

Shrimp Pesto Pasta

Delicious shrimp pesto pasta with succulent shrimp, vibrant basil pesto, and al dente pasta. Ready in 35 minutes - perfect for weeknight dinners!

15 min

PREP

20 min

COOK

35 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 8 oz pasta
- 1 lb shrimp
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup tomato
- 2 clove garlic
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the pasta water**

Fill a large pot with water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Add 1 teaspoon salt to the boiling water.
- 2** Add 8 oz pasta to the boiling water and cook according to package directions until al dente, usually 8-10 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the starchy pasta cooking water before draining.
- 3 Prepare the shrimp**

Pat 1 lb shrimp completely dry with paper towels and season both sides with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste.
- 4** Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the oil shimmers and moves freely in the pan, about 2 minutes.
- 5** Add 2 cloves minced garlic to the hot oil and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant but not browned.

6 Add seasoned shrimp to the skillet in a single layer without overcrowding. Cook for 2-3 minutes until the bottom side is pink and opaque, then flip and cook 1-2 minutes more until fully cooked through.

7 Transfer cooked shrimp to a plate and reduce heat to low.

8 **Combine and finish**

Add drained pasta and 1 cup pesto to the same skillet. Toss vigorously for 1-2 minutes, gradually adding reserved pasta water 2 tablespoons at a time until the sauce coats the pasta evenly.

9 Return cooked shrimp to the skillet and toss gently for 1 minute until heated through and well combined.

10 **Serve**

Transfer to serving bowls and serve immediately while hot.

Tips

Reserve pasta cooking water before draining - the starchy, salted water helps bind the pesto to the pasta and adjusts sauce consistency perfectly.

Pat shrimp completely dry with paper towels before seasoning and cooking to ensure proper searing and prevent excess moisture from diluting the pesto.

Cook shrimp just until they turn pink and opaque, about 2-3 minutes per side. Overcooked shrimp become rubbery and tough.

Toss the pasta with pesto off the heat to prevent the basil from becoming bitter and the sauce from separating.

Use freshly grated Parmesan cheese rather than pre-grated for the best flavor and melting quality.

If the pesto seems too thick when combining with pasta, thin it gradually with reserved pasta water until you achieve a silky consistency.

Add cherry tomatoes at the very end of cooking to maintain their shape and fresh texture while just warming them through.