

MEALTIME HELPER

MAKING MEALTIME EASY

Spicy Chickpea Pasta Bowls - Recipe

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 15–20 minutes

Total time: 25–30 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 12 oz (340 g) pasta (penne, rigatoni, farfalle, or spaghetti)
- 1–2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 can (15 oz / 425 g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/2–1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (adjust to heat preference)
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2–1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt (adjust to taste)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 can (14 oz / 400 g) diced tomatoes (or 1 1/2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved)
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) vegetable broth or reserved pasta water
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt or 1/4 cup creme fraiche / heavy cream (to finish — optional but recommended)
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta or grated Parmesan (optional)
- 2 cups fresh spinach or baby kale (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or basil, for garnish
- Juice of 1/2 lemon (about 1 tablespoon)
- Salted pasta water for cooking

Optional add-ins/toppings:

- Sliced avocado, toasted pine nuts, olives, chili oil drizzle, or chopped scallions

Directions

1. **Cook the pasta:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta according to package instructions until al dente. Reserve 1/2–1 cup pasta cooking water, then drain and set aside.
2. **Sauté aromatics:** While the pasta cooks, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and cook 3–4 minutes until softened. Add minced garlic and cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
3. **Spice the chickpeas:** Add the drained chickpeas to the skillet. Stir in red pepper flakes, smoked paprika, cumin (if using), salt, and pepper. Cook 2–3 minutes, tossing so the chickpeas get coated and warmed through.
4. **Tomatoes and simmer:** Pour in the diced tomatoes (with juices) and the vegetable broth or 1/2 cup reserved pasta water. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook 4–6 minutes until the sauce thickens slightly and flavors meld. Taste and adjust salt and heat.
5. **Wilt greens (optional):** If using spinach or baby kale, stir it into the sauce now and cook 1–2 minutes until wilted.
6. **Finish the sauce:** Reduce heat to low. Stir in the Greek yogurt or cream to add richness and tame some heat, if using. If the sauce is too thick, add a splash of reserved pasta water until you reach your desired consistency. Stir in lemon juice.
7. **Combine with pasta:** Add the drained pasta to the skillet (or return sauce to the pasta pot) and toss to coat evenly. If needed, loosen with more reserved pasta water. Heat through 1–2 minutes.
8. **Plate and garnish:** Divide into bowls. Sprinkle with crumbled feta or grated Parmesan, chopped parsley or basil, and any optional toppings (avocado, toasted nuts, chili oil). Serve immediately.

Tips and variations

- For more protein and texture, roast chickpeas first: toss with oil, smoked paprika, salt, and roast at 425°F (220°C) for 15–20 minutes until crispy, then add to the sauce.
- Make it vegan by omitting yogurt/cream and using nutritional yeast or extra olive oil for richness; use vegan cheese if desired.
- To deepen flavor, sauté 1/2 teaspoon crushed fennel seeds with the spices, or add a splash of balsamic vinegar at the end.
- Spice level: increase red pepper flakes or add a spoonful of harissa or sriracha for more heat.
- Leftovers keep 2–3 days refrigerated. Reheat gently with a splash of water or broth.

Bright, hearty, and fast — these bowls are spicy comfort with satisfying chickpea heft.