

Winter Pasta Supper

Written by Debbi Covington
Tuesday, 03 March 2009 07:45

When a cold chill is in the air most people are looking for healthy, yet hearty, winter fare. This menu, featuring Sausage, Spinach and White Bean Pasta, fills the bill without filling you up with the high fat content of most cream-based pasta sauces.



Bow tie pasta is boiled while Italian sausage is sauteed with chopped onion, celery and shredded carrots. Red wine and canned diced tomatoes are added to the sausage to make a sauce and then a can of white beans and fresh spinach are added and simmered until the spinach is wilted and the beans are heated through. The recipe is loaded with vegetables, but you don't need to spend a lot of time chopping and preparing. To save time use the pre-shredded carrots, chopped fresh onion and pre-washed bagged spinach that can be found in the produce section of your local supermarket. The pasta is a great one-dish meal! All you need to add is a fresh Blueberry-Pecan Salad, crusty Artichoke and Heart of Palm Crostini and a glass of hearty red wine. Chocolate Chip Pie is the perfect ending to a perfect meal and great comfort food, too. Happy Cooking!

Blueberry-Pecan Salad

- 1/2 cup blueberry spreadable fruit
- 1/3 cup raspberry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds
- 1 cup canola oil
- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 avocado
- 1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced
- 2 bunches green onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Combine first 5 ingredients in a blender until smooth. Place greens in a salad bowl, top with remaining ingredients and toss with dressing. Serves 8 .

Sausage, Spinach and White Bean Pasta

- 1 (8-ounce) package bow tie pasta
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot (about 1 large)
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 8 ounces sweet Italian sausage, crumbled (casings removed)

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1/2 cup dry red wine
1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 (14.5-ounce) can great northern white beans, undrained
6 ounces fresh baby spinach
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Parmesan cheese

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until al dente, drain and set aside. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add carrots, onion and celery and saute until vegetables are soft. Add the sausage to the vegetables. Cook until sausage is no longer pink. Drain and discard fat from the skillet. Return vegetable and sausage mixture to the skillet over medium-high heat. Pour in red wine and stir with a wood spoon, loosening any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the undrained tomatoes and simmer for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and stir in the beans, spinach, salt and pepper. Cover and cook until the spinach is wilted and the beans are heated through. Toss with the cooked pasta and top with grated Parmesan cheese. Serves 4 to 6.

Artichoke and Heart of Palm Crostini

2 (6-ounce) jars marinated artichoke hearts
3 stalks heart of palm
3/4 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup sour cream
1 cup Parmesan cheese
1 large cloves garlic, crushed
1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
French bread (baguette) sliced about 1-inch thick
Extra Parmesan cheese for topping
Paprika

Drain artichoke hearts and place in food processor with other ingredients and process quickly (leave a few small lumps). Mound about 2 tablespoons mixture on top of bread slice; sprinkle with extra Parmesan cheese and paprika. Place on baking sheet and put under broiler until topping is hot and bubbly. Serve immediately. Serves 6 to 8.

Chocolate Chip Pie

1 frozen pie crust, thawed
2 eggs
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
2 sticks butter, melted and slightly cooled
1 tablespoon vanilla

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1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate morsels

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine eggs, flour, sugars, melted butter and vanilla in a bowl and stir until well combined. Fold in chopped pecans and chocolate morsels. Pour into unbaked pie crust and bake for 1 hour, until center is set. Serves 6 to 8.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com . She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at covingtoncats@embarqmail.com.