

## PENNE WITH BUTTERNUT SQUASH, SPINACH AND BACON

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound penne rigate pasta
- 6 slices bacon
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 butternut squash, peeled and cut into 3/4-inch cubes
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook the pasta for 7 minutes (the pasta will only be partially cooked). Drain, reserving 2 1/2 cups of the pasta cooking water.
2. Meanwhile, in an extra-large skillet, cook the bacon over medium-high heat until crisp, about 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels, then crumble the bacon once it is cool enough to handle. Discard all but 3 tablespoons of the bacon fat in the pan.
3. Add the olive oil and squash to the skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 7 minutes. Add the pasta and 2 cups of the reserved pasta cooking water. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring, until the pasta and squash are cooked, about 5 minutes, adding additional pasta cooking water if needed.
4. Remove from the heat and stir in the spinach, garlic and parsley. Season generously with salt and pepper; sprinkle with the cheese and crumbled bacon.

#### TIPS:

**Season** pasta water with enough salt to make it taste like seawater.

**Place** leftovers in a baking dish, toss with heavy cream and dot with butter; bake at 350° until warmed through.

**Option:** Swap in crumbled goat cheese for the grated parmesan.