

Avocado can do more than make guacamole. Think pasta sauce!

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Avocado is far more than just guacamole, club sandwiches and California omelets. This creamy, fatty, filling fruit (technically, it's a berry), also is a great source of healthy fat, making it an excellent replacement for other fats.

Why have fat at all? Because research is clear that our bodies need fat to absorb other nutrients. Not to mention that they taste good and leave us satisfied. When I eat healthy fats with my meals, I am far less likely to dive into a sugary-carby treat later on. It's that simple. When I find myself craving a sweet in the afternoon, it's almost always a sure sign that I didn't eat enough healthy fat at lunch.

Avocado is nutrient-dense, which means the per-calorie nutritional game is solid. Avocados are packed with vitamins and minerals. And they are incredibly fiber-rich. Who would guess given how lusciously creamy they are? Know that nutrient-dense also means calorie-dense. So downing a large bowl of guacamole at happy hour probably is not wise. I aim for an ounce or two a day, which is about a quarter or a third of a medium avocado.

What do I do with avocado? I use it when I want to swap out cheese, such as adding decadence and creaminess to morning egg whites. Or I use it as a healthy boost for my kids' morning smoothies, adding vitamins and filling fiber and fat to jumpstart their day. Avocado also is a great substitute for

heavy cream; I blend it up to make salad dressings, silky-rich sauces, even puddings and baked goods.

Today's recipe is a quick creamy pasta sauce that needs no cooking. It's as fast as whizzing up a few ingredients in the blender and letting piping hot pasta bring all the heat necessary for the pasta sauce flavours to bloom. You won't miss the cream!



SPEEDY NO-COOK AVOCADO PASTA SAUCE

Ingredients

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 6
12 ounces whole-grain pasta
1 large avocado, peeled, pitted and roughly cubed
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 scallion, chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Pinch red pepper flakes
1/4 cup cilantro leaves and soft stems
Salt and ground black pepper

Preparation

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions, then reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water, and drain. Meanwhile, in a blender combine the avocado, lemon juice and zest, garlic, scallion, olive oil, Parmesan and Worcestershire sauce. Blend until smooth. If too thick, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of water. Once smooth, add the red pepper flakes and cilantro and pulse to mix, but not completely blend. Seasoned with salt and pepper. Pour into a large serving bowl. Once the pas-

ta is cooked, immediately add it to the sauce let sit for 30 seconds. Toss to coat the pasta, adding a bit of the reserved cooking water, if needed, to thin the sauce.

Nutrition information per serving: 320 calories; 100 calories from fat (31 per cent of total calories); 11 g fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 135 mg sodium; 47 g carbohydrate; 7 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 8 g protein — AP