

Batch Cooking to Save Time, Money, & Your Health

Modify your basic spaghetti recipe to

- boost the health profile a bit,
- maximize your yield,
- be an easy, prep-ahead, freeze ahead recipe for lunches.

Here's how. Follow the instructions for Recipe #1 below but when you drain the water off the pasta for the first recipe, immediately fill the pasta pot with water again and return it to the heat for the second recipe. For Recipe #2 use a different shaped pasta (e.g. white fiber pasta shells) and different vegetables (e.g. roasted vegetables or steamed summer squash or even different frozen vegetables for a quick recipe) and different sauce. Perhaps use a balsamic vinegar and oil dressing or a marinade packet using no more than 3 T of olive oil in with the mix to have a variation that you won't bore of easily and you have lunches for the next month at less than \$1-2 a serving! I recently did this 1.5 to 2-hour experiment (not counting clean up time) and had 28 lunches (1.5 c portions) frozen in quart sized freezer bags.

Recipe # 1

Chicken & Veggie Penne Pasta in Marinara Sauce

Yield: 14 servings

Serving size: 1.5 cups

(exchanges: 1.5 starches + 1 vegetable + 1.5 oz meat)

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lbs lean meat (chicken breast, ground turkey or 93% lean ground beef)
- 2 yellow bell peppers
- 2 lbs frozen broccoli
- 2 cans stewed tomatoes
- 1 jar Classico sweet basil marinara sauce
- 1 lb whole wheat penne pasta
- 2 cloves of garlic
- ½ t dried oregano*
- ½ t dried marjoram*
- 1 t dried thyme*
- 1 t dried rosemary*
- 2 T extra virgin olive oil
- 3 T fresh basil (optional)
- 2 T to 1/8 c of shredded parmesan cheese for another 40-55 cal & 4-5 g protein (optional)

Nutrition Facts	
Servings 14.0	
Amount Per Serving	
calories	217
	% Daily Value *
Total Fat	5 g 7 %
Saturated Fat	0 g 1 %
Monounsaturated Fat	1 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	0 g
Trans Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg 0 %
Sodium	512 mg 21 %
Potassium	413 mg 12 %
Total Carbohydrate	30 g 10 %
Dietary Fiber	7 g 28 %
Sugars	10 g
Protein	15 g 30 %
Vitamin A	8 %
Vitamin C	134 %
Calcium	9 %
Iron	18 %

* Instead of using each individual herb, ½ to 1 T of Italian seasoning can be substituted

Nutrient analysis without optional ingredients

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Directions:

1. Fill pasta pot with water to within 2 inches of the top of the pot and heat on high to bring water to boil
2. Heat frozen broccoli in a microwave safe bowl according to package (typically 8-10 minutes), and then divide evenly between 2 of your largest mixing bowls
3. In a large frying pan heat olive oil and then add garlic, bell peppers, and chicken and other seasonings, cook until chicken is lightly browned.
4. When the water is boiling add pasta, reduce heat, and cook according to package directions (typically 6-12 minutes).
5. Add stewed tomatoes and marinara sauce to frying pan after meat has cooked and simmer for 5-10 minutes; then divide mixture evenly between mixing bowls
6. Once pasta is cooked, drain water and divide evenly between mixing bowls
7. Toss well, garnish with fresh basil, & serve.

Notice the starch in this recipe is diminished by more adding more protein and more veggies, so you get to enjoy pasta but without an overwhelming amount of calories (~ 210-240 calories/serving).

Add a side of fruit and/or some raw veggies and really boost the nutrient density of your lunch without killing your calories.

Prepare a slight variation immediately after Recipe #1 using Recipe #2 below:

Recipe #2

Chicken & Pasta Shell Salad

Yield: 14 servings

Serving size 1.5 cups (exchanges: 2 starches + 1 vegetable + 1.5 oz meat)

- 1.5 lbs lean meat (chicken breast or ground turkey or 93% lean ground beef)
- 1 lb white fiber pasta shells
- 1 pkg cherry tomato (10 oz)
- 1 pkg frozen broccoli cuts (10 oz)
- 1 pkg frozen sweet peas (10 oz)
- 1 can red kidney beans
- 1 pkg shredded carrots (10 oz)
- ½ T Mrs. Dash Lemon Pepper
- 1 T extra virgin olive oil
- 1 T lemon juice
- 1 c light Italian dressing

Directions:

1. Fill pasta pot with water to within 2 inches of the top of the pot and heat on high to bring water to boil
2. Heat frozen broccoli & peas in a microwave safe bowl according to package (typically 8-10 minutes), mix well, and then divide evenly between 2 of your largest mixing bowls to cool
3. In a large frying pan heat olive oil and then cook chicken adding lemon pepper and other seasonings you like, once browned, add lemon juice at the end of cooking; then divide mixture evenly between mixing bowls
4. When the water is boiling add pasta, reduce heat, and cook according to package directions (typically 6-12 minutes).
5. Cut cherry tomatoes in half length-wise, and divide evenly between mixing bowls
6. Once pasta is cooked, drain water and divide evenly between mixing bowls
7. Rinse kidney beans well to reduce sodium content and add kidney beans, carrots, and dressing divide evenly between mixing bowls
8. Toss well, refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.

This second recipe can be frozen despite it being a cold pasta salad, but I do not recommend heating this one to defrost it. From frozen, pull 1 serving at a time out of the freezer and store in the refrigerator for 1-2 days before eating to allow it to thaw completely. You may want to drain excess liquid from freezer bag before serving.

Add a side of fruit and/or some raw veggies and really boost the nutrient density of your lunch without killing your calories.

Nutrition Facts	
Servings 14.0	
Amount Per Serving	
calories 271	
% Daily Value *	
Total Fat 7 g	11 %
Saturated Fat 1 g	4 %
Monounsaturated Fat 1 g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 0 g	
Trans Fat 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %
Sodium 546 mg	23 %
Potassium 222 mg	6 %
Total Carbohydrate 40 g	13 %
Dietary Fiber 9 g	35 %
Sugars 5 g	
Protein 17 g	34 %
Vitamin A	70 %
Vitamin C	10 %
Calcium	7 %
Iron	19 %