

Pasta Puttanesca

There are a number of versions of how this classic pasta dish originated. Some say that Puttanesca was first made in the Spanish Quarter brothels of Naples. Other stories include chef Sandro Petti of Ischia (just west of Naples) creating the recipe when asked to cook for friends late one night. His pantry was a bit exhausted from a busy weekend and he only had olives, capers and sauce ingredients remaining. He created Pasta Aulive et Chiapparielle (pasta with olives and capers), or Puttanesca.

Wherever it originated, this dish is a favorite in my home kitchen. It works with any combination of vegetables you have on hand. **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 (and more fun to cook!). Use a total of 3-1/3 C. wine as you make a double recipe of the Marinara Sauce. Prep a total of 9 cloves of garlic: 8 chopped cloves for the Marinara Sauce and 1 whole clove with the dressing.

Marinara Sauce

(You're doubling this Marinara Sauce recipe tonight.)

4 cloves garlic (smashed and chopped)
1 C. red wine
1 C. yellow onion (chopped)

two 15 oz. cans no-salt diced tomatoes
two 15 oz. cans regular tomato sauce
another 1 C. red wine

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

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

Pasta: Pasta, Salad and Dressing

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 clove garlic (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 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 chopped)
2/3 C. green bell pepper (seeded and chopped)
1 C. canned white beans (drained and rinsed)
6 pitted Kalamatta 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 8 chopped garlic cloves in olive oil over medium-high heat until garlic starts to turn golden brown. Add 1 C. red wine and bring to boil. Cook 1 minute.
2. Add onion and cook 2 more minutes.
3. Add tomato sauce (rinse cans with additional second 1 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 1/2 of the chopped garlic in oil. Add 2/3 C. more wine, bring to a boil, for about a minute and turn off heat. Add this additional wine and garlic to the large pan. Stir well and remove from burner.
6. You'll also stir in 1/2 C. starchy pasta cooking water after cooking pasta in the next step.

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 then reduce heat to medium. Cook 8 minutes, or until tender. (Set a timer.)
2. Reserve 1/2 C. starchy pasta cooking water when pasta is done. Then drain and rinse pasta.

Salad and Dressing:

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/Assemble and Plate

1. Steam carrots 3 minutes over 3/4 C. boiling water. Remove from heat. Shock with cold water.
2. Brown sliced mushrooms in olive oil until brown. Remove from pan and set aside.
3. 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. Return all pre-cooked vegetables to the pan.
4. Measure 1 C. drained white beans and add to vegetables.
5. Measure 1-1/2 C. Marinara Sauce into pan with all vegetables and beans. Add chopped olives, capers, reserved pasta cooking water and Tabasco sauce. Bring to a boil. Lower heat to medium and 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