

your

COMMISSARY

... It's Worth the Trip!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Pressure Cooker "Tomatoey" Pasta

The trend still continues! Americans aren't eating enough vegetables. Ideally, it would be great to our waistlines and the overall nutrition quality of our diet if vegetables made up the majority of our diet. Yet, even with years of promoting the extraordinary benefits to health, Americans still don't eat the minimum recommended amount of 2 to 2½ cups per day. This is alarming considering tomato sauce, salsa, French fries and legumes are counted as vegetables. We, as Americans, can't even make the minimum consumption of vegetables when we are eating pizza, spaghetti, and burritos?

Many Americans report that they may go a day or two without eating something green and even longer when asked about an orange vegetable. In part, this is because we have begun to rely on foods prepared for us and the drive-thru. There aren't many drive-thrus offering carrots or sweet potatoes on the menus. Some may think, if it isn't a fresh vegetable, then it doesn't count, or the only way they know how to eat vegetables is in salads. Let's be real, the majority of Americans are not eating salads every day because we find more comfort with warm/hot foods during our meal times.

A diet robust in vegetables is more than the go-to salad or broccoli sitting alongside a piece of chicken breast. A baked potato with a little cheese, some leftover chicken breast, a few black beans, steamed broccoli and a dab of salsa is a tasty, nutrient-dense meal loaded with a variety of vegetables. It can be made in the microwave!

It's truly not difficult, bland, or even obvious to increase the amount of vegetables we eat daily. It just takes just a little strategy, small changes in behavior, and some planning. For example, when consuming sandwiches, always aim to add at least three different vegetables. Try lettuce, tomatoes, pickles and/or cucumbers. When eating out, ask for extra lettuce and tomato to be added to your burgers and chicken sandwiches. Consider ordering entrées such as spaghetti or chili that have vegetables mixed in. Just don't forget about portion control.

Aim to cook more meals at home and consider decreasing the amount of pastas, rice, and meat served on the plate while increasing the amount of vegetables two to three nights a week. Also, try to have at least two servings of vegetables at lunch and dinner by serving as a side dish or by adding them to soups and stir-fries. Use canned, fresh and frozen. You can even "hide" vegetables in common dishes. Use minced, fresh mushrooms in ground meat dishes at a ratio of 1:4 (mushrooms to meat) or add an extra can of tomato sauce or stewed tomatoes to spaghetti sauce and chili and adjust the herbs and spices

This recipe uses a pressure cooker to make a quick pasta dish while also using a variety of vegetables. In fact, this recipe includes, red, green, white and orange vegetables in just one dish. The flavor will be a pleasant surprise.



Ingredients: 4 servings

- 1 lb. lean ground meat (beef, turkey, chicken, pork, etc.)
- 2 carrots, sliced thin
- 2 zucchini, chunked
- 1 24 oz. jar of spaghetti sauce
- 8 oz. canned sliced mushrooms
- 8 oz. whole wheat or whole grain pasta
- ½ medium onion, diced
- ½ tsp. salt

Directions:

1. Turn your pressure cooker on. If you're using a stove top pressure cooker, place it on the stove and begin heating it at medium high. Add the onions, carrots, and zucchini and cook until softened a bit. Be sure to stir constantly
4. Secure the lid of the pressure cooker and set the time for 10 minutes. If using a stove top cooker, bring the cooker to pressure over medium-high heat and then cook for an additional 9-10 minutes.

2. Add the lean ground meat and cook until the pink is almost gone. To remove the excess grease, place a paper towel over the mixture and press down using the back of a wooden spoon to absorb some of the grease. Carefully lift the paper out of the container and discard.
3. Add the spaghetti sauce, pasta, mushrooms and 2 cups water to the cooker. Gently push the pasta down so it is covered by the water. Do not stir.

Tips

Use this recipe as a guide on the proportions of ingredients to use. Then vary them. For example, replace the whole wheat pasta with egg noodles, the water with broth, the sauce with stewed tomatoes, the vegetables with frozen peas and carrots, and the ground meat for diced chicken breast -- put the lid on and you have a quick soup!

DISCLAIMER:

THIS RECIPE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT BY DOD OF ANY INDIVIDUAL VENDOR. ANY PRODUCT OF SIMILAR SPECIFICATION MAY BE USED TO MAKE THIS HEALTHY CHOICE MEAL.

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