



with broccoli in place. For a more Italian version with olives, add 1/2 cup pitted Kalamata olives. For a creamy variation, stir in 1/2 cup of the sauce with heavy cream. For a more earthy flavor, add mushrooms, both white button and cremini, and porcini, as well as a hefty amount of fresh thyme. For this variation, a splash of white wine will add a little more richness to the sauce a bit, giving the dish a sophisticated flavor in a short amount of time.

**TEST KITCHEN TIP:**

**A Strong Simmer**

Simmering the pasta vigorously guarantees that the pasta will absorb the cooking liquid and become tender in the allotted time.

## Skillet Penne with Sausage and Spinach

SERVES 4

Use either hot or sweet Italian-style turkey (or chicken) sausage here. Pork sausage can be substituted, but you will have to drain off the extra fat before adding the pasta. The spinach may seem like a lot at first, but it wilts down substantially. Ziti can also be used here.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound Italian-style turkey sausage, casings removed
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 1/4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 1/4 cups water
- 8 ounces penne (2 1/2 cups)
- 1/2 cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, rinsed and chopped fine
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1 (6-ounce) bag baby spinach
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted (see page 36)

**1. BROWN SAUSAGE:** Heat oil in 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add sausage, breaking it up with spoon, and cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

**2. SIMMER PENNE:** Stir in broth, water, penne, sun-dried tomatoes, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Increase heat to high and cook, stirring often, until penne is tender and liquid has thickened, 15 to 18 minutes.

**3. WILT SPINACH:** Stir in spinach, handful at a time, and cook until wilted. Off heat, stir in Parmesan and pine nuts. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

► VARIATION

## Skillet Penne with Sausage and Broccoli

*Try using packaged broccoli florets here for ease.*

Omit spinach. Add 8 ounces broccoli florets (3 cups) to skillet after penne has cooked for only 12 minutes, then continue to cook until penne and broccoli are both tender, about 5 minutes longer.

## Skillet Penne with Cherry Tomatoes, White Beans, and Olives

SERVES 4

While we use vegetable broth here, you can substitute low-sodium chicken broth, if desired.

- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth (see note)
- 2 cups water
- 8 ounces penne (2 1/2 cups)
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, rinsed
- 1/2 cup chopped pitted Kalamata olives
- 1/2 cup minced fresh basil
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Fresh lemon juice

**MAKING THE MINUTES COUNT:**

While the pasta cooks, cut the tomatoes and olives. After tomatoes, beans, and olives are added to the skillet, chop the basil.

**1. SIMMER PENNE:** Cook broth, water, penne, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in 12-inch nonstick skillet over high heat, stirring often, until penne is tender and liquid has thickened, 15 to 18 minutes.

**2. ADD VEGETABLES:** Stir in tomatoes, beans,