

Kitchen Hacks for Enjoying Lower Carb Pasta Meals



I've been low carb for a long time now. That doesn't mean I don't like pasta. Most restaurants just serve too much of it. What you get at most Italian restaurants in the US is a huge portion – dare I say a pile of pasta. Even the International Pasta Association will tell you that a portion of pasta is one cup, cooked. That's more like it. What I am going to layout here are some of my tricks for making pasta dishes; especially casseroles that are much lower carb than those you'd get in restaurants and also lower than most recipes you'll find elsewhere.

Hack #1: How to Measure Your Pasta

I don't follow a recipe portion for pasta. I go by this trick: take out the casserole dish you intend to use and cover the bottom of the casserole with one layer of pasta end to end. Don't crowd it. So if it's penne, for example, you are going to cover the bottom of the dish with pasta to measure it. Then cook that as usual. This way, there's enough pasta to satisfy your craving without overloading on carbs.

Hack #2: How to Pick the Best Noodles

When using long noodles, I stay with the thinner ones. There's automatically less pasta volume that way. So, think thin spaghetti, or capellini, or angel hair. More often than not, I will even substitute these noodles in recipes that call for a wider noodle like fettuccini.

Hack #3: Two for One

Here's another trick. I break the long pasta in half before I cook it. I take about a half-inch of pasta out of the box for serving two people. Then I put the pasta in my hands and make two fists. I go over to the sink and lower the pasta in my hands into the sink and break it into two chunks. Doing this over the sink allows makes it so I don't end up with pieces all over my kitchen. Most stay in the sink. The shorter noodles mean you won't be winding and winding the pasta around your fork. You'll eat less pasta that way.

Hack #4: Carb Resistance

Here's a trick a lot of restaurants in Italy use. They cook the pasta the day before. If you cook pasta and then chill it thoroughly it becomes more carb resistant. That means when you eat it the pasta will break down further in your digestive system. The further down in your intestines it digests, the less of a blood sugar spike you get. You can cook pasta and drain it. Let it cool overnight in your fridge in a ziplock bag or container. Then just run water over it so you can break it back up and then cook your dish. You can also assemble your pasta casserole, cover it and refrigerate it. Then cook it the next day. The pasta will be carb resistant.

Hack #5: Diversify your Dish

One more idea. I often add veggies the recipe didn't call for. The other day I made a casserole that featured just onions, Italian sausage, penne, and a cream sauce. I added red pepper bits and broccoli. It gave the casserole more color, but I also got the benefits of adding veggies to mine. They all cooked in the same casserole so that saved time, dishes, and clean up.

Hack #6: Soak up the Sauce

Even one more idea. Sometimes I double the sauce but not the other ingredients. When it's a creamy dish, that gives me more calories from fat. Fat fills you up and who doesn't want extra wonderful sauce?

Enjoy your pasta; just don't do it too often. Follow hints like this and you're much less likely to gain weight.

Cheers,