

Gochujang Pasta with Eggplant

Prep: 5 minutes • Cook: 20 minutes

Silky linguine swirled in a buttery garlic–gochujang sauce, finished with umami-rich Parmesan and scallions. Juicy sesame–tamari seared eggplant adds savory depth, gentle heat, and irresistible texture.

Ingredients

- 1 lb eggplant
- 1 1/4 teaspoons fine sea salt (divided use)
- 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil (or other neutral oil)
- 1 tablespoon tamari (or soy sauce)
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 3 scallions (thinly sliced; whites/light greens separated from dark greens)
- 6 oz dried linguine (or spaghetti)
- 3 tablespoons butter (vegan if needed)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 4 teaspoons gochujang paste (not sauce)
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese (finely grated; vegan if needed)
- for garnish crispy onions (optional)
- for garnish scallion curls (optional)

Instructions

1. Prep scallions: Thinly slice 3 scallions; separate the white/light green parts (for cooking) from the dark green parts (for finishing).
2. Prep eggplant: Chop 1 lb eggplant into 1-inch (2.5 cm) pieces. In a medium bowl, stir together 3 cups cold water and 1 teaspoon fine sea salt. Submerge eggplant (weigh down with a smaller bowl) and soak 10 minutes; drain and pat dry.
3. Cook eggplant: Heat a large stainless steel skillet over medium-high until water droplets skid across the surface. Add 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil, then the eggplant in a single layer. Sprinkle with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until all sides are golden and tender, 8–10 minutes (reduce heat or add a touch more oil if sticking). Transfer to a bowl and toss with 1 tablespoon tamari and 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil; set aside.
4. Cook pasta: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook 6 oz dried linguine until al dente per package directions. Reserve 1 cup pasta water; drain.
5. Build sauce: Let the skillet cool slightly, then return to low heat. Melt 3 tablespoons butter; add 2 cloves minced garlic and the white/light green scallion parts. Cook until the garlic is pale golden, about 2 minutes. Whisk in 4 teaspoons gochujang paste and 2/3 cup reserved pasta water until smooth.
6. Finish: Add pasta and toss to coat. Add 1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan and the dark green scallion parts; toss,

adding splashes of additional pasta water as needed until silky. Fold in the eggplant. Taste and adjust seasoning. Garnish with crispy onions and/or scallion curls, if using; serve hot.

Tags: Pasta, Korean-Inspired, Fusion, Vegetarian, Weeknight Friendly, Eggplant

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