

Lemon Ricotta Pasta with Spinach

Ingredients

1/2 lb (8oz/220 grams) pasta (spaghetti, linguine, penne, fusilli...)
1 cup (9oz/250 grams) whole-milk ricotta
8 oz (230 grams) fresh baby spinach, washed
1/3 cup (35 grams) grated Parmesan cheese, plus extra to serve
1 unwaxed lemon, zest and juice
3 lemon wedges, to serve (optional)
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
1 garlic clove, grated or pressed
salt and black pepper, to taste



Method

In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta according to package directions until al dente. Meanwhile, make the ricotta sauce.

In a medium bowl, combine ricotta, olive oil, parmesan cheese, garlic, lemon zest and juice. Season with 1/4 tsp of salt and a good pinch of pepper.

Stir until well combined, taste and make sure you're happy with the seasoning.

In the last minute of the pasta's cooking time, reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water, then add spinach to the pot. Stir well and push the leaves down to submerge them in water.

After 1 minute, drain and return pasta and spinach to the same pot.

Add the ricotta sauce and part of the reserved cooking water. Stir well to evenly coat the pasta in the sauce, add more cooking water as needed, you want a smooth and creamy texture.

Serve immediately and garnish with grated or shaved Parmesan cheese, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and lemon wedges if desired (for extra freshly squeezed juice, but I leave it optional). Plus, I love adding a good pinch of red pepper flakes, you might give it a go. Enjoy!

Notes

Cooking water: add pasta water gradually, you might not need all of it. You don't want to water down the flavor, but only make spaghetti nice and moist. If you think the reserved water is not enough, you might add a few Tbsps of milk.

Pasta: you can use any short, large or long pasta shapes that work well to capture the creamy ricotta. I love spaghetti, but penne, fusilli, conchiglie work fine. Mini pasta shapes like orzo or even elbow macaroni don't work well in the recipe.

What about adding a twist? This terrific recipe is so versatile, feel free to add more vegetables or even protein of your choice. Here are a few variations that taste delicious along with the lemon and ricotta combo. Add them to the pot when you stir in the ricotta mixture.

Sauteed or grilled vegetables: asparagus, peas, zucchini, artichokes

Arugula, basil, chives

Cherry tomatoes or chopped sun-dried tomatoes

Grilled chicken

Grilled or smoked salmon