Penne with Creamy Walnut Sauce
From – Moosewood Restaurant Low-Fat Favorites

10 oz fresh spinach
½ cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped*
2 cups low-fat cottage cheese
1 garlic clove, minced or pressed
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
¼ cup loosely packed chopped fresh basil
½ tsp salt
ground black pepper to taste
1 to 1 ½ lbs penne
1 head broccoli

grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

*Toast walnuts in a single layer on an unoiled baking tray in a conventional or toaster oven at 350 degrees for about 5 minutes until fragrant and golden brown.

• Bring a large covered pot of water to a rapid boil.
• While the water heats, wash the spinach and transfer to a separate large pot.
• The water clinging to the leaves should provide enough moisture to steam it.
• Cover and cook the spinach on medium-high heat for about 4 minutes, until wilted by still bright green. Drain.
• In a food processor or blender, combine the spinach, walnuts, cottage cheese, garlic, Parmesan, basil and salt.
• Puree until smooth, working in batches if necessary. Add pepper to taste and set aside.
• When the water boils, stir in the pasta, cover and return to a boil, then uncover the pot and cook until the pasta is al dente, about 7 minutes.
• While the pasta cooks, cut the broccoli into spears.
• Blanch it in boiling water to cover until just tender, about 5 minutes, and set it aside.
• Drain the pasta and serve immediately in individual warmed bowls topped with spinach-walnut sauce and several steamed broccoli spears.
• Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese if you wish.

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