

ASPGU Pasta

ASPGU stands for Apples, Spinach, Pine Nuts, Gorgonzola and Yogurt. I often use Granny Smith apples for this dish but any tart apple (Pink Lady, Braeburn, Empire) will work. The more tart the apple the better. The rich taste of roasted pine nuts and the savory flavors of freshly dressed spinach counter the tart apple flavors in this plate of pasta perfection.

I've created this light "cream sauce" using nonfat yogurt as a base. You get to enjoy rich flavor combinations of a cream sauce without feeling like you ate a stick of butter.

Preparation time: 40 minutes - Servings: 2

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients so they are easy to add. You'll appreciate having everything at your fingertips. Chop a total of 3/4 C. onion today: 1/4 C. in the Gorgonzola sauce and 1/2 C. in the pasta.

Gorgonzola Sauce

1 tsp. olive oil
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/2 C. white wine
1/4 C. yellow onion (finely-chopped)

1 -1/2 C. low-sodium veggie broth
1-1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1 bay leaf

2 T. cornstarch
mixed with
1/2 C. water
3 T. crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

2 T. plain, nonfat yogurt (stirred smooth)

Pasta Assembly

1-1/2 C. dry, whole wheat spiral pasta

3 C. baby spinach leaves (well washed)
2 tsp. olive oil
2 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1 T. low-sodium vegetable broth

1 C. water
2 tsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. olive oil
1-1/2 C. Granny Smith apples or other tart apple, cored and chopped. Cover with water and lemon juice from above.
1/2 C. yellow onion (chopped)

Garnish:

2 T. shredded Parmesan
1 large Roma tomato (chopped)
3 T. pine nuts (toasted)

Salad and Dressing

Fixings for a green salad

Honey Mustard Dressing:

2 T. olive oil
3 T. balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. prepared mustard
1 tsp. honey
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. onion powder
1/3 C. low-sodium vegetable broth



Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Start by making the Gorgonzola sauce. It will hold nicely until ready to use it in the final assembly.

Gorgonzola Sauce

1. Brown the chopped garlic in oil in a medium-sized saucepan. Add white wine and cook over medium heat for 3 minutes.
2. Add onion and sauté until onion turns translucent.
3. Add broth, dried oregano and bay leaf to pan and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 5-minutes.
4. Return mixture to a boil. Slowly stir cornstarch/water mixture into sauce until it begins to thicken. Reduce heat to low and cook 5-more minutes.
5. Add Gorgonzola and stir well. Remove from heat and set aside.
6. Wait to add yogurt until just before serving.

Salads and Dressing

Assemble individual side salads.

Quick Honey Mustard Dressing:

Combine all ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well. Transfer to a serving pitcher.

Pasta Assembly/Plate

1. Drop pasta into boiling water and set timer for 8-minutes, or until tender. When done, reserve 1/2 C. starchy pasta cooking water and then drain and rinse pasta.
2. Place spinach in a large bowl. Mix oil, vinegar and broth in a small bowl and pour over spinach. Toss well and set aside.
3. Drain liquid off chopped apples. Sauté apple and chopped onion in oil until onion becomes translucent. Add reserved pasta cooking water to the apples and onions and toss over medium heat for about a minute. Return sauce to a boil and remove from heat.
4. Stir yogurt into Gorgonzola sauce and measure 1-1/2 C. sauce into pan with apple mixture. Toss sauce and apple mixture with cooked pasta.
5. Measure 1 C. of the dressed spinach into pasta and toss well.

Plate Meal:

Divide remaining 2 C. dressed spinach between two dinner plates. Create a space in the center of the spinach on each plate and spoon 2 C. pasta into open space. Garnish servings with Parmesan, chopped tomato and toasted pine nuts. Serve salads and dressing on the side.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

This yogurt-based cream sauce is rich tasting and refreshing. It's significantly lower-in-fat than a conventional Béchamel or white sauce.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com