

Cashew Fettuccine Alfredo

Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS

Pasta and Garni

1 pound (450 grams) fettuccine noodles (or any other noodle shape you like)

1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) salt (for pasta water), optional

½ pound (225 grams) fresh or frozen peas (can substitute any fresh or frozen vegetables, small dice), optional

Parsley, chopped, optional

Lemon slices, optional

Cashew Alfredo

½ cup (120 milliliters) raw cashews (substitute ¼ cup [60 milliliters] raw cashew butter if you don't have a high-powered blender)

2 cups (480 milliliters) low-sodium vegetable stock

2 teaspoons (10 milliliters) apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) nutritional yeast

2 tablespoons (30 milliliters) all-purpose flour (can sub a gluten-free flour blend, to make gluten-free)

1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) garlic powder

1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) salt, optional

¼ to ½ teaspoon (1.25 to 2.5 milliliters) freshly ground black pepper (½ teaspoon [2.5 milliliters] gives this a bit of kick)

1 teaspoon (5 milliliters) Italian seasoning



This recipe showcases a delicious creamy sauce that just happens to be dairy-free, cholesterol-free, and much lower in calories and saturated fat than traditional alfredo sauces made with dairy butter, cream, and parmesan cheese. This is one of the few recipes that I think turns out well with either fresh or frozen vegetables, so it can be made entirely from pantry and frozen ingredients if you don't have time/money to shop for fresh veggies. Check out the option for Creamy Lemon Pasta, below, for a tangy take on the original.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak cashews (optional): If time permits, soaking cashews helps to make the sauce creamier. But, if you have a high-powered blender, it's not required. To soak cashews, (option 1) boil for 5 minutes and drain, (option 2) pour boiling water over the cashews to cover and soak for an hour at room temperature, or (option 3) cover with tap water and/or soak in the refrigerator overnight.
2. Cook pasta: Bring 4 quarts (4 liters) of water to a boil, add 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) of salt (optional), and then add pasta noodles, stirring well to prevent noodles from sticking. Cook for time indicated on the package (this is generally not long enough to reach the ideal al dente stage), then add the peas or other vegetables and boil for 1 to 2 minutes. Test pasta to confirm that it is al dente. Then, reserve 1 cup (240 milliliters) of the pasta water and drain noodles and peas/veggies in a colander.

3. Make the cashew alfredo: While pasta is boiling, make the cashew alfredo. If you soaked the cashews ahead, drain and rinse them. Add all ingredients for the alfredo into a blender (ideally, a high-powered blender) and blend until the mixture is smooth when rubbed between two fingers. If it is gritty, blend longer. In a saucepan over medium heat, cook alfredo, stirring constantly until it thickens a bit and becomes a creamy sauce (2 to 5 minutes); remove from heat. Make the sauce much thinner than you think alfredo should be. The sauce continues to thicken after coating the pasta and can become dry if not thin enough. If it's too thick, thin with pasta water.
4. Return pasta and veggies to the pot and pour cashew alfredo over them. Stir to combine and thin with a bit of the pasta boiling water, if needed. Transfer to a serving bowl and garnish with chopped parsley and lemon, if desired.

NOTES

- If you don't have a high-powered blender, don't skip the soaking step for the cashews. Alternatively, use raw cashew butter instead. If it is salted, omit or cut back on the salt in the recipe.
- If you prefer to have big chunks of fresh veggies in this dish, you can still add larger pieces of vegetables to the pasta water a couple minutes earlier in cooking or skip that step, sauté/roast them separately, and add or top pasta with them after mixing with the alfredo sauce.
- From a culinary perspective, the sauce benefits from the using the amount of salt listed. From a health perspective, you can omit the salt and use a bit more lemon, Italian seasoning, and pepper to increase the flavor of the dish.
- Zoodles option: Skip the pasta and pour the sauce over zoodles (zucchini noodles).
- Creamy Lemon Pasta option: Make the cashew alfredo sauce, but substitute apple cider vinegar with 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) lemon juice (or more, to taste) when blending the sauce, and add the zest of 1 lemon when you toss the sauce with the pasta at the end. Omit Italian seasoning if you want a more straightforward lemon flavor. Sprinkle additional grated lemon zest and freshly cracked black pepper on the finished dish to serve.

Nutritional Info (per ½ recipe): Calories 329, Total Fat 7.3 g, Saturated Fat 1.3 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 336.8 mg, Total Carbohydrate 53.4 g, Dietary Fiber 4.7 g, Sugars 4 g, Protein 13.7 g, Vitamin A 3%, Vitamin C 9%, Calcium 3%, Iron 14%

For comparison, here's the Nutritional Info for the same serving of traditional fettuccine alfredo prepared with butter, milk, and cheese.

Nutritional Info (per same-sized serving): Calories 757, Total Fat 53.1 g, Saturated Fat 32.9 g, Cholesterol 167 mg, Sodium 521.4 mg, Total Carbohydrate 50.2 g, Dietary Fiber 3.1 g, Sugars 5.6 g, Protein 20.7 g, Vitamin A 60%, Vitamin C 19%, Calcium 41%, Iron 8%

► To view the video for this recipe, and all electronic resources associated with the Culinary Medicine Curriculum, please see <https://bit.ly/culinarymededucation>.
