RECIPE

Spring Vegetable Pasta with Lemon and White Beans

A quick spring dinner of whole-wheat penne, asparagus, zucchini, peas and white beans, tossed in a lemon, olive oil and Parmesan sauce thickened with pasta water.

MAKES

4 servings US Metric

TOTAL

30 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 8 oz whole-wheat penne, dry (about 536 g, or 5½ cups, cooked)
- [ ] 1 tbsp salt for the pasta water (about 1.8 g of it ends up in the pasta)
- [ ] ½ cup of the pasta water, saved for the sauce (about 0.6 g salt in it)
- [ ] 1 tbsp olive oil, for the vegetables
- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil, for the sauce
- [ ] 1 medium onion, sliced thin
- [ ] 2 cups asparagus, trimmed and cut in 1-inch pieces
- [ ] 1 medium zucchini, cut in half-moons
- [ ] 1 cup frozen green peas, thawed
- [ ] 3 cups packed baby spinach
- [ ] 1 can (15 oz) no-salt-added cannellini beans (254 g drained and rinsed)

Method

1. Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil with the 1 tbsp salt. Cook the penne in it. At 5,300 feet the water boils near 203 °F, so go by the bite rather than the box: start tasting 2 minutes before the label time and pull it when it is tender with a little chew.
2. Before you drain, scoop out ½ cup of the pasta water and set it aside. Drain the penne.
3. While the pasta cooks, warm 1 tbsp olive oil in your widest skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the onion with the ¼ tsp salt for 3 minutes, until it softens.
4. Add the asparagus and zucchini. Cook, stirring now and then, 4 to 5 minutes, until the asparagus is bright green and a knife slips in with a little resistance.

- [ ] 1 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] ¼ tsp salt, for the vegetables
- [ ] ½ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ¼ tsp red pepper flakes
- [ ] juice of 1 lemon
- [ ] 1 tbsp grated lemon zest
- [ ] ¼ cup grated Parmesan (for a vegetarian dish, use a parmesan-style cheese made with microbial rennet)
- [ ] 1 cup fresh basil leaves, torn

5 Stir in the peas, spinach, beans, garlic powder, black pepper and red pepper flakes. Cook 2 minutes, until the spinach has wilted and the beans are hot. Take the skillet off the heat.

6 In a large bowl, whisk the 2 tbsp olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, Parmesan and the saved pasta water for about 30 seconds, until it turns cloudy and thickens a little. The starch in the water holds the oil in the lemon.

7 Add the drained penne and everything in the skillet to the bowl. Toss well so each piece is coated. Tear in the basil, toss once more, and serve right away in four bowls.