

WHOLE WHEAT LINGUINE WITH ASPARAGUS, PEAS, AND SPINACH CREAM

Spring is asparagus season. Asparagus can be expensive, even in season, as part of a vegetarian entrée, this dish is still affordable to serve.

SERVES 50 ADULTS

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. frozen spinach, drained or ½ lb. fresh spinach, washed
1 ½ lbs. skim milk ricotta cheese
1 cup oil
½ cup garlic, minced
Zest** of 2 lemons with juice (optional, but very good for taste)
5 lb. whole wheat linguine
5 lb. fresh asparagus, tough ends cut off (about 2inch), sliced to 1-inch pieces
4 lb. green peas, frozen
2 cups grated parmesan cheese
3 cups reserved pasta water*
2 tablespoons salt
1 tablespoon black pepper

**Note: Zesting: scrape off the thin outer layer of colored skin of citrus with a small grater or microplane

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a large stock pot of salted water to boil with enough room for pasta, peas, and asparagus.
2. Drop spinach into the boiling water in a steamer insert or sieve. Cook for 1 minute and remove with steamer insert or slotted spoon. Drain well and put into a bowl with ricotta cheese, oil, garlic, and lemon zest and juice.
3. Using an immersion blender or other food processor or blender, blend these ingredients. Set aside.
4. Bring water back to a boil and cook linguine until just about done. Drop in asparagus pieces and peas and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes until bright green and just cooked. *Reserve 3 cups pasta water and drain off the rest.
5. Put pasta and vegetables into a bowl. Pour spinach and ricotta mixture over the pasta. Add parmesan and toss.
6. If needed, mix in some, maybe not all, of the reserved pasta water, to make the pasta a smooth consistency.
7. Season with a sprinkle of salt and black pepper to taste.