

Luxurious Tomato Basil Pasta

This Luxurious Tomato Basil Pasta (from the *Oh She Glows* cookbook, by Angela Liddon) is surprisingly elevated. More than an ordinary tomato pasta sauce, it is both light and satisfying.

Serves 3. Can be doubled.

1/2 cup raw cashews

1/2 cup unsweetened, unflavored almond milk (I typically have flax milk, but I have also used cow's milk)

9 ounces uncooked pasta

1 tsp olive oil

1 small onion

2 cloves garlic

1 1/2 cup diced fresh or canned tomatoes

3 handfuls spinach

1 to 3 tablespoons nutritional yeast (this is not the same thing as bread yeast!)* (optional)

1 cup fresh basil, chopped

2-3 tbsp tomato paste**

1 tsp dried oregano

1/2 tsp salt

pepper to taste

Soak cashews in a bowl with water to cover, at least two hours or overnight. Drain and rinse, then blend with almond milk until smooth. Set aside.

Bring large pot of water to boil, and cook pasta until al dente. Drain.

In large pan, heat oil and add onion and garlic. Saute for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring to prevent burning. Add tomatoes and spinach and continue cooking over medium-high heat until spinach is wilted.

Stir in cashew cream, nutritional yeast (if using), basil, tomato paste, oregano, salt and pepper. Cook 5-10 more minutes, or until heated through.

Drain pasta, and add to sauce. Stir to combine, and heat through.

* Nutritional yeast adds depth to this recipe, and umami flavors. It is also wonderful with butter, salt and pepper on popcorn.

** To avoid food waste, freeze the rest of the tomato paste in 1 tablespoon servings on a cookie sheet or ice cube trays. When frozen solid, store in a freezer container and use as needed.

Chana Masala

Quick and Easy Chana Masala has a long list of spices, but if you buy them in bulk they are not expensive. This is an easy weeknight dinner. This is not a spicy recipe, but it is full of flavors.

(*Oh She Glows*, Angela Liddon)

Serves 4, can be doubled. Reheats well.

1 tbsp olive oil or coconut oil

1 onion, diced

1 tbsp fresh garlic (1-3 cloves, to taste)

1 tbsp fresh ginger, minced*

1 green serrano pepper, seeded, if preferred, and minced

1 1/2 tsp cumin

1 1/2 tsp garam masala

1 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander

1/2 tsp ground turmeric

3/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp cayenne (optional)**

1 (28 ounce can) whole peeled or diced tomatoes, with their juice

2 (15 ounce) cans or three cups cooked chickpeas

1 cup rice (uncooked) or 2 cups cooked rice, to serve

If you are cooking rice, start that first. One cup of white rice to two cups water. Bring to a boil, cover, and turn it off to steam on it's own. If you prefer brown rice, use 2 1/2 cups water to 1 cup brown rice. For softer brown rice, soak 4-24 hours, drain, then add 2 cups water to each cup brown rice you soaked.

Heat oil in a large pan, medium temperature. Add onion, garlic, ginger and serrano. Cook until the onion softens, then add cumin, garam masala, coriander, turmeric, salt and cayenne (if using) and cook two more minutes.

Add tomatoes and juice. Use the back of your spoon, break of the large pieces of tomato (if using whole tomatoes). Leave some chunks for texture.

Raise the heat to high and add chickpeas. Bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes or longer, for flavors to develop.

Serve over cooked rice.

* To avoid food waste, keep fresh ginger in the freezer. You can grate, peel or microplane it while still frozen!

** Cayenne pepper is NOT the same thing as chili powder. They are not interchangeable. Chili powder has additional spices, and is not as hot as cayenne.

Chili Cheese Nachos

Chili Cheese Nachos are comforting and easy. You can make just the chili part, or you can make the creamy cheese sauce as well. If you choose not to make the cheese sauce, top with grated cheese, jalapenos, salsa, lettuce, or whatever your heart tells you. (*Oh She Glows Everyday*, Angela Liddon)

Makes 4-5 servings

1 tbsp olive oil

1 medium onion, diced

3 large cloves garlic, about 1 tbsp

1/2 to 3/4 salt

1 medium/large jalapeno, seeded if desired, chopped finely

1 small red bell pepper, seeded and diced (reserve some for toppings)

1 tbsp chili powder*

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp dried oregano

1 tsp smoked paprika

1 (14 ounce) can diced tomatoes, with juices

1 tbsp tomato paste **

1 (14 ounce) can lentils, drained and rinsed, or 1 1/2 cup cooked lentils ***

1 (14 ounce can) refried beans

1 1/2 tsp apple cider vinegar

pepper to taste

Chips for serving

In a large saucepan, heat oil on medium heat. Add onion, garlic and a pinch of salt. Stir, cooking 4-5 minutes until the onion starts to soften.

Stir in fresh jalapeno, bell pepper and cook a few minutes more. Add cumin, chili powder, oregano, and paprika and stir to combine.

Stir in tomatoes and their juices. Increase heat to medium high and bring to a simmer.

Stir in tomato paste, lentils and refried beans. Roughly mash, with back of spoon or potato masher, to thicken to your liking.

Add vinegar, salt, black pepper, and hot sauce (if desired)

Pour over chips to serve, and top with cheese or cheese sauce and other condiments

* Cayenne powder cannot be substituted for chili powder.

** To avoid food waste, freeze 1 tablespoon servings of leftover tomato paste on a cookie sheet or ice cube tray, and store in a freezer container.

*** For 1 1/2 cups lentils, cook 3/4 cup lentils in 1 1/2 cups water, and drain when they are soft. You can speed cooking and increase digestibility by soaking them for 2-12 hours ahead, drain well, then cook in 1 cup water (or to cover).

All-Purpose “Cheese” Sauce

1/2 cup raw cashews

2 1/2 cups diced, peeled potatoes*

heaping 2/3 cup diced carrots **

4-6 tbsp nutritional yeast, to taste (NOT the same as bread yeast)

2 tbsp neutral tasting oil (grapeseed, refined coconut oil or what makes you happy)

5 tbsp water (reserved from cooking potatoes and carrots)

3 tsp fresh lemon juice, or to taste

2 medium clove garlic

1 to 1 1/2 teaspoon white wine vinegar, to taste

Soak cashews in a bowl with water to cover, overnight or at least one hour. (Longer soaking makes blending easier.)

In a medium pot, cover potatoes and carrots with water. Bring to a boil on high heat, then reduce to medium until carrots and potatoes are fork-tender. Drain, reserving water. Alternately, steam carrots and potatoes.

Drain cashews. Transfer drained cashews, potatoes and carrots to blender. Add nutritional yeast, oil, water, lemon juice, 1 tsp salt, garlic and vinegar and blend until smooth. Add a splash of additional oil or water if sauce is too thick. Taste, and add hot sauce or more salt, if desired.

Keeps in an airtight container (empty jam jar?) in the fridge up to one week.

* I have used thin skinned potatoes, and skipped the peeling process with good results. The color is not much affected, and you save vitamins and prevent food waste.

** Dice carrots and potatoes small for more accurate measure and to speed cooking.