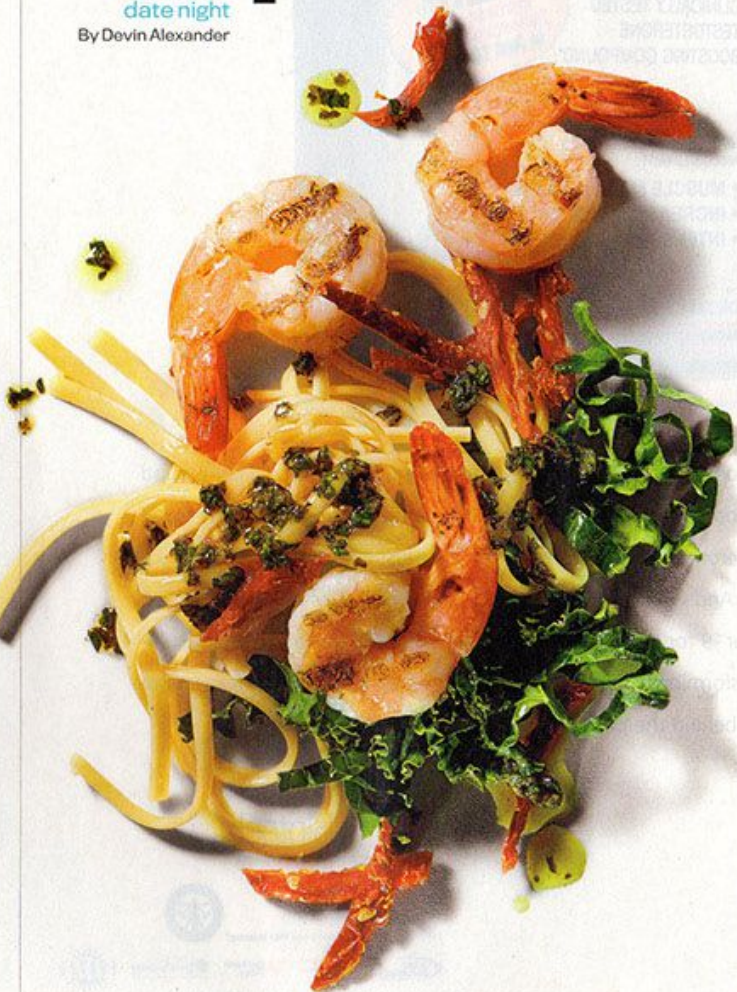


# his (and her) muscle pastas

These protein-packed dishes are tasty enough for date night

By Devin Alexander



To most fitness buffs, pasta is too low in protein and too high in carbs to be a physique-friendly meal choice—but that's shortsighted. For starters, it's one of the few foods nearly every guy can make. And, if you substitute a more nutrient-rich noodle—such as whole wheat in place of traditional semolina—you get a lower-carb, ultra-low-fat, and higher-fiber meal that even allows you to sneak in all the vegetables you "forgot" to eat during the day. We've added protein, too, with various lean meats and seafood, to give you five delicious options that will support your workouts and make a nice dinner for two (just double the ingredients). In case you forgot, girls love pasta, too, so now you've finally got some muscle meals you can both eat. It's better than cutting her in on another serving of chicken and rice.

## PESTO SHRIMP LINGUINI WITH KALE & SUN-DRIED TOMATOES

MAKES: 1 SERVING

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 tbsp jarred pesto sauce
  - 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
  - 6 oz large, peeled, grilled (or steamed) shrimp (ideally 20-25)
  - 1 cup chilled, cooked linguini pasta\*
  - 1 cup kale leaves, shredded
  - ¼ cup sun-dried tomato slivers
  - ½ tsp fresh garlic, minced

\*COOK ACCORDING TO PACKAGE DIRECTIONS THEN RINSE UNDER COLD WATER AND DRAIN.

### DIRECTIONS

- 1) Mix pesto with vinegar.
- 2) Place the shrimp, pasta, kale, tomatoes, and garlic in a salad bowl. Spoon sauce over and toss. Enjoy immediately or chill and serve later.

**NUTRITION**  
493 calories, 56g protein, 52g carbs, 9g fat

STYLING: JESSICA WATSON

ZUCCHINI IS HIGH IN POTASSIUM, WHICH LOWERS BLOOD PRESSURE.



## CHICKEN RICOTTA BOWTIE PASTA

MAKES: 1 SERVING

### INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 2 tbsp fat-free milk
- ½ tsp olive oil
- 3 tsp parmesan cheese, grated, divided
- 1 tsp fresh garlic, minced
- 4 oz trimmed boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into strips
- ¼ cup yellow squash rounds
- ¼ cup zucchini rounds
- Garlic powder, to taste
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Olive oil spray
- 1 cup cooked (2 oz dry) whole-wheat bowtie pasta
- Crushed red pepper flakes, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

- 1) Mix the ricotta, milk, olive oil, 2 tsp parmesan, and minced garlic in a glass measuring cup or microwave-safe bowl and set aside.
- 2) Sprinkle the chicken, squash, and zucchini with garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
- 3) Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Mist with spray. Add chicken, squash, and zucchini in a single layer. Cook the chicken 1-2 minutes per side until no longer pink inside.
- 4) While the chicken cooks, heat the cheese mixture in the microwave until just

hot. Transfer the chicken and squash to a medium bowl and add the cooked bowties and cheese mixture. Toss. Season with additional salt, pepper, parmesan, and pepper flakes, and serve.

**NUTRITION**  
461 calories, 47g protein, 48g carbs, 10g fat



**STEAK & BROCCOLI NACHO PENNE**  
MAKES 1 SERVING

**INGREDIENTS**

- 4 oz top-round steak, cut into strips
- Salt-free Mexican seasoning
- Sea salt
- Olive oil spray
- 1 cup broccoli florets, broken into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes
- 1/2 cup natural salsa con queso (nacho cheese sauce)
- 1 cup cooked (2 oz dry) whole-wheat penne pasta

Fresh cilantro leaves to taste

- 1/2 jalapeño or Fresno chili to taste

**DIRECTIONS**

- 1) Sprinkle the steak with seasoning and salt. Place a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, mist with cooking spray. Add the broccoli and tomatoes in a single layer.
- 2) Cook about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally, then add the steak in a single layer. Cook steak 1 minute per side or

until pink inside; stir broccoli and tomatoes until broccoli is bright green, crisp-tender, and warm.

- 3) While the steak cooks, heat the cheese sauce in the microwave until just hot. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add the cooked penne and cheese. Toss. Top with fresh cilantro and jalapeños or Fresno chilies. Enjoy immediately.

**NUTRITION**

440 calories, 35g protein, 58g carbs, 10g fat

**JALAPEÑOS HELP FIGHT HEADACHES, INFLAMMATION, AND EVEN CANCER. (THEY BURN FAT, TOO.)**



**GRILLED CHICKEN PASTA SALAD WITH CHILI MAYO**  
MAKES 1 SERVING

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1/2 cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tsp chili garlic sauce, or to taste
- 6 oz lean grilled chicken breast, cut into strips
- 1 cup cooked (2 oz dry) whole-wheat rotini pasta
- 1 cup spinach, chopped
- 1/2 cup yellow or red cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
- 1/2 cup roasted red peppers, cut into strips (drained, if jarred)
- 8 fresh basil leaves, sliced

**DIRECTIONS**

- 1) Mix the mayo and chili sauce until well combined.
- 2) Add the chicken, rotini, spinach, tomatoes, red peppers, and basil to a salad bowl. Toss with the mayo. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to enjoy.

**NUTRITION**

525 calories, 49g protein, 62g carbs, 10g fat

**SHELLS & CHEESE WITH SHRIMP, BROCCOLI & BACON**  
MAKES 1 SERVING

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 1/2 tsp flour
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk
- Olive oil spray
- 4 oz large, peeled, raw shrimp (ideally 20-25)
- 1 cup asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- Garlic powder, to taste
- 2 oz 75% light or low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup cooked (2 oz dry) whole-wheat pasta shells
- 1 tbsp jarred bacon pieces

**DIRECTIONS**

- 1) In a small bowl, using a whisk, mix the flour with 1/2 cup milk until smooth. Gradually add the remaining milk, and

then transfer to a small saucepan and set aside.

- 2) Place a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Mist with cooking spray. When pan is hot, add shrimp and asparagus in a single layer. Sprinkle lightly with garlic powder. Cook shrimp 1-2 minutes per side until no longer pink; stir asparagus occasionally.

- 3) While the shrimp and asparagus cook, place the milk mixture over medium heat. Add cheese and stir constantly until the cheese is melted and the mixture is smooth. Stir in the cooked shells, shrimp, and asparagus and transfer to a serving bowl. Top with bacon bits and enjoy immediately.

**NUTRITION**

521 calories, 55g protein, 55g carbs, 10g fat

**Lotsa Pasta**  
If you don't like the taste of whole-wheat pasta, or can't digest it well, you can substitute quinoa or rice pasta into these recipes. The nutritional difference is minimal and they're prepared the same way.