

Red Lentil Marinara Spaghetti from The Plant-Based Cookbook

This is a recipe you can easily put into your weeknight rotation. Red lentils (or masoor) cook quickly and work to thicken and give texture to this marinara. You can serve this pasta topped with any Parmesan for extra yum!

Makes 4–6 servings

Equipment needed: Large sauté pan

INGREDIENTS

1 cup (150 g) finely diced onion
1 cup (130 g) finely diced carrots
6 cloves garlic, minced
4 ounces (113 g) thinly sliced button or cremini mushrooms
1 teaspoon dried basil
¾ teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (more if you like it spicy)
14 ounces (~400 g) tomato sauce
1 (14.5 ounce/411 g) can Italian style or regular diced tomatoes
2 tablespoons (30 ml) tomato paste
2½ cups (590 ml) low-sodium vegetable broth
1 cup (190 g) red lentils, rinsed
1 tablespoon (15 ml) balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons (10 g) coconut sugar (optional)
¼–½ teaspoon salt
2 cups (50 g) baby spinach or 1 cup shredded kale, optional
12–16 ounces (340–453 g) brown rice, quinoa spaghetti (or whole wheat or spelt if gluten isn't an issue)
Parmesan of choice (I use the almond parmesan from The Plant-Based Cookbook)

HOW-TO

1. In a large sauté pan, sauté the onion and carrot with ¼ cup (60 ml) water for 5 to 7 minutes or until the onions are translucent. Add water as needed to prevent burning.
2. Now add the garlic, mushrooms, and all the spices. Stir and continue to cook on medium heat for another 5 minutes. Again, add water as needed.
3. Add the tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, tomato paste, vegetable broth, and red lentils and stir. Put the cover on the pan and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes covered.
4. After 10 minutes, stir the marinara and now partially remove the cover and continue to simmer for another 10 to 12 minutes, stirring a couple of times throughout.

5. Meanwhile bring a large pot of water to boil and cook the pasta according to directions for an al dente texture. I like a really “sauc-y” pasta so I make 12 ounces of pasta.
6. Most of the liquid in the marinara should be absorbed by now. Remove the cover and add the balsamic vinegar, coconut sugar, and salt. Cook uncovered for another minute and then add the baby spinach or kale if using, it will wilt quickly. Taste and re-season with salt and pepper if needed. Cover and remove from heat.
7. Drain the cooked pasta. Divide among plates and top with marinara or add the pasta back to the pot and add the marinara, toss well. Divide among plates and garnish with parmesan if using.