



# FAST FALL PASTA MEALS

**When** most people think of pasta, they think of spaghetti. To be honest, I think spaghetti can get a bit boring. There are a ton of different pastas to choose from and all of them have their advantages.

Since it's getting colder, this meal plan features a few different fast pasta dishes although the dishes are not crazy heavy like some pasta dishes. Also, I included a fantastic, large Mediterranean salad that you can eat for a few days in a row!

# Macheesmo Meals

## Helpful Equipment:

- Baking Sheet
- Slotted spoon
- Tongs
- Food Processor or Blender
- Microplane Zester



You can click on these to zap you to Amazon and see my recommendation for each.

 MEAL 1	 MEAL 2	 MEAL 3	 BONUS!
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## MEAL 1 | Chicken Paprikash and Sheet Pan Salad

The amount of paprika in this dish looks like a typo but it's not called Chicken Paprikash for nothin'. The paprika not only flavors the chicken, but also the sauce. The dish is a bit on the heavy side by itself, but it goes great with a small side salad. The salad makes a ton so you can use it for meal 2 also.

### Chicken Paprikash

Yield: Serves 4 | Time: 30 minutes.

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 chicken cutlets (about 1 pound)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium white onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, sliced thin
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt or sour cream
- 2 tablespoons flour mixture (see sidebar)
- Salt and pepper
- 8 ounces egg noodles or spaghetti
- Fresh parsley, garnish

#### Directions:

- 1) Stir flour together with paprika, oregano, salt, and pepper. Add chicken cutlets and coat lightly with flour and spices. Set chicken out on a plate to dry.
- 2) In a large skillet, add olive oil over medium heat. Add onions and sliced peppers. Cook for a few minutes until soft. Remove veggies from pan once they are slightly soft.
- 3) Add another drizzle of oil to the pan if the pan is dry. Add chicken and cook for 4 minutes per side. Add veggies back to pan.
- 4) Pour chicken stock into the pan and use the stock to scrape up any bits stuck to the pan. Stir in two extra tablespoons of flour and spice mixture to help thicken the sauce.
- 5) Cover the pan and turn heat down to low. Simmer mixture for 10 minutes.

### Mediterranean Sheet Pan Salad

Yield: Serves 8 | Time: 15 minutes.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 large Romaine heads
- 1/4 large red onion, sliced thin
- 1/2 cup marinated artichokes
- 1 large roasted red pepper, chopped
- 8 cloves marinated garlic, sliced thin
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese, slivered
- 1 green apple, sliced thin
- 1/2 lemon, juice only

#### Quick Apple Cider Vinaigrette:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 lemon, juice only
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

#### Directions:

- 1) Whisk together dressing ingredients.
  - 2) Wash Romaine well and chop roughly. Spread lettuce out on a sheet pan.
  - 3) Dot sheet pan with all the other toppings so ingredients are distributed.
  - 4) Drizzle vinaigrette over salad and chill until serving. Salad will keep fine in the fridge for two days.
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- 6) Stir sour cream or Greek yogurt into the pan and season the mixture with salt and pepper.
  - 7) Meanwhile, cook egg noodles or spaghetti according to package. Drain pasta after it's done.
  - 8) Serve chicken paprikash over the pasta with fresh parsley on top.



### The Sauce Secret

Making creamy and delicious sauces can be tricky, but the sauce that results from this chicken dish is about as easy as it gets.

There is one confusing step that definitely works, but sounds a bit strange. When you add the stock to the pan with the chicken and veggies and bring it to a simmer, it will thicken a bit because of the flour on the chicken already, but if you add a few tablespoons of leftover flour to the pan it will really thicken into something delicious. And don't worry about the chicken being in the flour. The pan gets hot enough and it simmers for 10 minutes so there is no risk of bacteria.

After simmering, the sauce should basically be a thin gravy. Then you can stir in some sour cream (or Greek yogurt) to make it a bit more rich. It's a failsafe sauce method!



### Plan This Meal!

40 minutes ahead - Make salad and dressing. Dredge chicken in flour and spices and set aside.

25 minutes ahead - Start cooking veggies in large pan and put a large pot of water on to boil.

20 minutes ahead - Remove veggies and cook chicken in large skillet.

15 minutes ahead - Add veggies back to pan with stock and bring mixture to simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes. Start pasta.

5 minutes ahead - Finish chicken with cream or yogurt. Serve over pasta with salad on the side.



## MEAL 2 | Salmon Orzo and Leftover Salad

Many people actually think that orzo is a grain, but it's a pasta. A very tiny pasta that goes great in pasta salads. This is sort of a warm pasta salad but is excellent with the Mediterranean salad that you made for meal one!

### Salmon Orzo

**Yield:** Serves 4 | **Time:** 25 minutes.

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. salmon filet, roasted and flaked
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 ounces orzo
- 1/4 red onion, sliced thin
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup roasted and salted pistachios, chopped
- Salt and pepper

### Directions:

1) Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lay out salmon filet on a baking sheet and rub with a tablespoon of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle salmon with fresh rosemary.

2) Roast salmon for 18-20 minutes until it is just cooked through.

3) Cook orzo according to package.

4) When orzo is cooked, drain orzo and toss with red onions, grape tomatoes, and pistachios.

5) When salmon is done, you can either serve the salmon over the top of the orzo or flake the salmon into large chunks and fold it into the orzo salad.

Serve orzo warm with leftover sheet pan salad on the side.



### Plan This Meal!

30 minutes ahead - Preheat oven. Prep salmon and chop veggies.

25 minutes ahead - Roast salmon.

20 minutes ahead - Cook orzo according to package.

5 minutes ahead - Finish orzo salad and serve with salmon either folded in or on top. Serve with small side salad of the Mediterranean salad.



### Sheet Pan Salad?

Of course, you could make the sheet pan salad in meal one in a large bowl and toss it together, but making the salad on a sheet pan makes it a lot easier to spread out the ingredients. It's especially helpful in a salad like this where some of the ingredients (marinated garlic) are very flavorful and you want to make sure they are distributed evenly.



## MEAL 3 | Quick Soba and Tofu Hot Pot

Believe it or not this is actually a pasta dish and a really good one. In fact, it's one of my favorite pasta dishes. Normally, hot pot can take days to prepare because it relies on making a really delicious stock from scratch. I cheat a bit in this version by enhancing a store-bought stock. It works great.

### Soba and Tofu Hot Pot

**Yield:** Serves 4 | **Time:** 45 minutes

#### Ingredients:

- 1 (15-ounce) pack extra firm tofu
- 1 quart vegetable stock
- 1 quart water
- 2 inches fresh ginger, chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, smashed
- 4 dried small red chilis (like arbol)
- 9-10 ounces soba noodles
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 bulbs baby bok choy
- 1 red pepper, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- Fresh cilantro
- Sriracha chili sauce

#### Directions:

- 1) Drain tofu and cut it in half horizontally. Place the tofu between two pieces of paper towel. Press the tofu with some weight to press out liquid. Let press for 10 minutes.
- 2) Add stock and water to a large pot with chopped ginger, smashed garlic cloves, and dried chilis. Bring to a simmer and simmer, uncovered for 15 minutes.
- 3) In a separate pot, cook soba noodles according to package. When done, drain soba, rinse with cold water, and toss with a tablespoon of sesame oil.
- 4) When tofu is pressed, add olive oil to a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add tofu to the pan and cook for 4 minutes per side until tofu is lightly browned on both sides.
- 5) When tofu is crispy on the outside, remove it from the pan and chop tofu into 1/2-inch cubes.
- 6) Cut bok choy in half down the middle and place it in large skillet that you cooked the tofu in. Place it cut-side down in the pan and add an extra drizzle of oil if the pan is dry. Cook bok choy for about 3 minutes until it's charred on the cut side. Remove and chop.
- 7) Build bowls by dividing soba, tofu, bok choy, and raw sliced red peppers between each bowl. Spoon in simmering stock (without add-ins) and a dash of soy sauce in each bowl. Garnish each bowl with cilantro, sesame oil, and Sriracha chili sauce.



#### Plan This Meal!

**In Advance** - You can press the tofu many hours in advance to remove as much liquid as possible.

30 minutes left - Get stock simmering with aromatics. Cook soba.

20 minutes left - Sear tofu and bok choy and roughly chop both.

5 minutes left - Build bowls, garnish and serve.



#### The Leftover Hot Pot

I make hot pots like this a lot because they are incredibly flexible. If you have any leftover veggies (raw or cooked) or any meat, you can probably get away with adding it to a bowl.

Just some ideas:

- Shredded chicken or pork
- Wilted spinach or leafy green
- Sauteed mushrooms
- Roasted salmon or any sturdy fish, flaked
- A hard boiled, soft boiled, or fried egg
- Any raw pepper, sliced thin



## BONUS! | Lentil Salad and a Favorite Fall Hummus

These rice wraps are the perfect weekday lunch: healthy and filling. The salsa is different than most salsa and is actually better if you can let it chill for a day in the fridge. It's great for game day.

### Cold Lentil Salad

**Yield:** Serves 8 | **Time:** 50 min.

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pound dry green lentils, rinsed
  - 1 pound fingerling or new potatoes, boiled
  - 1/2 red onion, diced
  - 1 English cucumber, diced
  - 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
  - 1 Cup radishes (about 8) sliced into matchsticks
  - 1/3-1/2 cup olive oil
  - 1 Teaspoon paprika
  - 1/4 Teaspoon cayenne pepper
  - Salt and Pepper
  - 1-2 jalapenos, minced (optional)
  - 1 avocado, for garnish
  - Parsley, for garnish
- (Opt. Pita bread or tortillas for wrapping)

#### Directions:

- 1) Rinse lentils in cold water. Fill large pot with 3 cups water for every cup of lentils. Bring to a simmer and simmer, covered, for 30-35 minutes until lentils are tender but not mushy.
- 2) Boil new potatoes in lightly salted water for 15 minutes until tender. Cool for a few minutes and dice.
- 3) Dice veggies and combine with potatoes.
- 4) Drain lentils and let cool for a few minutes. Mix lentils with veggies.
- 5) Drizzle in olive oil and spices. Season with salt and pepper.
- 6) Serve with diced avocado and chopped parsley on it's own or wrapped in pita or tortilla.

### Sweet Potato Hummus

**Yield:** Makes 4 cups | **Time:** 45 min.

#### Ingredients:

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1/2 Cup Tahini
- 3/4 Cup olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon cumin
- 2 Teaspoons Kosher salt
- 1/2 - 1 Teaspoon of cayenne depending on your heat desires
- 1 Teaspoon black pepper
- 1 lemon, juice only
- Pitass, cut into chips

#### Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Peel potatoes and cube them into 1-2 inch cubes. Sprinkle them with a bit of olive oil and salt.
- 2) Bake for about 30 minutes. Give them a toss every 10 minutes or so to make sure they are cooking evenly. They should be almost caramelized and fork tender.
- 3) Add all the potatoes to a blender or food processor along with the Tahini and olive oil and blend until smooth. If you are using a blender you'll probably have to stop and stir it after 10 seconds or so as it is really thick.
- 4) If the blender is running smoothly you can add all the spices and lemon juice right in. If the blender isn't, put hummus in a bowl and then added all the spices.
- 5) Chop them up pita into squares and bake them with just a touch of olive oil. They should crisp up after about 10 minutes in a 350 degree oven.



### Feedback!

I'm always anxious for feedback. If you have any feedback of any individual meal or the meal plans as a whole, please let me know! You can email me directly at [nick@macheesmo.com](mailto:nick@macheesmo.com).



### Making Pita Chips

Pita chips are really easy to make since you already have your oven preheated for the sweet potato hummus. Just chop each pita into 6ths. I like to actually separate the pita sides which ends up making thinner chips, but you can bake them double-sided also.

Toss the chips with a good drizzle of olive oil and season how you like them (I like just kosher salt and fresh cracked pepper).

Bake them for 10-12 minutes, stirring once halfway through until they are lightly browned. The chips will continue to crisp up as they cool out of the oven.



## SHOPPING LIST

This is a full list of all the ingredients used in every meal in this week's plan. I recommend reviewing it for stuff you probably already have on hand before rushing out to the store and buying everything! If items on the list don't have amounts, it is most likely because the recipe uses a very small amount of that ingredient or it is used as a garnish.

### Fresh Produce

- Avocados (1)
- Baby bok choy (2 bulbs)
- Cilantro
- English cucumber (1)
- Fresh rosemary (2 sprigs)
- Garlic (6 cloves)
- Grape tomatoes (1 pint)
- Green apple (1)
- Green bell pepper (1)
- Ginger (2 inches)
- Jalapenos (1-2) (opt.)
- Lemon (2)
- New potatoes (1 lb.)
- Parsley
- Radishes (about 8)
- Red onion (1)
- Red pepper (1)
- Romaine lettuce (2 heads)
- Sweet potatoes (2 large)
- White onion (1)

### Meat, Poultry, Seafood

- Chicken Cutlets (1 lb.)
- Salmon Filet (1 lb.)

### Dairy

- Greek yogurt (1/2 cup)
- SUB: Sour cream
- Parmesan cheese (2 oz.)

### Spices and Pantry Items

- All-purpose flour (1/2 cup)
- Apple cider vinegar (2 Tbsp.)
- Black pepper
- Cayenne pepper (1 teas.)
- Chicken stock (2 cups)
- Cumin, ground (1 Tbsp.)
- Dried oregano (1 teas.)
- Dried arbol chilis (4)  
SUB: 1/2 teas. red pepper flakes
- Egg noodles (8 oz.)  
SUB: Spaghetti
- Green lentils (1 lb.)
- Kosher salt
- Marinated garlic (8 cloves)
- Olive oil (2 cups)
- Orzo pasta (8 oz.)
- Paprika (1 Tbsp. + 1 teas.)
- Pistachios, roasted & salted (1/2 cup)
- Pita chips (or pita and make them)
- Roasted red pepper (1)
- Sesame oil (1 Tbsp.)
- Soba noodles (9-10 oz.)
- Soy sauce (2 Tbsp.)
- Sriracha Chili sauce
- Tahini paste (1/2 cup)
- Tortillas, large (opt.)
- Tofu, extra firm (1 15-oz.)
- Vegetable stock (1 qt.)