

Pasta with tomato sauce

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp vegetable oil	2 tsp garlic powder
½ pound ground beef	1 28-oz can crushed tomatoes
1 cup frozen, diced onion	1 6-oz can tomato paste
1 carrot, peeled and diced	1 tsp beef bouillon powder
1 stalk celery, diced	½ cup water
1 Tbsp Italian seasoning	1 pound dry pasta

Instructions:

1. In sauté pan over medium high heat, add the vegetable oil, then the ground beef. Stir frequently, breaking up chunks as you go, until no pink remains in meat.
2. Add the onion, carrot, celery, Italian seasoning and garlic powder. Reduce heat to medium and stir frequently until vegetables begin to soften.
3. Add the crushed tomato, tomato paste, beef bouillon powder and water. Bring to a simmer (small bubbles coming to the surface), then reduce heat to low or medium-low to maintain a gentle simmer. Cook for 15-20 minutes until vegetables are tender.
4. While sauce simmers, prepare the pasta according to the package directions. If you'd like to thin the sauce a little bit, ladle in a splash of the hot pasta water.
5. To serve, combine the sauce and pasta. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Options:

This recipe is easy to customize based on your preferences:

- **Substitute other vegetables**, such as fresh mushrooms, zucchini or bell peppers. (Add during Step 2.) Canned mushrooms, fresh or frozen chopped spinach or chopped kale can be added during Step 3.
- **If you like spice**, add 1-3 teaspoons of red pepper flakes while cooking the ground beef.
- **For a richer sauce**, stir in 2-3 ounces of cream cheese at the end of Step 3.
- **Top with parmesan cheese** if you have some on hand.
- **Any shape pasta will work**. Follow cooking directions on the package.
- **To increase protein**, use more ground beef (up to 1½ pounds) or add lentils at the beginning of Step 3. For every ½ cup of lentils, add ½ cup of water and ½ teaspoon of beef bouillon powder.
- **Use undrained diced tomatoes or tomato sauce** in place of crushed tomatoes.