

Palate pleasing pastime: pasta

Eating pasta may be one of the new national pastimes. Pasta consumption has grown significantly — 20 percent to be exact — since 1970. About 1.5 billion pounds of pasta are consumed annually in this country, or about 6.5 pounds per person, according to figures from the National Pasta Association.

Pasta or spaghetti is popular for a number of reasons. It's economical — an average serving of plain spaghetti costs less than 10 cents. While pasta is low in cost, there's nothing low about its nutritional value. Two ounces of dry pasta contain just 210 calories and supply 10 percent of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance (U.S. RDA) of protein, 35 percent of thiamine, 15 percent of riboflavin, 15 percent of niacin and 10 percent of iron.

And, as most alert cooks know, pasta is versatile. Just change the sauce and pasta goes from ordinary to elegant. Serve it hot or cold; as a salad, an entree or a side dish.

Combining pasta with meat or poultry is a good way to stretch food dollars. For example, Pasta Marco Polo with a decidedly Italian heritage, does just that with a half cup of ham and other ingredients to feed six. This substantial main dish owes its ease of preparation to quick cooking vegetables and a can of chunky vegetable beef soup. The other ingredients include ham, mushrooms, zucchini, tomato and those favorite seasonings oregano and garlic.

Another way to stretch meat — this time a quarter pound of sausage — is Sausage and Green Pepper Pasta. This great tasting entree has a wonderfully velvety sauce that gets its rich texture from condensed cream of mushroom soup. Green pepper, garlic and onion are flavor accents.

Pasta Primavera with Sesame Seed is a variation on the traditionally spring and early summer vegetable and pasta dish. The creamy sauce, which conveniently gets its start from condensed cream of chicken soup, is flecked with parsley and provides a luscious backdrop for the cauliflower, pea and other ingredients. Served over plain or spinach spaghetti, this pasta dish can be the basis for a light supper with a crisp, green salad, crusty bread and sliced sweet strawberries. Or serve as a side dish to accompany roast chicken.

Pasta is perfect any season, for any meal and any occasion.



Pasta is inexpensive, versatile and just plain fun. Pasta Marco Polo includes ham, zucchini, tomato and mushrooms.

PASTA MARCO POLO

2 tablespoons butter or margarine
 1/2 cup ham cut in strips
 1 can (about 2 ounces) sliced mushrooms, drained
 1 small clove garlic, minced
 1/4 teaspoon oregano leaves, crushed
 1 can (18 1/4 ounces) chunky vegetable beef soup
 1 1/2 cups cooked spaghetti
 1/2 cup shredded zucchini
 1 medium tomato, cut in wedges
 Grated Parmesan cheese

In 2-quart saucepan, over medium heat, in hot butter, brown ham and mushrooms with garlic and oregano. Stir in remaining ingredients except cheese. Heat; stirring occasionally. Serve with cheese. Makes 5 cups or 6 servings.

SAUSAGE & GREEN PEPPER PASTA

1 tablespoon olive oil
 1/4 pound mild Italian sausage, casing removed
 1 large onion, sliced
 1 small green pepper, cut in strips
 1 large clove garlic, minced
 1 can (10 1/4 ounces) condensed cream of mushroom soup
 1/2 soup can water
 3 cups cooked spaghetti

In 1 1/2-quart saucepan, over medium-high heat, in hot oil, cook sausage, stirring to separate meat. Add onion, green pepper and garlic; cook until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in soup and water. Heat; stirring occasionally. Serve with spaghetti. Makes 3 cups or 3 servings.

PASTA PRIMAVERA WITH SESAME SEED

3 tablespoons butter or margarine
 3 cups cauliflowerets (about 1 small head)
 1/2 cup frozen peas
 1/4 cup chopped parsley
 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
 1 can (10 1/4 ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup
 1/2 soup can milk
 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seed
 4 cups cooked spinach noodles

In 2 1/2-quart saucepan, over medium heat, in hot butter, cook cauliflower and peas with parsley and nutmeg until vegetables are tender. Add remaining ingredients except noodles. Heat; stirring occasionally. Serve with noodles. Makes 4 cups or 4 servings.

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Vitamin C can be harmful

Daily "megadoses" of Vitamin C reduce the body's ability to use copper, an essential nutrient, an Oregon State University researcher has reported.

"Although it's been demonstrated previously in laboratory animals, our study showed for the first time that high intake of ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) is antagonistic to copper status in humans," said Florian Cerklewski, OSU foods and nutrition professor.

In the OSU experiment, 13 men 20 to 33 years old, judged to have normal blood chemistry, took 1,500 milligrams of ascorbic acid a day for about two months (500 milligrams with each meal for a total 25 times the recommended daily intake).

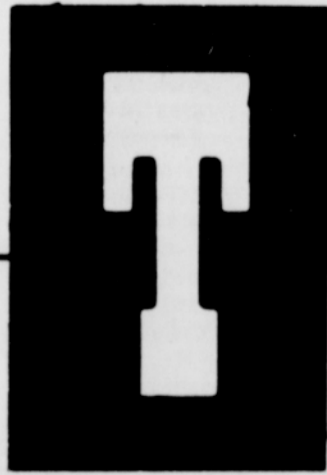
Blood levels of a copper-containing protein necessary in the body's utilization of stored iron dropped an average of 26 percent in the volunteers but remained within normal range, Cerklewski said.

Large daily doses of Vitamin C have been credited by some in recent years as having value in combating ailments ranging from the common cold to cancer.

Copper is in whole grains, organ meats, peanuts, seafood like oysters and perch and other foods. Most people who eat a balanced diet have an adequate supply, Cerklewski said.

"I don't think it is a wise course to recommend more dietary copper because of this study," he said. "Rather, the major point should be that 25 times more vitamin C than is recommended is not without potential of inducing a nutrient imbalance, at least in terms of copper."

Cerklewski conducted the research with graduate student Elizabeth Finley. The study was funded by OSU's Agricultural Experiment Station.



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ATTENTION CITIZEN CONSULTANTS!

Final comments due on electric power rates.

A lot has happened since we (the Bonneville Power Administration) asked you and all other Northwest people to be "Citizen Consultants" on our proposed electric power rates.

We've listened to hundreds of your comments and suggestions, presented either orally at the April public hearings or in writing. And lengthy formal hearings have produced thousands of pages of valuable testimony and exhibits.

Now we're asking you for additional comments, so that they can be considered in the development of our final rate proposal, due out November 1.

Again, you may comment either orally, at one of our July 21 comment forums (see locations at right), or in writing. For information, please call our Public Involvement Office. Toll-free numbers are: in Oregon, 1-800-452-8429; in other Northwest states, 1-800-547-6048.

Written comments must be received by 5 p.m. July 29, 1983. Please send them to our Public Involvement Office, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, Oregon 97212.

We are the Bonneville Power Administration, and we'd like you to consult with us. We're listening.

Public Comment Forums Thursday, July 21, 1983

Registration 7 p.m., meetings 7:30 p.m.

Burley, Idaho

Burley Inn, 800 North Overland Avenue

Eugene, Oregon

Eugene Hilton, Wilder Room I
 66 East Sixth Avenue

Missoula, Montana

Red Lion Inn, Blackfoot Room
 100 Madison

Richland, Washington

Federal Building Auditorium
 825 Jadin Avenue

Seattle, Washington

Seattle Center, Mercer Forum Room VII
 Mercer Street at Third Avenue North

Spokane, Washington

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 Community Room
 1200 Fort Vancouver Way



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