

HANDMADE SPINACH PASTA WITH LEEKS & WILD MUSHROOMS



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Pasta is one of the world's oldest foods of sustenance in many cultures and cuisines. Being relatively easy to prepare, pasta provides an endless number of meal possibilities. In any dish, pasta can be the star, or play a supporting role as a versatile base that showcases the flavor of other ingredients. In this recipe, the handmade pasta gets its bright green color and fresh taste entirely from spinach. A blend of Type 00 and Semolina flours make it easy to form, and give it the wonderful characteristic bite of Italian style pastas. The dish features the deep, rich umami flavors of wild mushrooms, leeks, garlic and cashew cream with a bright complement of fresh herbs. When I make this dish for guests at home, the reaction is one of surprise when they learn that it is entirely plant based. Perhaps the best compliment is that which has changed a perception or inspired others to try something new. I hope you enjoy the recipe and feel inspired to experiment with your own plant based recipes!



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DIRECTIONS

Serves: 4 to 6

1 ½ C Type 00 flour
⅓ C Semolina flour
3 oz Spinach puree
3 oz Water
1 tsp Salt
1 T Olive oil

Step 1: Blend

To make the spinach puree, quickly blanch fresh spinach leaves in a small amount of boiling water and immediately drain. Press out the excess water and reserve it for adjusting the consistency of the puree. Process the blanched spinach until smooth using a blender or food processor, adding back just enough of the reserved blanching liquid to create a smooth puree consistency. Allow the spinach puree to cool.

Step 2: Mix

To mix the pasta dough, add the flour, semolina and salt to a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and add the spinach puree and oil. Begin mixing, pulling flour into the center to form a shaggy dough. Add only enough water to make a firm, cohesive dough. *Note: it is better for the dough to be a little dry for easier handling, rolling and cutting using the pasta machine.



Step 3: Knead the Dough

Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface for 6-8 minutes or until a smooth, elastic consistency is achieved. Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours to relax the gluten.

Step 4: Cut

Cut the pasta into small rectangles and press flat to fit through the widest setting on the pasta roller. Alternatively, a rolling pin may be used. Feed the pasta dough through the machine several times to a thickness of 1-2mm using flour only if the pasta is sticking to the machine or table. Allow the sheets to dry on each side for a 10-15 minutes to help prevent the dough from sticking when the noodles are cut.

DIRECTIONS (CONT'D)

Step 4: Cut

Cut the pasta into small rectangles and press flat to fit through the widest setting on the pasta roller. Alternatively, a rolling pin may be used. Feed the pasta dough through the machine several times to a thickness of 1-2mm using flour only if the pasta is sticking to the machine or table. Allow the sheets to dry on each side for a 10-15 minutes to help prevent the dough from sticking when the noodles are cut.



Step 5: Pass

Pass the sheets of pasta through the noodle cutting attachment to the desired width. Dust the noodles lightly with semolina to prevent them from sticking together. At this point the cut noodles may be hung to dry or coiled into small nests equal to one portion. The pasta may be cooked immediately, dried, refrigerated or frozen fresh for use at a later time.



Step 6: Cook

To cook the pasta, bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Drop the pasta into the boiling water and cook for 2-3 minutes or until al dente. Fresh pasta cooks very quickly, so be sure to have everything else ready before boiling the noodles.



Final Dish
Bon Appétit!