

Pasta Puttanesca

Pasta Puttanesca! It's one of the iconic pastas. Puttana is one of those words in Italian that can be substituted in many grammatical situations. As it's used in Pasta Puttanesca, it's like saying: "I threw a bunch of stuff together to make this spicy pasta." We all like a spicy pasta! This one's a favorite at my table.

Preparation Time: 40 minutes - Serves: 2

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients on small plates or in bowls so they are easy to add. You'll need a total of 1-1/3 C. wine as you make the Marinara Sauce tonight. Prep 5 cloves of garlic: 4 chopped cloves in the Marinara Sauce and 1 whole, peeled clove with the salad dressing.

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 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

2 tsp. olive oil
remaining 1/2 of the chopped garlic (above)
another 2/3 C. red wine

Pasta, Salad and Dressing

Pasta:

1-1/2 C. dry whole-wheat penne pasta
fixings for a green salad

Basil Vinaigrette Dressing:

12 fresh basil leaves (washed, patted dry)
1 garlic clove (whole, peeled)
3 T. yellow onion (coarsely chopped)
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. soy sauce
2 T. balsamic vinegar
4 T. olive oil
1/3 C. low-sodium vegetable broth

Puttanesca Assembly

1 Italian Sausage of choice
1 large carrot (sliced into rounds)
1 tsp. olive oil
6 cremini mushrooms (sliced)
1 tsp. olive oil
one 6" zucchini (sliced into rounds)
2 thick slices sweet onion (coarsely chopped)
2/3 C. red bell pepper (seeded and diced)
2/3 C. green bell pepper (seeded and diced)
6 pitted Calamatta olives (chopped)
2 T. capers
dash of Tabasco sauce (or more to taste)
2 T. Parmesan cheese

But First!
Put Pasta Water on to boil.

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Start by making Marinara Sauce. Cook pasta while Marinara Sauce continues cooking. Make side salads and dressing. Finish the meal by cooking the vegetables and assembling the Puttanesca.

Marinara Sauce

1. Toss 1/2 of the chopped garlic in olive oil over medium-high heat until garlic starts to turn golden brown. Add 1/2 C. red wine and bring to boil. Cook 1 minute.
2. Add onion and cook 2 minutes.
3. Add tomato sauce (rinse cans with additional second 1/2 C. red wine and add to sauce.)
4. Add spices and Tabasco. Bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook 10-minutes.
5. Using a separate sauté pan, brown the remaining half of the chopped garlic in oil. Add 2/3 C. more wine, bring to a boil, cook for about a minute and turn off heat. Add this additional wine and garlic to the large pan. Stir well and remove from burner.

Pasta

Pasta, Salad and Dressing

1. When water boils, place 1-1/2 C. (3 handfuls) of dry pasta in water. Return water to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Cook 8-10 minutes, or until tender. (Set a timer.)
2. Reserve 1/2 C. starchy pasta cooking water when pasta is done. Stir the 1/2 C. of starchy cooking water into the Marinara Sauce. Then drain and rinse pasta.

Salad and Dressing:

3. Make green side salads on individual plates. Make a Basil Vinaigrette salad dressing by blending all dressing ingredients in a food processor or blender.

Puttanesca Assembly and Plate

1. Brown a Plant-based Italian sausage or a meat sausage of choice. Allow to cool and chop.
2. Steam carrots 3 minutes over 3/4 C. boiling water. Remove from heat. Shock with cold water.
3. Brown sliced mushrooms in olive oil until brown. Remove from pan and set aside.
4. Heat another teaspoon of olive oil in the same pan. Add zucchini slices and brown on both sides. Remove from pan. Toss onions and peppers in same pan until edges of onions begin to brown. Add all previously-cooked vegetables and chopped Italian sausage to the pan.
5. Add chopped olives, capers and Tabasco sauce. Bring to a boil. Gently fold in 2 cups cooked pasta and toss over medium heat. Serve with a garnish of shredded Parmesan.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

Years ago, the chef at one of my favorite Italian restaurants described his technique of lightly browning extra garlic and making a reduction of wine/garlic to add to the Marinara sauce. This addition adds a lovely garlicky richness to the finished sauce.

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