

Pasta Carbonara

Tonights pasta is an Americanized variation of carbonara pasta. This version uses a marinara sauce base and has neither egg nor prosciutto. “Bestemmia!” (Blasphemy!) might be the cry from Carbonara purists.

I actually prefer this alternate way of preparing carbonara. It’s not as rich as the pure classic carbonara. In this plant-based approach, chopped smoky tempeh brings the prosciutto (bacon) flavor to the sauce and browned mushrooms add to the umami. It’s mighty tasty.

Preparation time: 40 minutes - Servings: 2

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

I like to organize ingredients on small plates or in bowls so they are easy to add. Cooking’s more fun when everything you need is ready to go. Prep a total of 5 cloves of chopped garlic today: 4 in the Marinara Sauce and 1 in the Pasta Carbonara. There is 1-1/3 C. wine in this Marinara Sauce.

Marinara Sauce

1 tsp. olive oil
4 cloves garlic (smashed and chopped)
1/2 C. red wine

1/2 C. yellow onion (chopped)
one 15 oz. can of no-salt tomato sauce
one 15 oz. can regular tomato sauce
another 1/2 C. red wine

2 T. dry basil leaves
1 T. dry oregano leaves
a few dashes Tabasco sauce

remaining half of the chopped garlic

1 tsp. olive oil
yet another 2/3 C. red wine

Salad and Dressing

Fixings for a green salad

Il Semplico Dressing:

3 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp. prepared mustard
2 T. rice wine or white vinegar
3 T. low-sodium vegetable broth
pinch of salt

Pasta Carbonara

4 slices Smoky tempeh
1 tsp. olive oil
10 cremini mushrooms (sliced)
1 clove garlic (smashed and chopped)
3 handfuls of dry penne Pasta
Garnish:
4 T. shredded Parmesan

*But First!
Put Pasta Water
on to Boil*

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Once you've made Marinara Sauce, the meal comes together quickly. Make salads and dressing and brown the tempeh. You'll want to be ready to dine as soon as the pasta is assembled.

Marinara Sauce

1. Measure oil into a deep sauté pan. Add 1/2 of the chopped garlic and stir over medium-high heat until garlic starts to turn golden brown.
2. Add first 1/2 C. wine and bring to boil. Cook 1 minute.
3. Add onion and toss until wine is almost gone.
4. Add both cans of tomato sauce (rinse cans with additional 1/2 C. red wine and add to sauce.)
5. Add spices and Tabasco. Bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook 10 minutes.
6. While sauce cooks, brown remaining garlic in olive oil in a smaller sauté pan. Add final 2/3 C. wine and cook over low heat for 2-3 minutes. Turn off heat and leave on burner.
7. When the sauce in large pan finishes cooking, add additional wine and garlic to the sauce. Remove large pan from burner.

Green Salad and Dressing

Preheat oven to 400°.

Assemble green salads on individual side-serving plates.

Il Simplicio Dressing:

Simply shake dressing ingredients together in a container with a tight fitting lid.

Pasta Carbonara

1. Brown tempeh on a cookie sheet in a 400° oven. Brown 5 minutes per side. Let cool and chop 4 pieces. Set aside. Store remaining browned tempeh in a sealable bag in the fridge.
2. Brown mushrooms in oil and add chopped garlic. Toss until garlic becomes fragrant. Remove from heat.
3. Drop pasta into boiling water, reduce heat to medium-low and set timer for 8 minutes, or cook until pasta is at desired tenderness. Reserve 2/3 C. cooking water and add to Marinara Sauce. Drain and rinse pasta.
4. Return cooked and rinsed pasta to the empty pasta kettle. Measure 1-1/4 C. Marinara sauce over pasta. Add tempeh and mushrooms to the pan and toss over medium heat until hot.
5. Divide pasta between two dinner plates. Garnish with Parmesan. Serve salads on the side.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

Tempeh is an excellent substitute for bacon, ham or prosciutto. It has plenty of protein, all of the flavor and none of the saturated fat.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com