

OLD MAN'S BASIC KALE PESTO PASTA

This is one of the rare ones where I remember the origin of the idea. In this case, it was an issue of Bon Appetit. I have subscribed to it for a while, but I think this is the first time it has inspired me. The recipe looked pretty good, but as I thought about it over the following days, I thought “Well, what about this?”, “Hey! This sounds like it would work well”, “Hey... BACON”. Anyways, it kinds morphed into its own beast. I was trying to figure out if there was enough kale for a serving of this to be considered having a serving of vegetables and..... well, I am still not sure.

Anyways, I have a bunch of other things I want to try with this including, but not necessarily limited to:

- Add anchovies
- Incorporate dried mushroom powder
- Add juice of one lime
- Up the EVO to 1/2 cup
- Add eggs (along the line of a carbonara)

I was thinking of just updating this recipe to add those, but I liked this so much, I decided to keep this one as is, and just create new ones

Uh.. sir? Just one more thing... I had another one of those rare epiphanies while making this...
BLANCHING GREENS REALLY WORKS!!! I was quite surprised how bright green the kale turned!!!

INGREDIENTS

Qty.	Unit	Item
1	16 oz. Pack	Regular Cut Bacon
1	Bunch	Kale
6	Qt.	Water
1	TBSP	Morton's Kosher Salt
AR	-----	Ice, Ice, BABY!
1/2	Cup	Unsalted, Shelled, Dry Roasted Peanuts
1/4	Cup	EVO of choice
1/3	Cup	Water
1	Good Sized Clove	Garlic
AR	TBSP	Water
12	Oz.	No. 8 Spaghetti
2	TBSP	Butter
AR	-----	Fresh Ground Black Pepper

Pasta... I used to use angel hair pasta almost exclusively, but inspired by Carla Music's disdain for angel hair pasta, I have recently started trying bigger pastas. You know what? I REALLY like the No. 8 spaghetti! Don't have it? I am pretty sure any pasta would work here

If your water is funky, use bottled or distilled water

Insert standard disclaimer about salt here

As far as the bacon goes, I am still on the Kunzler kick

SPECIAL TOOLS

- Spider

PREPARATION – UP TO ONE WEEK BEFORE

- 1) Make bacon crumbles as per “Oven – Low and Slow” from “How to Cook Bacon”

PREPARATION – UP TO ONE WEEK BEFORE OR DAY OF [I]

- 1) Add 6 quarts of water and 1 TBSP kosher salt to a large pot [ii]
- 2) Heat water to boiling
- 3) While water is boiling, weigh [iv] the kale, then rinse and pat dry
- 4) Remove the ribs/ stems from the kale [iii]
- 5) Weigh the kale [iv]
- 6) Prepare an ice bath in a large bowl
- 7) Setup a ½ sheet cooling rack in a ½ sheet pan
- 8) Once water has reached a rolling boil
 - a. Add a small batch of kale to water and boil for 30 seconds
 - b. Immediately transfer the kale to the ice bath using the spider
 - c. Use the spider to submerge the kale under the water
 - d. Pick the kale out of the ice bath and GENTLY squeeze out excess water back into bowl
 - e. Spread the kale over the ½ sheet cooling rack
 - f. Add ice to the ice bath as required
 - g. Repeat for the rest of the kale
- 9) Remove heat from the water and cover the pot with a lid
- 10) Add ½ cups peanuts, ¼ cup EVO, 1/3 cup water, 1 garlic clove to food processor bowl
- 11) Give it a few pulses to get it going, then process until well blended
- 12) Add kale a little bit at a time to the food processor
 - a. Give it a few pulses to get it going, then process until well blended
 - b. Add 1 TBSP of water at a time if it gets too thick [v]
 - c. Scrape down the sides of the food processor bowl as required
 - d. Repeat for the rest of the kale
- 13) Add bacon crumbles and pulse until evenly distributed, but not pureed

- 14) Remove the pesto from the food processor
 - a. If you are not making the pasta the same day, put in a Tupperware container and put in the fridge until needed
 - b. If you are making the pasta the same day, put the pesto in a bowl and cover until needed

PREPARATION – DAY OF

- 1) If you are making the pasta the same day as the pesto, return the water used to blanch the kale to a rolling boil. If not
 - a. Add 6 quarts of water and 1 TBSP kosher salt to a large pot [ii]
 - b. Heat water to boiling
- 2) Cook pasta to al dente according to the pasta directions [vi], stirring occasionally with a wood spoon
- 3) Reserve at least 2 cups of pasta water then drain the pasta
- 4) Reduce the pot heat to low
- 5) Add 2 TBSP butter to the pot and let melt
- 6) Return pasta to the pot and reduce heat to very low
- 7) Add ½ portion of the pesto and ½ cup pasta water and stir with wood spoon until well incorporated
- 8) Add second ½ portion of the pesto and ½ cup pasta water and stir with wood spoon until well incorporated
- 9) Stir in pasta water 1/8 cup (2 TBSP) at a time until you get the consistency you are looking for
- 10) Plate and top with fresh ground black pepper
- 11) ENJOY!!!

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Upon reviewing my notes I saw this: “OK... That was PRETTY [Expletive Deleted] GOOD!!” This one is definitely a keeper. I was kind looking to turn this into a single dish meal with carbs, veggies, and protein all in one place. I am not there yet, but I have some ideas

NOTES

- i. I made mine the day of, but it took a total of about 2 hours from start to finish. The pesto supposedly stores fairly well for about a week in the fridge, so I think it is something that can be done before hand
- ii. My 7 quart pot was a perfect fit for this
- iii. Tearing with your hands works just fine for this!
- iv. This step is optional. I am putting it in for future use
- v. You want it smooth, but not watery. I think I like it a bit on the thicker / drier side, but do what you like!
- vi. 10 minutes in my case

PICTURES

None yet!!!