

SEASONED

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to *Seasoned* Newsletter #5. (If you missed the most recent one, it's [here](#).) In this issue we feature two recipes using spinach, which is not only delicious and readily available, but of course very good for you. We use it in a main course pasta dish and also in our version of an easy, very flavorful side dish from Japan. Then, because everyone deserves a dessert, we've got a quick and delicious Layered Yogurt Parfait. There's also a kitchen trick, an exercise to improve your balance, and a tool you need in your kitchen when cooking for one or two. Finally, we go over the basics of a skill every cook needs to know: measuring ingredients.

Let's get started!



CHOP CHOP
FAMILY

Pasta with White Beans and Spinach

The sauce for this dish comes together in the time it takes the pasta to cook. After you add the chicken broth and tomatoes, it may look like there's too much liquid in the skillet. But don't worry, it will be fine—some of it will evaporate and the pasta will absorb some. Also, although it looks like there's a ton of spinach, it will cook down to a small fraction of its original volume. BY ADAM RIED

HANDS-ON TIME: 20 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 25 MINUTES MAKES: 2–3 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound whole-wheat penne or other short, stubby pasta
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- ¼ cup low-sodium chicken broth or pasta cooking water (see Tip below)
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, including liquid
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can cannellini, white kidney, or other white beans, drained and rinsed
- 6 cups (loosely packed) baby spinach (about 3 ounces)
- ⅓ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, plus extra to pass at table
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put a large pot of water on the stove and turn the heat to high. When it comes to a boil, add the pasta and 1 teaspoon of the salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until it's almost cooked through but still has a bit of resistance in the center, 7 to 10 minutes depending on the brand. Drain.
2. While the pasta is cooking, put a large skillet on the stove and turn the heat to medium. Add the oil, onion, garlic, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring often, until the onion is soft and golden, about 4 minutes.
3. Add the broth or pasta cooking water and the tomatoes with their juices, raise the heat to medium-high, and bring the mixture to a boil. Add the white beans and cook, stirring, until they are heated through, about 2 minutes.
4. Add the drained pasta to the skillet. Add half the spinach and stir until it wilts, then repeat with the second half.
5. Add the cheese, pepper, and lemon juice and stir to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning with additional salt, pepper, and/or lemon juice if desired.



Tip

If using pasta water instead of broth in this recipe, there's no need to wait until you drain the pasta. Just dip a heatproof measuring cup into the pot and scoop it out.

Or You Could

- **Make it simpler:** Leave out the tomatoes. Just increase the amount of chicken broth or pasta cooking water to ¾ cup.
- **Make it a real “from the pantry” dinner by using frozen spinach:** Use 1 (10-ounce) package of frozen spinach, thawed, drained, and squeezed dry, in place of the fresh spinach.
- **Make it spicy:** Add about ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper when you add the garlic—or more if you really like spicy.
- **Give it a Greek accent:** Add ½ cup chopped pitted Kalamata olives just before serving and/or use crumbled feta in place of the Parmesan cheese.

Chilled Sesame Spinach

This is an adaptation of a classic Japanese salad called gomae. Our version is a little bit sweet, a little bit salty, and plenty peanut-y. As an added bonus, spinach is not just delicious; it's incredibly healthy—loaded with more vitamins and minerals than almost any food you can eat.

HANDS-ON TIME: 15 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 25 MINUTES MAKES: 4 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 (1-pound) bag baby spinach
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons warm water
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar or white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put a large pot of water on the stove, turn the heat to high, and bring the water to a boil. Add the salt and spinach and cook until it is just wilted, about 30 seconds. Drain immediately in a colander and run cold water over the spinach for 1 minute to stop cooking.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the peanut butter, warm water, vinegar, soy sauce, and honey until smooth and creamy, adding more water if you need to. Stir in the toasted sesame seeds.
3. Lift the cooled spinach out of the colander by the handful and squeeze it to get rid of the extra moisture. Put it in the bowl with the dressing, and toss gently.
4. Serve right away at room temperature, or refrigerate for 30 minutes and serve chilled. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 3 days.



Toasting Sesame Seeds

As with all nuts and seeds, toasting really brings out the flavor of sesame seeds. (Try tasting a few before and after toasting, and you'll see what we mean.) To toast, put a small skillet on the stove over medium heat, add the sesame seeds, and toast, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Immediately remove the seeds from the pan to prevent them from burning.

Layered Yogurt Parfait

Parfait usually refers to an ice-cream concoction layered in a fancy glass, but it's really a French word that means "perfect." And one perfect thing about this recipe is that you can use any fruit that you like.

HANDS-ON TIME: 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 10 MINUTES MAKES: 2 SERVINGS



INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 2 cups fresh berries or chopped fruit
- 4 teaspoons raisins (optional)
- ¼ cup chopped toasted almonds, walnuts, or pecans

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put ½ cup yogurt in each of 2 glasses and top each with ½ cup fruit plus 1 teaspoon raisins, if using. Repeat.
2. Top each glass with 2 tablespoons chopped nuts and serve right away..

A Trick, a Tool, an Exercise



Keep Lettuce Fresh

Lettuce fades fast, but one way to keep it fresh longer is to put the lettuce in a bowl, drape a paper towel over it, and then cover the bowl with plastic wrap. The paper towel absorbs moisture, helping to prevent wilting and sogginess for up to a week.



Small Skillet

Whether you call it a skillet or a frying pan, this is an essential tool when cooking for one or two people. And you might as well make it nonstick while you're at it. We like the T-fal Professional Nonstick 8-inch Fry Pan, which includes a red dot that shows when the pan is hot (about \$20).



Obstacle Course

Arrange a series of cones or other obstacles such as small household objects like cups or cans in a straight line about four feet apart. Starting at one end of the course, weave through the obstacles in an "S" pattern without touching them. Difficulty can be increased by decreasing the distance between the obstacles.



How to Measure Ingredients

It may seem obvious, but measuring ingredients properly is an important cooking skill. So you need to know which tools to use and how to use them. It also comes in handy to know how various units of measurement relate to one another. That way, for example, if a recipe calls for a pint of liquid, you can use whatever liquid measuring cup you have to measure out a pint.

Tools for Measuring

Cup types Measuring cups are often referred to as “liquid” or “dry.”

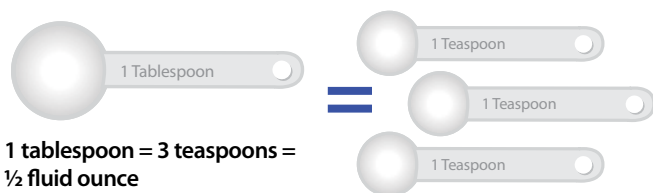
Liquid measuring cups are used for anything that is pourable, like water, milk, broth, and oil. They are made out of clear glass or plastic, and sometimes have a pour spout. Fill to the mark where the measurement you need is printed. To get an accurate reading, it's important to crouch down so you can view the mark at eye level. The marks are usually at every $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, and 1 cup. The most common sizes for the measuring cup itself are 1 cup, 2 cups, or 4 cups.

Dry measuring cups are not just for dry ingredients! They are used for anything you can scoop and measure, like flour, rice, peanut butter, and yogurt. They are usually made out of metal or plastic. They are meant to be filled right to the top and then leveled off with the flat side of a knife. The most common sizes for dry measuring cups are $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, and 1 cup.

Measuring spoons are used for measuring small amounts of ingredients like dried herbs or spices, salt, baking powder, and vanilla extract. Each measuring spoon has the quantity it measures written on the spoon. These are usually expressed in whole or fractions of tablespoons and teaspoons ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1).



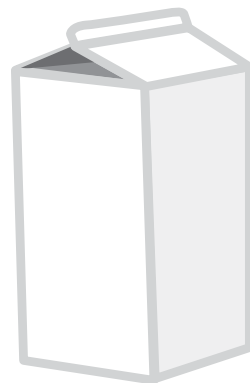
Measurement Equivalents



1 cup =
16 tablespoons =
8 fluid ounces = $\frac{1}{2}$ pint

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup =
8 tablespoons =
4 fluid ounces

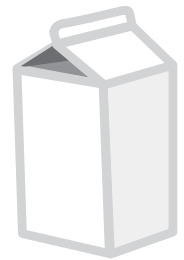
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup =
4 tablespoons =
2 fluid ounces



1 gallon =
4 quarts =
16 cups =
128 fluid ounces



1 quart =
2 pints =
4 cups =
32 fluid ounces



1 pint =
2 cups =
16 fluid ounces