

Pasta with White (Bean) Sauce



Work Intensity

Kid-Friendly

Cost

If you don't tell your dinner guests you're serving beans, they'll be hard-pressed to figure out the difference between this protein-packed white sauce and a standard Alfredo. You can choose to leave the beans whole for a lovely texture, too.

Ingredients



If soaking dry beans, start with 1 cup before soaking.

- ½ c. chopped onion
- 1 4-oz. can diced green chili peppers, drained, or 1 chopped jalapeno or Anaheim pepper
- 2 Tbs butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs whole wheat flour or arrowroot starch
- 1/8-1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 ½ c. whole milk
- 1 ½ c. shredded cheese (any kind works, but Swiss or Monterey Jack is great)
- 1 15-oz. can white beans, drained and rinsed, or 2 cups cooked dry beans
- salt to taste, likely about a ½ tsp.
- ½ lb. Linguine or favorite pasta, cooked according to package directions

Method

In a medium-sized, heavy bottomed pot, cook onion and peppers (if using fresh) in melted butter until tender, adding garlic at the last minute. Stir in flour and pepper and cook two minutes. Add the milk all at once. Cook and stir over medium heat until bubbly and thickened, taking care not to scorch the bottom. Cook one more minute, then add cheese and stir to melt. Add the beans and canned chiles (if using canned) and stir to heat through. Feel free to add extra milk at any point if the sauce is too thick for your tastes. Serve over linguine or your favorite pasta. You might include steamed veggies right in the sauce for an all-in-one meal.

For the bean haters of the world: If you use an immersion blender and whiz the sauce, the beans (and their taste) disappear. You might want to add a bit of extra milk to thin it out, up to 1/4-1/2 cup.

Serves 4.



Timesaver: Balance your steamer basket over the pasta water for the last 5 minutes or so of the cooking time and your steamed veggies will be done in one pot and at the same time as your pasta for a super easy meal.

Healthy Upgrades

- ✓ **Vegetable Variations:** Adding some diced red pepper in the saute or any vegetable you might include in a stir fry, whether right in the sauce or just stirred in with the sauce and pasta, makes some delicious new options.
- ✓ **Add Meat:** Grilled chicken on top takes the pasta right up to restaurant quality. It's a complete meatless meal in itself, or it can serve as a healthy side dish.



FAQS

- ✓ *How is this meal gluten-free?* The sauce works great with gluten-free pasta.
- ✓ *Does it have to be a compromise meal?* You can, of course, make your own pasta, which launches the dish from a “compromise quick meal” to a traditional foods healthy option.
- ✓ *How can I keep the costs down on this meal?* Buy jalapeno (and other kinds of) peppers at the Farmer's Market or the reduced produce section at your grocery store. Peppers can be chopped and frozen without blanching or any other treatments. It's easy to grab a handful of chopped peppers from a bag in the freezer and toss them right into the saute pot. You can also use a less expensive cheese of any kind.