

# Sun-dried Tomato Pesto Pasta

Tonights menu features a seriously good pasta dish. A sauce anchored with a tangy sun-dried tomato pesto wraps around whole wheat penne pasta and Chik'n strips. Browned mushrooms and onion finish the unforgettable flavor profile of this pasta dish. You'll have leftover pesto to use later.

Also, if you didn't roast beets yesterday, put them in the oven to roast today while you're hanging around the house. Once roasted, store in the fridge. You'll use them in a beet dinner salad on Thursday.

**Preparation time: 1 hour - Servings: 2 (plus leftovers)**

## Organize Your Ingredients!

### Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients on small plates or in bowls. Prep 2 cloves of chopped garlic: 1 in the pesto and 1 in the pasta.

### Sun-dried Tomato Pesto

- 1 C. sun-dried tomatoes (cut into 1/2" pieces)
- 1/2 C. white wine
- 1/3 C. peanuts
- 1 C. fresh cilantro leaves (chopped)
- 1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. Asian pepper sauce
- 2 tsp. smoky paprika
- 3 T. olive oil
- 1 tsp. sesame oil
- 3 T. fresh lime juice
- 3 T. shredded Parmesan

### Plant-based Choice or Chicken Option

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 2 C. of frozen Morningstar Chik'n Strips or similar plant-based product
- 1/4 C. white wine
- or -
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1/2 C. white wine
- salt and pepper to taste

### Salad and Dressing

fixings for a green salad

#### Dressing:

- 2 T. olive oil
- 3 T. Balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. prepared mustard
- 2 tsp. honey
- 1/3 C. low-sodium vegetable broth

### Pasta

2 C. dried, whole wheat penne pasta

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 2 C. Cremini mushrooms (sliced)
- 2/3 C. sweet onion (chopped)
- 1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
- 2/3 C. starchy pasta cooking water
- 2/3 C. low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1/3 C. sun-dried tomato pesto
- 2 T. shredded Parmesan cheese

## Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

### Basic Assembly Instructions

Put the pasta water on to boil. Next make the pesto and everything else will fall into place. You should be able to assemble salads and dressing while pasta cooks.

### Sun-dried Tomato Pesto

1. Place cut sun-dried tomato pieces in a small bowl, add wine and microwave 2-3 minutes. Stir and let stand for 15-minutes.
2. Once tomatoes are softened, place all ingredients in food processor and blend until fine.
3. Remove from processor and reserve 2/3 C. pesto for today's meal.
4. Pack the remainder of the pesto into a container. Pour a little olive oil over the top of the pesto. Cover with a tight fitting lid. (This will help preserve it.) The pesto should keep for several weeks.

### Plant-based Choice or Chicken Option

#### Plant-based choice:

Brown Chick'n strips in oil and add white wine. Cover and let wine cook away. Remove from heat, let cool and thin-slice lengthwise.

#### Chicken Option:

Brown chicken breast in oiled pan. Once browned, add white wine and cover pan. Cook over medium-low heat 5 minutes per side. Allow to cool and slice.

Salt and pepper to taste.

### Pasta and Salad

1. Drop pasta into boiling water and cook 8 minutes or until tender. Reserve 2/3 C. pasta cooking water and set aside, then drain and rinse pasta.
2. While pasta cooks, make green salads on separate plates. Place all dressing ingredients in jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well.
3. Brown sliced mushrooms in olive oil. Add sliced onion to pan with mushrooms and sauté until onions begin to brown. Sprinkle with chopped garlic. Toss until garlic becomes fragrant.
4. Add the 2/3 C. reserved pasta water and broth to pan with mushrooms. Bring to a boil and stir in pesto. Once pesto and liquid are well blended, add meat choice and cooked pasta. Toss 2 minutes and serve.
5. Serve 2 C. pasta per serving topped with shredded Parmesan. Serve salads on the side.

### What I've Learned from this Recipe

Why add pasta water? The starchy pasta water thins the sauce and acts as a binder to hold the sauce together while helping create a creamy sauce base.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! [chezdon@plate6.com](mailto:chezdon@plate6.com)