

Easy Shrimp Pasta with Pesto, Tomatoes, and Spinach

1 pound jumbo (21-25) shrimp, peeled and deveined



TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

1 pound jumbo (21-25) shrimp, peeled and deveined
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
12 ounces spaghetti
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved (about 2 1/2 cups)
3/4 cup basil pesto, store-bought or homemade
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
3 cups baby spinach
Grated Parmesan cheese (optional, for topping)
Fresh basil leaves (optional, for topping)

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Prepare the Pasta:** Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Cook the spaghetti until it is al dente, according to the package directions. Before you drain the pasta, reserve about a cup of the starchy pasta cooking water. Drain the pasta and set it aside.
- 2. Season and Sauté the Shrimp:** While the pasta is cooking, sprinkle the shrimp with a pinch of salt, pepper, and baking soda (if using). In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp in a single layer and cook for about 1-2 minutes per side, or until they are opaque and just cooked through. Be careful not to overcrowd the pan. Transfer the cooked shrimp to a plate and set it aside.
- 3. Sauté the Tomatoes and Spinach:** In the same skillet, lower the heat to medium and add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Add the minced garlic and cook for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Add the halved cherry tomatoes and a pinch of salt. Sauté for 2-3 minutes, until the tomatoes soften and start to burst.
- 4. Wilt the Spinach:** Add the baby spinach to the skillet and stir until it wilts completely. If you're using them, stir in the crushed red pepper flakes.
- 5. Combine and Toss:** Return the cooked shrimp to the skillet along with the drained spaghetti. Add the basil pesto and a splash of the reserved pasta water. Toss everything together gently to coat, adding more pasta water as needed to reach your desired sauce consistency.

6. **Finish and Serve:** Taste and adjust the seasoning with more salt and pepper if needed. Transfer the pasta to a large serving bowl and top with grated Parmesan cheese and fresh basil leaves, if desired. Serve immediately and enjoy!

SWAPS & NOTES

The best part is how quickly it all comes together in one pan, which means less time cleaning and more time enjoying.

It's a perfect example of a simple recipe that tastes incredibly complex and satisfying.

They are a great size and cook beautifully.

You can use frozen shrimp, just be sure to thaw and pat them dry before cooking.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overcook the Shrimp: Shrimp cook very quickly.

Remove them from the pan as soon as they turn pink and opaque to ensure they stay tender and juicy.

Reserve the Pasta Water: This starchy water is your best friend.

It helps the pesto sauce cling to the pasta and gives it a smooth, creamy consistency.

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Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/easy-shrimp-pasta-with-pesto-tomatoes-and-spinach/>