

# **One-Pot Creamy Kale + White Bean Pasta**



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Hello from Dallas, Texas! I'm blogging at you from the BBYO International Conference. Yes, that makes two blog posts from conferences so clearly, I clearly pay close attention to presentations and am not distracted at all when you invite me to a conference.

Anyway, It's an honor to be here for so many reasons! First, I love teenagers! They're inspiring and motivating and hilarious and loud and sometimes smelly but I love them anyway. Second, I got to speak on using social media and blogging as a means to build understanding for issues that I'm passionate about, like food justice and mindful living. But, most importantly, it's an honor because on Shabbat, I get to speak in partnership with the one and only Amy Kritzer from What Jew Wanna Eat! After years and years of being Internet friends and even co-authoring a e-cookbook together, we finally got to meet in person! Amazing! We met at the airport upon arrival into Dallas and have only paused from each other's side to sleep and do our presentations. I'm tellin' ya folks, if loveliness exists in this world it is house within Amy. What an amazing individual! This lady is so amazing for tons of reasons but the thing I honestly love the most about her is her willingness to support other bloggers – competition be damned! She sees the success of other Jewish bloggers as a success of her community and gosh darn it, that is beautiful!







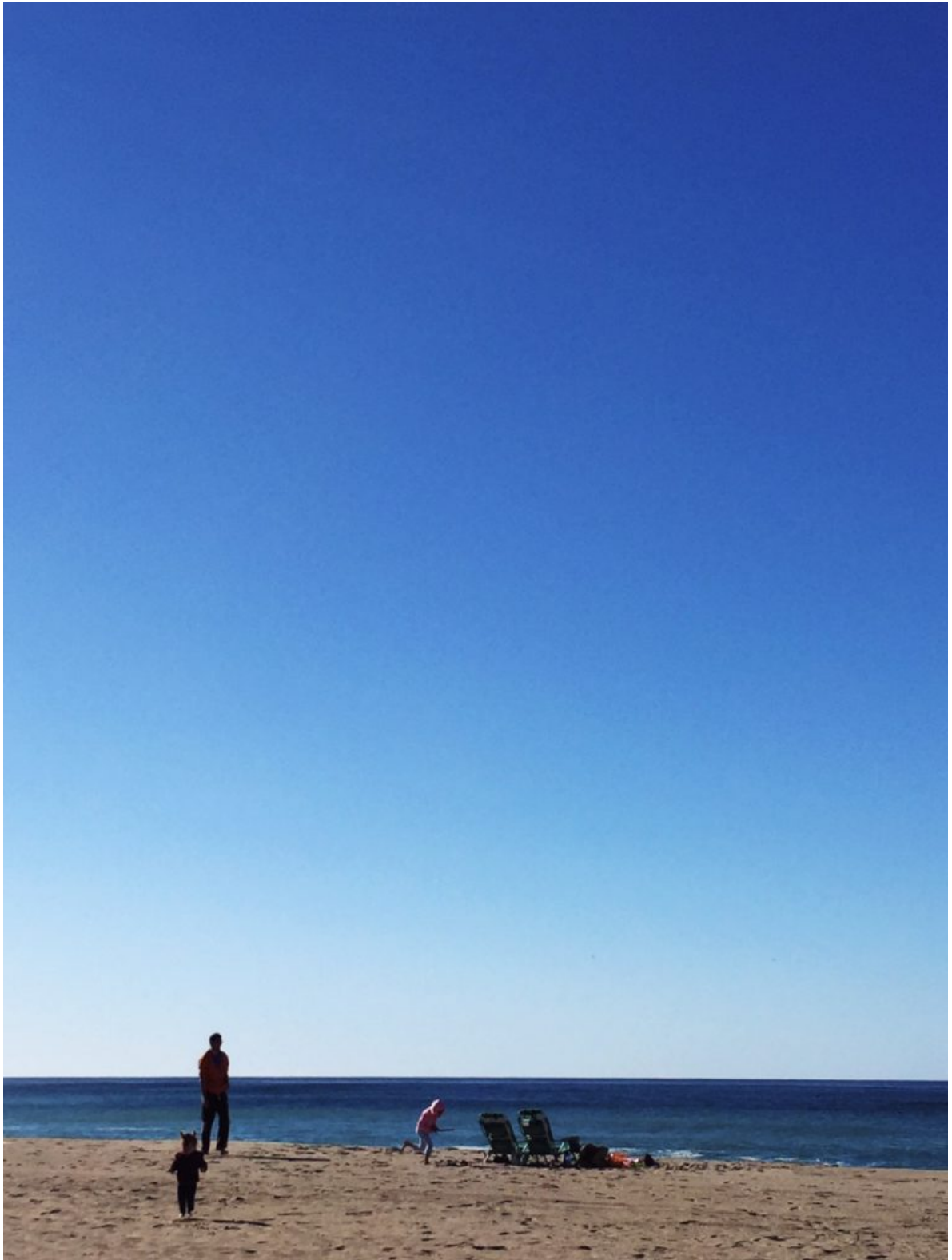


So aside from gushing about Amy, I'm here to write about one of my favorite subjects – PASTA! If you've met me you'll know already that carbs and I are besties. If I could, I'd eat pasta every single night. Back in my younger years when I was living in Chicago, my favorite dinner for myself was a giant bowl of spaghetti, dripping in sauce with layers and layers of cheese on it (most specifically, American cheese but, whatever). Because I no longer have the metabolism of a 24 year-old, I don't eat like that anymore. However, as a working parent in her late 30s with two young children, pasta certainly visits our dinner table at least once a week. In

order to assuage some of my guilt of eating pasta, I like to mix in healthier, easy proteins and vegetables. Two of my favorites are frozen kale and canned beans. This is a dish I often throw together on those later evenings when I leave work later than normal and don't have as much time to cook dinner. Feel free to omit the cream but I like the tanginess it brings to the dinner. And, if you're like me and you are looking for little more nuttiness to your pasta, go ahead and top it with mounds of Parmesan cheese. Trust me, your taste buds will thank you.







My squad in Malibu.





Me and my soul-sista, Amy from What Jew Wanna Eat

### **One-Pot Creamy Kale + White Bean Pasta**

- 1 box whole wheat spaghetti
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves of garlic, smashed
- 1 cup frozen blue curly kale
- 1 can, Cannellini bean, rinsed
- 2 cans diced tomatoes with juice
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream or half and half
- 1 tbsp kosher salt + more for final dusting before serving
- 1/2 tbsp coarse ground pepper
- 1 tbsp dried basil
- 1/2 tbsp dried fennel seed

Using a large stock pot, cook pasta as indicated on the back of the package. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup of the cooking liquid. Set both pasta and cooking liquid (separately) aside.

Wipe down stock pot. Add olive oil to pot and place back on stove over a medium-high heat. Once smoking just a bit, add diced onions, garlic and kosher salt. Saute for roughly 3



minutes or until fragrant. Add pepper, basil and fennel seed to the onion and garlic mixture and saute for another minute. Next, add the diced tomatoes and tomato paste, mix and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to low and let mixture simmer for about 5 – 7 minutes. Taste and add more salt if necessary depending on your flavor preference. After mixture has simmered for a bit, using a handheld immersion blender, blend tomato and onion mixture until semi-smooth (I like to leave mixture a bit chunky but this is my personal preference). Add in the whipping cream and stir until combined.

Next, add the beans, kale and about 3/4 of your cooked pasta back to the pot. Mix until almost combined. Add in about half of your reserved cooking liquid to help coat the pasta and allow for sauce to adhere to the pasta. Taste. Adjust seasoning to your liking. Serve hot!

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## **Sweet Potato Fries w/Za'atar Ranch Dip**



There I was, Wednesday morning, all red-nosed from the cold I've had for roughly 2 weeks, standing in line at my local Starbucks when, at roughly 7:30 in the morning, I was approached by a sweet young woman. She apologized for bothering me but she wanted to say 'hello' because she follows the blog and is a 'fan'. Then she introduced me to her mom



and we kibbitzed a bit until it was my turn to order. When I left that Starbucks, with my bucket of coffee in hand, I had regretted not letting her know how much it meant to me that she came by to say 'hi'. That, as corny as it sounds, I think maybe Gd brought us together at that moment, at 7:30 on a Wednesday morning because I needed her.

It sounds a bit selfish, and maybe it is, but I needed to run into Michal. Recently, I've been lacking the motivation to cook and to blog. I've lost some of my love for the process. My 'mojo', as it were. Between work, the kiddo, finalizing details of the forthcoming Passover cookbook I've been working on with my girls, Sarah, Liz and Amy, I haven't had the strength or even desire to cook. It was bringing me down a little bit. I just invested all this money into this new site. How can I now be feeling like I want to back off of this food blogging thing for a while? I've become a little too obsessed with checking my stats and I've been having the feeling that I'm pretty sure the only folks who actually read this blog are those I'm either related to or have known my whole life. I've been frustrated because the BlogHer Food Conference is going to be in Miami this year and I can't attend because it's over Shabbat and the powers that be won't let me buy a ticket for one day so I can attend on Friday. I've been wondering if folks in the food blogging world get scared when they see a blog called, "Jewhungry"? Like maybe I'm 'too' Jewish and it's alienating. I've been questioning my purpose for doing this and wondering if I really want to keep at it.



Pre-cooked

But then I met this 'fan' and she brought me hope and a little bit of validation; two things I didn't know I needed so badly until they were there. I am so grateful she wasn't shy and she just came on over and introduced herself. I hope she reads this post so she knows how grateful I am. Next time, coffee's on me.





Dip – The good stuff's in there.

Now, for this recipe. As a Southerner, I often look for ways to incorporate, mayonnaise and/or buttermilk into, um, EVERYTHING I EAT. And, in an effort to be a little bit more 'homemade', I've been making my own dressings lately. This za'atar ranch is a cute little blend of who I am—beautiful unique za'atar (hyssop) from the Middle East; a flavor I fell in love with while living in Israel combined with creamy, tangy buttermilk (a shout out to my Southern roots). I recommend using this as a dressing on salads or a dip for sweet potato fries or veggies. Feel free to play with the thickness until you get the consistency you like. My measurements recommended below are for a creamier dip. Enjoy!



Don't be shy now . . .



When I dip, you dip, we dip.



Messy is good.

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Top with chives. Enjoy.