

Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli: Quick Homemade Dinner

Discover your new weeknight favorite: **Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli**. This dish strikes the perfect balance between vibrant, zesty flavors and hearty, satisfying pasta, all while coming together in under 30 minutes. It's an elegant meal that requires minimal effort yet delivers impressive results. Forget heavy, complicated sauces; this recipe relies on the simple, powerful combination of fresh lemon, pungent garlic, and bright green broccoli.¹ It is the ideal solution for busy evenings when you crave something wholesome and delicious without spending hours in the kitchen. This quick homemade dinner proves that simplicity often leads to the most memorable meals.

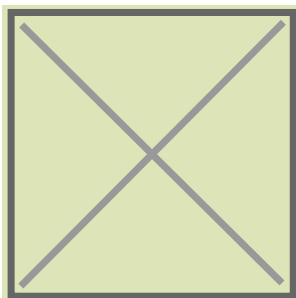
Why This Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli Wins Weeknights

The Magic of Simplicity

In our fast-paced lives, complexity is the last thing we need at dinnertime. This recipe champions simplicity. You use only a handful of fresh, readily available ingredients. Consequently, the cleanup is minimal, and the cooking process is straightforward. There are no complicated techniques, just the pure joy of combining good ingredients well. This approach not only saves time but also allows the quality of the broccoli, garlic, and lemon to shine through.

Fresh Flavors in Every Bite

This dish is the antithesis of heavy, store-bought jarred sauces. The flavor profile is built on fresh components. You get the bright acidity and fragrant zest from the lemon, which cuts perfectly through the richness of the olive oil. Furthermore, the sharp, aromatic punch of freshly minced garlic provides a robust backbone. The broccoli, quickly blanched with the pasta, retains a crisp-tender texture and its vibrant, earthy taste.



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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [25 minutes](#)
- Yield: [4 servings 1x](#)

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Description

A fast, fresh, and vibrant Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli. This quick homemade dinner comes together in under 30 minutes, using simple ingredients like fresh garlic, lemon, and olive oil to create a light yet satisfying sauce that clings perfectly to linguine.

Ingredients

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☐ 12 ounces linguine or spaghetti 1 large head broccoli, cut into small florets 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced or minced 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional, for heat) 1/2 cup reserved pasta cooking water 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving 1 large lemon, zested and juiced 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark

Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook according to package directions for al dente. 2. About 2-3 minutes before the pasta is done, add the broccoli florets directly to the pot with the pasta. 3. While the pasta cooks, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add the sliced garlic and red pepper flakes. Cook gently, stirring often, for 1-2 minutes until the garlic is fragrant and very lightly golden. Do not let it brown. 4. Just before draining the pasta and broccoli, reserve 1 cup of the starchy pasta water. 5. Drain the pasta and broccoli and add them directly to the skillet with the garlic oil. 6. Turn the heat up to medium. Add the lemon juice, lemon zest, Parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, and 1/2 cup of the reserved pasta water. 7. Toss everything together vigorously for 1-2 minutes, until the sauce emulsifies, thickens slightly, and clings to the pasta. If it looks dry, add more reserved pasta water, one tablespoon at a time. 8. Serve immediately, topped with extra grated Parmesan cheese.

Notes

Do not overcook the garlic. The goal is to infuse the oil, not fry the garlic. Burnt garlic will make the entire dish bitter. The starchy pasta water is essential. It helps the oil, lemon juice, and cheese bind together to create a light, creamy sauce without any cream. Use fresh lemon juice and zest. Bottled juice will not provide the same bright, vibrant flavor.

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 15 minutes
- Category: Main Course, Dinner
- Method: Boiling, Sautéing
- Cuisine: Italian-American, American

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1.5 cups
- **Calories:** 450 kcal
- **Sugar:** 4 g
- **Sodium:** 480 mg
- **Fat:** 18 g
- **Saturated Fat:** 3 g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 14 g
- **Trans Fat:** 0 g
- **Carbohydrates:** 60 g
- **Fiber:** 6 g
- **Protein:** 15 g
- **Cholesterol:** 5 mg

Did you make this recipe?

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Essential Ingredients for Zesty Pasta

Selecting Your Pasta and Produce

The foundation of this dish starts with the right pasta. A long noodle, such as linguine, fettuccine, or spaghetti, works beautifully here. These shapes excel at catching the light lemon-garlic sauce. When selecting broccoli, look for a head with tight, dark green florets and firm stalks. Avoid any bunches that show yellowing or feel flimsy. Since lemon is a star player, opt for fresh, unwaxed lemons for both their juice and zest.

The Flavor Powerhouses: Garlic and Lemon

Do not substitute fresh ingredients here. Use fresh garlic cloves, minced just before cooking, for the best aroma and flavor. Jarred garlic often carries a muted, slightly acidic taste that won't provide the same punch. Similarly, fresh lemon juice is essential. Bottled juice lacks the bright, volatile oils

present in fresh-squeezed juice and the fragrant zest, which adds another layer of citrus complexity to the final dish.

Mastering the Art of the Sauce

Creating the Garlic-Infused Oil Base

The sauce begins by gently warming extra virgin olive oil over medium-low heat. You then add the minced garlic and a pinch of red pepper flakes. The key is *infusion*, not *frying*. Allow the garlic to soften and become fragrant for about one to two minutes. You must pull it from the heat before it browns. Browned garlic turns bitter and will ruin the delicate balance of the dish.

Using Pasta Water for Creaminess

This is the professional secret to a restaurant-quality sauce without using heavy cream. Before draining your pasta, reserve about one cup of the starchy, salty cooking water. This liquid gold is the emulsifier. When you add the pasta water to the garlic oil, the starch helps the oil and water bind, creating a light, creamy sauce that clings perfectly to every single noodle.

Step-by-Step Cooking Guide

Timing Your Pasta and Broccoli Perfectly

Begin by bringing a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add your chosen pasta and cook according to the package directions for al dente. The timing trick is next: about two to three minutes before the pasta is finished, add your broccoli florets directly into the pot. This blanches the broccoli perfectly, keeping it bright green and tender-crisp while ensuring you only use one pot for this step, just like in this [one-pot creamy broccoli pasta](#) favorite.

Bringing It All Together

While the pasta and broccoli cook, prepare your garlic oil in a separate large skillet. Once the pasta and broccoli are done, reserve your pasta water and drain. Immediately add the drained pasta and broccoli to the skillet with the garlic oil. Turn the heat to medium, add the lemon juice, lemon zest, and about half a cup of the reserved pasta water. Toss everything vigorously for one to two minutes until the sauce thickens and coats the pasta.

Nutritional Breakdown

A Look at the Macronutrients

This dish offers a well-rounded nutritional profile for a satisfying dinner. The pasta provides essential carbohydrates for energy.² The olive oil delivers healthy monounsaturated fats, which are crucial for nutrient absorption.³ Additionally, the broccoli and Parmesan cheese contribute a surprising amount of plant-based protein and fiber, helping you feel full and satisfied long after the meal is over.

Vitamins and Minerals

This Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli is a powerhouse of essential micronutrients. Broccoli, a true superfood, leads the charge.

Nutrient	Primary Source	Benefit
Vitamin C	Broccoli, Lemon Juice	Boosts immune system, aids collagen production
Vitamin K	Broccoli	Essential for bone health and blood clotting
Folate	Broccoli	Crucial for cell growth and metabolism
Potassium	Broccoli	Helps regulate blood pressure and fluid balance

Variations and Serving Suggestions

Adding Protein for a Heartier Meal

While fantastic on its own, this pasta serves as an excellent base for added protein. Grilled chicken breast, sliced and tossed in at the end, is a classic pairing. Sautéed shrimp, cooked in the pan just before the garlic, also adds a wonderful seafood element. For a plant-based option, consider adding a can of drained and rinsed chickpeas or some crispy, oven-roasted tofu.

Perfect Pairings

This Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli pairs wonderfully with a few simple sides. A crisp, simple green salad with a vinaigrette complements the zesty flavors of the pasta. Additionally, a side of crusty garlic bread is perfect for soaking up any of the delicious lemon-garlic sauce left at the bottom of the bowl. For a beverage, a chilled glass of Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio is an ideal match.

Storage and Reheating Tips

Keeping it Fresh

Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days. The flavors will continue to meld, although the broccoli may lose some of its vibrant color. This dish does not freeze well, as the texture of the pasta and broccoli can become mushy upon thawing. Therefore, it is best enjoyed fresh or within a few days.

Reviving Leftovers

The best way to reheat this pasta is in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add the pasta to the skillet along with a tablespoon or two of water or chicken broth. This extra moisture helps to steam the pasta and recreate the light sauce without making the noodles oily. Avoid the microwave if possible, as it tends to reheat unevenly and can make the pasta rubbery.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use frozen broccoli for this recipe?

Yes, you can use frozen broccoli florets. Add them directly to the boiling pasta water during the last two minutes of cooking. You do not need to thaw them first.

How do I keep my garlic from burning?

The key is low and slow heat. Start your garlic in lukewarm, not hot, oil. Keep the heat on medium-low and stir constantly. The moment it becomes fragrant and turns a very pale, light golden color, it is done.

My sauce seems too thin. How can I fix it?

If your sauce is thin, continue to toss the pasta over medium heat. The combination of evaporation and the starch from the pasta water will thicken it. If it still needs help, add another tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese and toss vigorously to emulsify.

Conclusion

This **Lemon Garlic Pasta with Broccoli** is more than just a quick homemade dinner; it is a testament to the power of fresh ingredients. It delivers a vibrant, restaurant-quality meal with minimal fuss, making it a perfect addition to your weekly rotation. This recipe provides energy from carbohydrates, healthy fats from olive oil, and a wealth of vitamins from the fresh produce. By mastering the simple techniques, like creating a garlic-infused oil and using starchy pasta water, you unlock a delicious and satisfying meal that the whole family will love.