

PASTA WITH MEATBALLS AND SPINACH

My inspiration came from a container of spinach in the fridge that needed to be used. I searched my memory bank of recipes and considered my stash. After making several adjustments in the original recipe from Cook's Illustrated, this turned out SO GOOD!

Cook's Illustrated recipe adapted by Peggy Crum, MA, RDN

Featured Food: pasta

Yield: serves 4

Ingredients

Original ingredient list from Cook's Illustrated:

1 T olive oil
1 lb hot or sweet Italian turkey sausage, casings removed
3 cloves minced garlic
2 1/4 c low-sodium chicken broth
2 1/4 c water
8 oz (2 1/2 c) penne pasta
1/2 c oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, rinsed and chopped fine
6 oz fresh baby spinach
1/2 c grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 c pine nuts, toasted

Adjusted ingredient list (exactly what I used):

1 T vegetable oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 c low-sodium chicken broth
1 (14 oz) can diced tomatoes
1/4 c sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
1 c water
1/2 t salt
12 oz cellentani pasta (spiral tubes)
12 oz (about 12) meatballs
5 oz fresh baby spinach
1/2 c grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 c pine nuts, toasted

Preparation

If you're using sausage, heat oil in 12-inch skillet. Add sausage and cook until lightly brown. Add garlic and cook for about 30 seconds.

If using precooked meat/meatballs or beans, begin here: Heat oil in 12-inch skillet. Add garlic and cook for about 30 seconds.

Next, add broth, tomatoes, water and pasta to the skillet. Bring to simmer. Cook, stirring often, until pasta is al dente and liquid has thickened slightly. Add more water as needed. With a few minutes to go, tuck the meatballs into the pasta and sauce. Total simmering time is about 15 minutes.

Remove from heat. Add spinach, a handful at a time, and gently stir it in. Stir in Parmesan cheese and pine nuts. Taste; add salt and pepper as needed. Sprinkle more cheese on top as desired. Serve with crusty bread to soak up the sauce.

Original recipe is from [Cook's Illustrated](#).