

Kids' Corner

Pasta in a Flash

Teens can prepare a fast feast for dinner

MOST MODERN FAMILIES SPLIT UP THE HOUSEHOLD DUTIES SO NO ONE PERSON DOES ALL THE WORK. If Dad takes the kids to soccer practice one night, that means Mom waters the lawn the next day. The good news is that when the kids in the family are old enough, they can help out, too. Our no-cook and microwave sauces for fresh or frozen pasta make meal preparations simple. With these recipes, teens can cook dinner and still have time for homework. • While the water boils for Easy Stuffed Pasta and Vegetables, make one of the two sauces—it's easy with prepackaged ingredients and beginner techniques. Then, make dinner complete by serving the main dish with purchased garlic bread, warmed in the oven, and a fast salad of ready-to-eat romaine lettuce drizzled with Caesar dressing and sprinkled with croutons and parmesan cheese.



FRESH PASTA COOKS SO QUICKLY, YOUR KIDS WON'T TIRE OF BEING IN THE KITCHEN.

EASY STUFFED PASTA AND VEGETABLES

PREP AND COOK TIME: 20 minutes

NOTES: Do not defrost the frozen vegetables before adding them to the cooking pasta. They will cook almost instantly when they hit the boiling water. When adding the sauce to the cooked pasta and vegetables, remember this tip: Pour the sauce in the bottom of the serving bowl or cooking pot first. Then add the cooked pasta to the sauce and use a rubber spatula to gently move the sauce from the bottom of the bowl up the sides and on top of the pasta. This way, everything is evenly coated with sauce, but there's no messy tossing.

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon Safeway SELECT Verdi Olive Oil (optional)
- 1 (20-oz.) package fresh or 1 (19-oz.) package frozen Safeway SELECT Verdi Tortellini, Tortelloni, or Ravioli, any flavor
- 1 (16-oz.) package frozen Safeway SELECT Petite Blends Vegetables, any variety

1. In a 6- to 8-quart pan, bring 5 quarts of water, the salt, and the olive oil, if using, to a boil over high heat, covered.
2. As soon as the water begins to boil, remove the lid and add the pasta. The boiling will stop. Cover the pan to keep the steam in and help the water come back to a boil more quickly.
3. When the water begins to boil again (2 to 4 minutes, depending on whether the pasta is fresh or frozen), immediately uncover the pan and set a timer for 3 minutes.
4. When the timer goes off, pour the frozen vegetables into the pan. The boiling will stop. Immediately set the timer for an additional 1 or 2 minutes.
5. When the timer goes off again, immediately remove the pan from the stove. Drain the pasta and vegetables well in a large colander. Serve immediately, mixed with one of the sauces (see notes) or without sauce in a large bowl for pasta bar (see sidebar on page 77).

Per serving: 190 cal., 22% (41 cal.) from fat; 9.1g protein; 4.5 g fat (1.5 g sat.); 27 g carbo (2.3 g fiber); 305 mg sodium; 22 mg chol.

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TANGY PESTO

PREP TIME: 10 minutes
NOTES: Don't defrost the orange juice concentrate before mixing it into the sauce. It will defrost as you stir. To measure, spoon it into a ¼ cup dry measure.
MAKES: 1½ cups, enough for topping one recipe Easy Stuffed Pasta and Vegetables

- ¾ cup Safeway SELECT Verdi Classic Pesto Sauce
- ¼ cup whipped cream cheese
- ¼ cup light sour cream
- ¼ cup frozen orange juice concentrate

In a 2-cup bowl, mix all the ingredients with a fork until well blended. If not using immediately, refrigerate in a small airtight container for up to 2 days. Bring to room temperature to serve.

Per serving: 197 cal., 82% (162 cal.) from fat; 3.3 g protein; 18 g fat (4.9 g sat.); 7 g carbo (0.5 g fiber); 295 mg sodium; 16 mg chol.

CHEESY MICROWAVE SAUCE

PREP AND COOK TIME: 15 minutes
NOTES: As this sauce cooks, the bowl you use will get hot. Use pot holders to remove it from the microwave so you won't burn your hands. If the butter turns brown during Step 1 or 2, throw it out and start over. To reheat cooled sauce, microwave for 1 or 2 minutes on high (100% power), covered with plastic wrap. Although sauce must cook uncovered to thicken, always reheat it covered. If it becomes stringy during reheating, vigorously whisk in a few drops of lemon juice and 1 or 2 tablespoons of milk.



Pasta Party Bar

TRANSFORM A PASTA DINNER INTO A FAMILY PARTY WITH A DO-IT-YOURSELF PASTA BAR. First, set the table including large plates for under the pasta bowls and small plates for the garlic bread. Arrange the other items buffet-style on a counter or side table in this order:

1. Empty bowls for pasta.
2. Pasta. Depending on the number of people you're serving, offer one to three bowls of cooked pasta and vegetables. For 4 to 6 people, make one recipe Easy Stuffed Pasta and Vegetables; for 6 to 8, make two recipes; for 8 to 12, make three recipes.
3. Sauce. Arrange 3 bowls of sauces to represent the colors of the Italian flag. For green, offer Tangy Pesto. For white, serve Cheesy Microwave Sauce. For red, choose your favorite Safeway SELECT Verdi tomato-based sauce, heated in a microwave-safe dish, covered, for 2 to 3 minutes on high (100% power). Make sure there is a separate ladle for serving each of the sauces and a plate under each bowl to catch drips.
4. Toppings. Offer small bowls filled with a variety of fun toppings. Try sliced black olives; shredded mozzarella, provolone, asiago, or fontina cheeses; Safeway SELECT Verdi Shredded Parmesan; chopped fresh tomatoes; chopped fresh herbs; hard salami, thinly sliced into matchsticks; cooked baby shrimp; diced cooked turkey; canned sliced mushrooms; or marinated artichoke hearts. Don't forget to put a small spoon in each bowl for serving.



COOK FILLED RAVIOLI WITH CARROTS AND BROCCOLI, THEN TOP WITH OUR CREAMY PESTO WITH A BIT OF ORANGE FLAVOR.

MAKES: 1½ cups, enough for topping one recipe Easy Stuffed Pasta and Vegetables

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- About ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
- ⅛ to ¼ teaspoon finely ground white pepper
- 1¼ cups lowfat milk
- ¼ cup Safeway SELECT Verdi Shredded Parmesan Cheese
- About ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup finely shredded gourmet cheddar cheese blend or six-cheese Italian blend

1. Put butter into a 4-cup microwave-safe bowl or glass measure. Microwave on high (100% power) for 1 minute and 30 seconds, just until butter is melted and hot and remains light yellow.
2. Remove bowl from oven. Whisk in flour, nutmeg, and white pepper. Microwave on high for 1 minute and 30 seconds, until mixture bubbles vigorously and foams but is still light yellow.
3. Remove bowl from oven. Thoroughly whisk in milk until evenly combined. Microwave on high, uncovered, for 2 minutes.
4. Remove bowl from oven; whisk thoroughly. Microwave on high, uncovered, for 1 minute, until sauce thickens.
5. Remove from oven; thoroughly whisk in salt and cheese until melted. If the cheese does not melt completely, microwave an additional 30 seconds to 1 minute; whisk again.

Per serving: 145 cal., 66% (93 cal.) from fat; 7.0 g protein; 10 g fat (8.2 g sat.); 4.9 g carbo (0.1 g fiber); 385 mg sodium; 25 mg chol.

by **HOLLY RUDIN-BRASCHI**

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