



Creamy Spinach Tortellini with Pan-Fried Sweet Potatoes

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 16 / **Cook Time** 16 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

knife skills: Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

shape: to form food into a specific shape by hand or with a cutting tool—examples are cutting cookie dough into shapes with cookie cutters, forming bread dough into a roll or crescent shape, and rolling ground meat into a meatball.

crumble: to break up food into small pieces, like bacon, crackers, or feta cheese.

fry: to cook in a pan in a small amount of fat.

wilt: to cook a leafy vegetable very briefly until it has lost its shape.

fill: to add food to a wrapper, like pasta, rice paper, tortilla, or wonton, before folding or rolling it up (e.g., dumpling, spring roll, and taco); or to add food, like jelly or pastry cream, inside the cavity of another food (e.g., eclair and jelly donut).

Equipment

- ☐ Large frying pan + lid
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Kid-safe knife
- ☐ Mixing bowls
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Liquid measuring cup

- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Citrus juicer (optional)
- ☐ Heat-resistant spatula

Ingredients

Creamy Spinach Tortellini with Pan-Fried Sweet Potatoes

- ☐ 4 T olive oil
- ☐ 1 medium sweet potato
- ☐ 1 garlic clove
- ☐ 3 C fresh spinach OR 2 C frozen, thawed spinach
- ☐ 1/2 lemon, zested and juiced
- ☐ 1 tsp salt, divided
- ☐ 1/8 tsp ground black pepper
- ☐ 4 fresh sage leaves
- ☐ 1/4 C heavy cream ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free heavy whipping cream)****
- ☐ 2 T grated Parmesan cheese + more for sprinkling ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan-style cheese)****
- ☐ 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
- ☐ 1 pkg wonton wrappers ****(for EGG/GLUTEN ALLERGY sub Asian rice paper wraps OR gluten-free, oven-ready pasta or lasagna sheets for kids with allergies—more info below)****
- ☐ 1/4 C + 1 T water

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free heavy cream for heavy cream. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan-style cheese.

Egg/Gluten/Wheat: Substitute Asian rice paper wrappers for kids with egg/gluten/wheat allergies. NOTE: these are very tricky to work with. Or you can sub gluten-free, oven-ready pasta or lasagna sheets.

Instructions

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intro

Legend has it that the tortellini (tore-tuh-LEE-nee) pasta shape was inspired by an Italian chef so enchanted by the beauty of the Greek goddess of love, Venus, that he made a pasta in the same shape as her belly button. Really!! Belly button pasta!! Other stories suggest that tortellini was a way to keep filling from spilling out of the pasta by wrapping it around the finger and sealing it before cooking. But we like the belly button story best! Practice saying "tortellini" together as a group.

measure + fry

First, we will fry the sage. Add **2 tablespoons of olive oil** to a skillet over medium heat, then add **4 fresh sage leaves**. Fry until the sage is crisp, about 5 to 8 seconds in a hot skillet.

cool + crumble

Remove the fried sage from the skillet with a spatula and set to the side on a plate to cool. Once cooled, kids can crumble the crispy sage leaves with their fingers and set them aside to use in the tortellini and sweet potatoes. They can also be used with other pasta or potato dishes.

chop + measure

Next, we will make the tortellini filling and the pan-fried sweet potatoes. Add **1 tablespoon of olive oil** to a large frying pan and warm over medium heat. Kid chefs can chop **1 medium sweet potato** into very small 1/2-inch cubes OR grate the sweet potato. Mince **1 garlic clove** and chop **3 cups fresh spinach** OR **2 cups frozen and thawed spinach**.

zest + juice

Zest **1/2 lemon** into the spinach bowl, then slice the lemon in half. Juice the zested half into the bowl as well. (Reserve the other half for **Apple Sage Italian Soda** if making.)

sauté + stir

Add the chopped spinach to the skillet with the minced garlic. Then, add **1/2 teaspoon salt** and **1/8 teaspoon black pepper** and sauté until tender and wilted. (Review the word "wilt": to cook a leafy vegetable very briefly until it has lost its shape.) Scoop the sautéed spinach into a bowl and set it to the side.

pan fry + stir

Now, we'll pan-fry the sweet potato. Add **1 tablespoon olive oil** to your frying pan over medium heat. Add the sweet potato cubes and fry them for about 5 minutes or until they are cooked through. Add a BIG pinch of the fried sage and gently stir. Turn off the heat when the sweet potatoes are cooked.

measure + mix

To the spinach bowl, add **2 tablespoons heavy cream**, **2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese**, **1/2**

teaspoon salt, 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg, and a BIG pinch of the fried sage.

fill + shape

Time to wrap and fill the tortellini. Measure **1/4 cup of water** into a small bowl. Place 2 teaspoons of the spinach filling in the middle of each wonton wrapper. Trace the edges of the wonton wrapper, then fold over one corner of the wrapper to make a triangle. Gently press the edges (not the middle!) to seal them. Then fold over 2 opposite corners of the triangle and overlap them, then press down again with a little water to seal. (Here is a quick video showing how to wrap wonton wrappers to make tortellini.)

toss + serve

Add the remaining **1 tablespoon of olive oil** to the skillet with the sweet potatoes and remaining sage. Add the kid-made tortellini to the skillet and pan-fry until golden brown, about 2 to 3 minutes. Then, add **1 tablespoon of water or heavy cream** to your frying pan and gently toss the pasta and sweet potatoes together with a rubber spatula. Then, cover with a lid and finish cooking for 1 to 2 minutes or until the pasta is fully cooked.

serve + enjoy

Serve the warm tortellini and pan-fried sweet potatoes with **a sprinkle of grated Parmesan cheese!** "Buon appetito" (Bwohn ap-peh-TEE-toe)!

Featured Ingredient: Sage!

Hi! I'm Sage!

"I'd like to think my name shows that I'm very wise. Although, if I'm not wise, at least I'm flavorful! I've been described as tasting earthy and slightly peppery, with notes of citrus and pine. I add an aromatic flavor to your Thanksgiving stuffing!"

History & Etymology

Common sage is an herb with a savory, slightly peppery flavor. Sage has been used as medicine and food for centuries.

Sage is native to the region of the Mediterranean Sea, but it has also been grown and has become naturalized in many other parts of the world.

In ancient Rome, sage was used as an antiseptic, a diuretic, and an aid in the digestion of fatty meats. It was still considered an herbal medicine during the Middle Ages for many of the same issues the Romans encountered. It was also used to help stop bleeding.

The word "sage" is from Middle English, from the Old French "sauge," from the Latin "salvia" or "'healing plant," from "salvus" or "safe."

Anatomy

The common sage plant (*Salvia officinalis*) is a small perennial, evergreen shrub. It has woody stems, greenish-gray leaves, and purple flowers. It prefers to grow in a warm climate and dry soil.

Sage is a member of the Lamiaceae or mint family. Other members include basil, catnip, lavender, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, and savory.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Fresh sage leaves should be picked from your garden or container before the plant flowers for the best flavor. Store leaves in a paper towel and put them in your refrigerator to keep them fresh. If you remove a stem with leaves on it, put the stem in a glass of water. Use the fresh sage within a week of harvesting it. Sage is used in American and British cooking, especially in dressings or stuffings with chicken and turkey, served for Christmas or Thanksgiving dinners. It goes well with duck, pork, sausage, and other fatty meats.

In Italy, sage is added to gnocchi and pasta dishes. It is an essential ingredient in the Italian dish "saltimbocca" (veal wrapped in prosciutto and sage).

Sage tea is made using either fresh sage leaves or dried sage.

Some of the sage grown in Europe is distilled into sage oil, an essential oil.

Sage flowers are the favorite of bees, and sage honey has a lovely aroma, although it is quite expensive.

Nutrition

Sage has high amounts of vitamin K, which is good for building strong bones and helping blood to clot. It also contains antioxidants, such as vitamins A, C, and E, which may help lower cancer risk and benefit brain function.

Sage tea has been shown to decrease levels of bad cholesterol and increase levels of good cholesterol.