow pepper chopped in strips
- 2 x handfuls of rocket chopped roughly

**Cooking instructions**
1. Warm the chorizo in a pan on a medium heat - there should be enough oil in the chorizo to cook this dish, this warming process will release the oil.
2. Add the garlic and shallot for a couple of minutes and then add the paprika powder and peppers - cook on a low heat until the pepper has softened, may take about 15 minutes.
3. If you see the pan getting dry add a little water (just a little), white wine or sherry (sherry really compliments the "Spanish" flavour of the pepper, chorizo and paprika).
4. Once the pasta is ready, I add the rocket to the pasta and mix round until it wilts a little.

**Salmon Pasta**

**Ingredients**
- 4 x salmon filets of about 100 to 125 gr each chopped into bite sized pieces
- 4 x spring onions chopped finely
- 1 x dessert spoon of olive oil
- 2 x handfuls of rocket leaves chopped finely
- Splash of vodka
- 2 x dessert spoons of light crème fraiche
- Juice of half a lemon
- Some chives chopped finely to sprinkle over the top of the dishes.
- Salt and black pepper to taste

**Cooking instructions**
1. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan, add the spring onions and fry for a couple of minutes on a medium high heat.
2. Add the pieces of salmon, being careful not to move them around too much so that they do not break up.
3. Once the salmon is cooked through, de-glaze on a high heat with the vodka.
4. Add salt and pepper and mix through the rocket until it wilts (a few seconds).
5. Take off the heat and mix through the crème fraiche.
6. Spritz with juice of half a lemon, and dress the dishes on the plate with some chives.
Crayfish and Courgette Pasta

Ingredients
› 3 x anchovies (good quality) chopped finely
› 2 x cloves of garlic chopped finely
› 2 teaspoons olive oil
› 2 x shallots chopped finely
› 400 gr crayfish (bought ready prepared)
› 3 x dessert spoons low fat natural yogurt
› 1 x small glass of white wine
› 1 x courgette sliced in very thin strips
› 1 x aubergine (cube cut in cm square) about 300 gr
› Juice of half a lemon
› 1 x teaspoon English or Dijon mustard
› 50 gr grated parmesan
› 400 gr whole meal pasta - I like tagliatelle for this one
› Salt and pepper to taste (careful with the amount of salt due to anchovies and parmesan!)

Cooking instructions
1. Warm the oil in a non stick frying pan and add the garlic and shallot. Let them cook gently for a few minutes until they become opaque.
2. Add the finely chopped aubergine and let it cook for about 10 minutes. The aubergine as it cooks and softens gives a great creamy texture to this dish.
3. Boil a kettle and use it to cook the pasta in a large pan.
4. Turn the heat up in the pan with the sauce and add the white wine to deglaze, allowing it to reduce.
5. Add the courgette strips, lemon and the mustard, this only needs a couple of minutes to cook (2 - 3).
6. Add the crayfish and spoon through for until covered in the sauce. Keep back a few crayfish to dress (4/5 per person).
7. Take the pan off the heat add the yogurt and parmesan. Mix through until creamy.
8. Check for seasoning and add if necessary.

Tips
› The reason we take the pan off the heat to add the yogurt is to prevent it splitting. Its not a disaster if it does, as is in this dish you do not really notice it.
› You can add some rocket or baby spinach leaves through this dish or through the pasta just before serving if you like.

Note
› All recipes based on approximately 4x portions.