



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

Botanic Cottage Community Cook Club Late July 2021

A lovely lunch

Spinach, feta and almond pasta

This recipe is based on a half-remembered Nigella Lawson recipe that I first made at least a decade ago and have been playing with ever since. It's good hot, but I think it's even better cold. During hot weather I make a big bowl of this for the easiest lunches, and it's perfect for picnics too. Sumac is a spice made from ground dried sumac berries and is used a lot in Middle Eastern cookery. It has a sweet and sour taste. As an alternative you can use allspice (just ½ tsp ground) or just skip it.

Makes at least 6 servings - so halve for a less greedy household!



Ingredients

1 large onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
½ tsp sumac
500g dried pasta - I usually use penne or fusilli
600g spinach- finely chopped fresh, or frozen
½ a lemon
200g feta cheese
2 tbsp parmesan
Olive oil, salt and pepper
50g almonds

You will need a large pot for pasta, a colander, a mug, a large saucepan or wok, a chopping board and knife, a small pan.

Method

1. In a large pot put plenty of water on for pasta. Salt well and then cook until al dente, (check the packet instructions). Drain, reserving a mug of the pasta water.

2. In a small pan toast the almonds for a few minutes with no oil. Remove from the heat, allow to cool and then roughly chop.
3. While the pasta is cooking, heat 1 tbsp olive oil in the saucepan and then cook the onion for 8-10 minutes until starting to soften. Add the finely chopped garlic and sumac and cook for a further minute.
4. Add the spinach and keep moving round the pan until cooked. If using frozen this will take longer.
5. Crumble in the feta cheese, add the parmesan and squeeze in the juice of the lemon. Stir until all combined.
6. Add the pasta to the pan and mix everything together so the sauce coats the pasta. If it seems too dry then add a few splashes of your reserved pasta water.
7. Top with the chopped nuts and enjoy hot or cold.