

MEALTIME HELPER

MAKING MEALTIME EASY

Vegetarian Pasta Primavera - Recipe

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 12–15 minutes

Total time: 27–30 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 12 oz (340 g) pasta (penne, farfalle, spaghetti, or linguine)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 small shallot or 1/2 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced into half-moons
- 1 cup asparagus tips or trimmed asparagus, cut into 1–2 inch pieces
- 1 cup bell pepper, thinly sliced (any color)
- 1 cup peas (frozen and thawed, or fresh)
- 1 cup baby spinach or baby arugula
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest and 2 tablespoons lemon juice (about 1 lemon)
- 1/2 cup reserved pasta cooking water (as needed)
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan (or Pecorino), plus extra for serving (use vegan cheese if desired)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil, plus extra for garnish
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- **Optional additions:**
 - 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts or chopped walnuts
 - 1/4 cup heavy cream or 2 tablespoons butter for a richer sauce
 - 1/2 cup roasted artichoke hearts or mushrooms for extra heft

Directions

1. **Cook the pasta:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta to just al dente according to package directions. Reserve 1 cup pasta water, then drain

and set pasta aside.

2. **Prep vegetables while pasta cooks:** Trim and slice zucchini, asparagus, bell pepper, halve cherry tomatoes, and mince shallot and garlic.
3. **Sauté aromatics:** In a large skillet over medium heat, warm 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add shallot (or onion) and cook 2–3 minutes until softened. Add garlic and crushed red pepper flakes (if using) and cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. **Cook firmer vegetables:** Add zucchini, asparagus, and bell pepper to the skillet. Sauté 3–4 minutes until just tender-crisp and beginning to brown.
5. **Add quick vegetables:** Stir in cherry tomatoes and peas and cook 1–2 minutes until tomatoes soften and peas are heated through. If using mushrooms or artichokes, add them here and cook until warmed.
6. **Combine pasta and sauce base:** Reduce heat to low. Add the drained pasta to the skillet with the vegetables. Toss to combine, adding reserved pasta water a little at a time (start with 1/4 cup) until the mixture is glossy and coats the pasta.
7. **Finish the dish:** Stir in lemon zest, lemon juice, remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, grated Parmesan, and chopped basil. Fold in baby spinach until wilted. Taste and season with salt and plenty of freshly ground black pepper. If you want a creamier result, stir in cream or butter now.
8. **Plate and garnish:** Divide among bowls, sprinkle with extra Parmesan, toasted nuts (if using), a drizzle of olive oil, and more basil. Serve immediately.

Tips

- Use seasonal vegetables — swap in peas, green beans, broccoli florets, or spring onions as available.
- For protein, add white beans, chickpeas, or sautéed tofu.
- To keep veggies bright and crisp, don't overcook; finish tossing with pasta so residual heat wilts the greens.
- Leftovers keep 2–3 days refrigerated; reheat gently with a splash of water or olive oil.

Fresh, colorful, and perfect for spring — Vegetarian Pasta Primavera is quick comfort that celebrates vegetables.