



strong bodies **healthy minds**

## Spinach Pesto Pasta

The secret ingredient in our pesto is raw sunflower seeds instead of the traditional pine nuts, which are more expensive and higher in fat. We also use spinach instead of basil and whole wheat pasta, so that it's high fiber. This pasta dish is a favorite lunch item with kids because it tastes so good, and popular with parents because it's so good for kids! Spinach is easy to grow, so this is the perfect recipe for anyone interested in starting a school or backyard garden. If you have a shovel in one hand, make sure you have a fork in the other, because this pesto dish disappears quickly!

### Ingredients:

- 1 package (13.25 ounces) whole wheat penne or rotelle pasta
- 2 cups packed baby spinach leaves
- ¼ cup hulled raw sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons low sodium vegetable broth (or water)

### Directions:

1. In a large saucepot of boiling water, cook pasta as label directs. Reserve ½ cup pasta cooking water, then drain pasta. Set pasta aside in large bowl.
2. In food processor or blender, combine spinach leaves, sunflower seeds, Parmesan, sea salt, pepper, and garlic; pulse until finely chopped. With processor running, gradually add oil and broth through feed tube to form a smooth, thick mixture.
3. Add spinach pesto to pasta in bowl and toss until evenly coated. If mixture is too thick, stir in enough reserved pasta cooking water until desired consistency.

Makes 8 servings (1 cup per serving).

**Nutrition Facts per serving:** 240 calories; 7g fat (1g sat fat, 3g mono, 2g poly, 0g trans fat); 0mg cholesterol; 37g carbohydrate (5g fiber, 2g sugar); 8g protein; 75mg sodium; 4% Daily Value (DV) vitamin A; 2% DV vitamin C; 6% DV calcium; 10% DV iron.