

Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner

Pinching pennies? Make it a pasta night!

Pasta is a budget-friendly whole grain. Choose ingredients from the chart below to make a meal for four. Then, follow the step-by-step directions and review the chef's notes.

Pasta (½ pound)	+	Protein	+	Veggies (2 cups total, any combo)	+	Sauce (1–2 cups)	+	Seasonings (Optional, to taste)
Whole grain pasta		Lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken, cooked and drained (1 pound)		Spinach, chard, or kale		Marinara		Dried basil
Brown rice pasta		Extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled (14-ounce package)		Broccoli		Peanut Sauce		Dried oregano
		Beans, rinsed and drained (1 can or 2 cups cooked)		Carrots		Canned diced or crushed tomatoes		Garlic powder or minced fresh garlic
		Frozen peas or edamame (soy beans), thawed and drained (2 cups)		Sugar snap or snow peas		Quick Cheese Sauce		
		Chicken or turkey sausage, cooked and sliced (1 pound)		Zucchini or yellow squash		Simple White Sauce		

Directions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. In a colander, drain pasta.
2. Cook protein as needed. If using, add optional fresh garlic during the last minute of cooking time.
3. Cook veggies by steaming, grilling, roasting, sauteing, or adding to boiling pasta water during the last few minutes of cooking.
4. In a large pot over medium heat, heat sauce. If using, add optional spices now. Add protein and veggies to heat through. Toss with hot cooked pasta and serve.

Chef's Notes

- New to whole grain pasta? Start with a whole grain blend. Once you are used to the taste, switch to 100% whole wheat pasta.
- Use ground meat that is 90% lean or leaner. Drain excess fat from meat after cooking.



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Try these combos!

Asian Noodles

Whole grain spaghetti + tofu + sugar snap peas + carrots + peanut sauce

Summer Pasta Primavera

Whole grain pasta + diced tomatoes + cannellini beans + zucchini + garlic

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

Whole grain pasta + lean ground beef + broccoli + marinara sauce + dried basil + dried oregano + garlic



Sauce Recipes

Simple White Sauce

1. In a small bowl, use a fork to whisk together 2 Tablespoons cornstarch and 1 cup nonfat or low-fat milk until smooth.
2. In a large saucepan over medium heat, add milk mixture. Cook until thickened, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in 2 teaspoons mustard. Season with dried or fresh herbs as you like, such as basil, parsley, or dill. Start with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon and add to your taste.
4. Remove from heat. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

Quick Cheese Sauce

1. Grate 2 ounces low-fat cheddar cheese.
2. Follow instructions for Simple White Sauce above. In step 3, stir in cheese along with the mustard and seasonings, until melted.

