



Yes, You CAN Eat That

Do the words, "I can't eat that" sound familiar? They're usually spoken by people who are on a diet, avoiding "carbs," or otherwise restricting food intake. Strict food rules are commonly followed to lose weight. Is this an effective approach?

Research tells us that denying yourself foods you enjoy will eventually backfire. It can lead to overindulgences, even binges and other disordered eating, which of course undermines the purpose of the deprivation in the first place. This can lead to guilt, shame, and feelings of failure. Food should never cause such emotions. Over time, eliminating favorite foods can easily cause more harm than good.

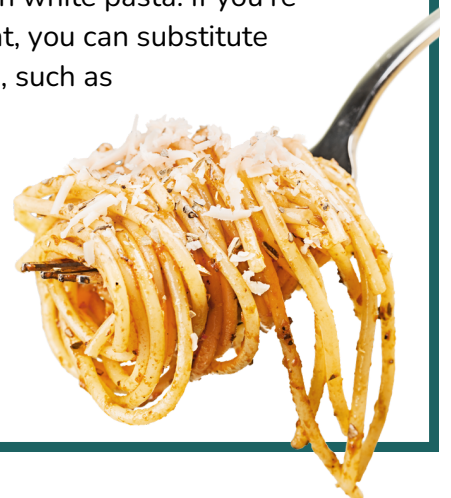
That's why it may be a good idea to go ahead and include foods you enjoy—in small amounts. Allowing yourself a portion-controlled treat each day or each week may actually help you stay on track. This is especially important over the holidays, when special, once-a-year foods abound and beckon us.

Remember, your overall dietary pattern is what is important. Portion control is the crucial component. So pick your passion, stick to your planned portion, put away the rest, and savor your treat. Then move on, knowing you will be able to do the same the next time—no stress!

Let's talk pasta, a food often shunned as "bad" – a starchy spree that will leave your healthy eating plan in shambles. Not so! Pasta meals can definitely fit into your health goals. Whole grain or bean-based pastas are nutritious and delicious, and can be made in so many ways. Keep your portions in check and enjoy every bite.

This week's recipe features whole wheat pasta, which has more fiber and nutrients than white pasta. It comes together super fast and always pleases. Feel free to swap veggies per your preference and season (locally grown veggies are the tastiest!). Out of fresh veggies? Try frozen peas or greens, jarred sun-dried tomatoes, and canned artichoke hearts. If you're using leftover cooked veggies, add them toward the end of cooking.

Whole wheat pasta is widely available at most grocery stores. It is made with the entire wheat kernel, which is higher in fiber and nutrients than white pasta. If you're sensitive to wheat, you can substitute any type of pasta, such as quinoa, bean, or brown rice pasta.



One-Pot Pasta Primavera

For this super budget-friendly recipe, you cook the noodles and the veggies together, which saves time and effort. Plus kitchen cleanup is a breeze!

You will need:

- 1 pound whole wheat penne
- ½ medium onion, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 6-oz bag pre-washed baby spinach, or 1 bunch fresh spinach, rinsed well and roughly chopped, OR 2 cups broccoli florets
- 1 bell pepper, diced (color your choice)
- 1 15.5-oz can white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved (you can also use 2-3 large tomatoes, chopped, or a 15-oz can of diced tomatoes)
- ¼ cup or more of veggie broth or water (amount depends on how juicy the tomatoes are and how saucy you like your pasta)
- ¼ cup fresh finely chopped basil or 1 tbsp dried basil
- Juice from ½ lemon, or 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1½ tbsp olive oil (you can omit if you're following an oil-free plan; the fat in the oil helps the body absorb nutrients from the veggies and imparts body and flavor to the dish. You can add an ounce of raw nuts or seeds in place of the oil if preferred)
- ¼ cup white wine or 2 tbsp white wine vinegar + 2 tbsp water
- Fresh ground pepper to taste
- Salt to taste
- Crushed red pepper flakes (optional)



Boil pasta according to package directions. With 5 minutes of boiling remaining, add the onion, garlic, spinach or broccoli, and the bell pepper to the boiling pasta.

When pasta is done, drain pasta and veggies in a colander (do not rinse) and add back to pot. Add the beans and tomatoes and cook, stirring, over low to medium heat until the tomatoes are softened and cooked through.

Remove from heat and immediately add the veggie broth, basil, lemon juice, olive oil, wine, pepper, salt, and red pepper, tossing well. If the mixture is too dry, add more little veggie broth or water. Adjust seasonings and serve!