

# MEAL KITS

## Saucy Veg and Pasta Bake

ASSEMBLY/COOKING TIME: 40 minutes or less

**Chefs Tim Ma and Ben Lin kept things simple in this hearty, good-for-you casserole. Bonus: Kids get their hands on a bunch of kale! What's in the marinara sauce? See the NOTE, below.**

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:** Cutting board, a sharp knife, large pot, wide skillet, 8- or 9-inch baking dish, canola oil, salt, black pepper.

**WHAT KIDS CAN DO:** Rinse the kale to remove any dirt, then give it a good shake. Strip the kale leaves from their stems. (Save those stems! See CHEF'S TIPS.) Stir the cooked veggies and sauce into the cooked pasta. Sprinkle the cheese on top.

**WHAT YOU CAN ADD IN:** Cooked and crumbled sausage, diced/cooked chorizo, cooked ground turkey or chicken.

### TO MAKE 4 SERVINGS

Salt

3 cups dried whole-wheat penne (1 container in the kit)

1 bunch kale

1 green bell pepper

3 cups (8 ounces) sliced mushrooms

2 tablespoons canola oil

Ground black pepper

About 2 cups marinara sauce (1 container in the kit)

1 cup (4 ounces) shredded cheddar-provolone cheese blend



**START THE PASTA:** Boil a large pot of water. Add a big pinch or two of salt, then the penne pasta. Cook for about 10 minutes, so it's firm but not mushy. Drain the penne and return it to the pot (off the heat).



**PREP THE VEGETABLES:** While the penne is cooking, rinse the kale well then separate the leaves from their stems. Stack the leaves and chop into bite-size pieces, which should make about 4 cups total. Cut the green bell pepper into ¼-inch pieces (discarding the seeds inside). Heat a wide skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sliced mushrooms and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring, or until they start to release their moisture and turn brown. Stir in the canola oil, then add the chopped kale leaves and diced green bell pepper. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring a few times; it looks like a lot of kale, but it will soften and wilt down.



**MIX** Add the just-cooked vegetables to the cooked pasta in the pot, then pour in the marinara sauce and stir until everything's coated. Transfer it all to your baking dish. Sprinkle the cheese blend evenly over the top.



**BAKE** at 325 degrees F for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly.



Chef Ben's marinara sauce is made with whole tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, salt, crushed red pepper flakes, oregano and basil.

# MEAL KIT TIPS

## DID YOU KNOW?



Mushrooms are 90 percent water. They breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide—just like humans!



Kale stems are edible! You can chop them up and add them to a stir-fry, or roast them until crisped. You can blend them into a pesto with garlic, pine nuts, cheese and olive oil. Some people say blanching the stems first (cooking for a few minutes in boiling water) gets rid of any bitter taste.



“Marinara” means “sailor-style” in Italian, because this simple tomato sauce was a favorite of the Italian merchants who long ago traveled by sea to buy and sell their goods.

## WHAT ELSE CAN YOU MAKE WITH THE INGREDIENTS IN THIS MEAL KIT?

### STUFFED PEPPER-PALOOZA!

Make the filling by cooking 1 pound of ground beef or ground turkey and 2 cups of the **sliced mushrooms** in a skillet. Stir in 2 cups of the **marinara sauce**. Cut the **green bell peppers** into top-and-bottom halves, discarding the stem and seeds. Fill the empty halves with the filling, then top with some of the shredded **cheddar-provolone cheese blend**. Broil or bake just until bubbly.

### SMOTHERED KALE AND MUSHROOMS!

Heat 2 tablespoons each olive oil and butter in a wide skillet over medium heat. Stir in 3 cups **sliced mushrooms**, then place a lid or heatproof plate right on top of them in the pan—smothered! Cook for about 8 minutes, stirring once. Add about 4 cups rinsed/stemmed/chopped **kale (from 1 bunch)** and toss to combine. Cover again with the lid or plate, right on top of the kale. Cook for about 2 minutes, then uncover and pour in ¼ cup of your favorite broth or balsamic vinegar. Serve over cooked brown rice or **whole-wheat penne**, or with scrambled eggs. (Adapted from a Rachael Ray recipe)

### CRISPY KALE CHIPS!

Rinse **1 bunch of kale** well, shaking to remove all the water, then separate the leaves from their stems. Tear the leaves into 2-inch pieces and spread them on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle 2 or 3 teaspoons of olive oil or canola oil over the kale, then use your clean hands to massage and coat each piece of kale—make sure each one is well coated. Sprinkle with salt and a little garlic powder, if you have it. Bake at 300 degrees F for 10 minutes, then give the kale a stir. Bake for another 10 to 15 minutes, then stir again. Bake for 7 to 8 minutes, more, until you can tell the kale is getting crisp. Let it sit on the baking sheet for 5 minutes (out of the oven), so it can crisp up some more. Serve with **marinara sauce** for dipping.