

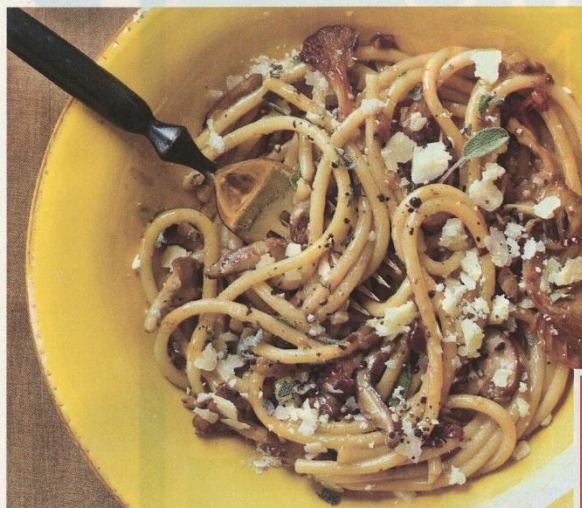


The Enlightened Cook | TALK TO THE FOOD EDITOR



What can I sub for bacon for meaty, smoky flavor?

ANN TAYLOR PITTMAN answers questions, sorts out problems.



Bucatini with Mushrooms tastes great without bacon. Recipe at CookingLight.com.

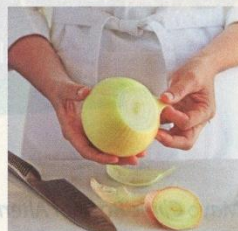
> **A LOT OF YOUR RECIPES USE BACON,** but I gave up eating pork a few years ago. I've learned to use smoked paprika in my greens in place of pork, but what other foods could substitute for bacon—particularly where it adds a meaty, smoky flavor, where leaving it out would make a recipe thin and bland?
—HJ McNaron, Atlanta, Ga.

Ann: We do love what a bit of bacon adds to many recipes. But there are other ways to add savory, rich, or smoky depth.
• For soups or greens: Try smoked turkey wings, which add a meaty

richness and smokiness like you'd get from bacon. Shred the meat and discard the skin; add meat and bones to the pot for a long simmer. (Fish out and discard bones before serving.)
• For long-simmered soups, add the rind from a wedge of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. While this won't add smokiness, it will contribute depth and lots of savoriness.
• For pasta, risotto, or other relatively quick-cooking dishes that would taste weak without bacon, mushrooms are a great choice. Sautéed 'shrooms, particularly varieties like shiitake, oyster, and cremini, add a ton of meaty richness. And

reconstituted dried porcini mushrooms have an almost smoky-nutty flavor, too; use the mushrooms and soaking liquid.
• For vegetable dishes, sprinkle a little smoked salt (available online and at gourmet markets) on top to finish the dish.
• For salads (leafy green or potato salads), try flaked smoked trout or smoked salmon.
• For dishes where you don't mind some heat with the smoke (chili, Tex-Mex dishes, or some soups), try chipotle chiles—either canned in adobo sauce or reconstituted dried chiles.
• Or add musty, slightly smoky ground cumin to dishes with a Latin or Mediterranean vibe.

was standing next to with the top burners on. Of course,



→ Ask Ann

Do you have a burning question about food or cooking? E-mail me at Ann_Pittman@timeinc.com.