

Pasta with Baked Cherry Tomatoes



From the Sensenig's Recipe Book

Ingredients

3 pints cherry tomatoes, halved
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus 1 tablespoon
⅓ cup fine dry bread crumbs
1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for the pasta pot
¼ teaspoon peperoncino flakes, or to taste
1 pound spaghetti, gemelli, or penne
10 plump garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
2 tablespoons fresh Italian parsley, chopped
1 cup fresh basil leaves, loosely packed
½ cup pecorino, freshly grated, plus more for passing
4 ounces ricotta, or ricotta salata

Preparation

Arrange a rack in the center of the oven, and heat to 350 degrees.

Toss the cherry-tomato halves in a large bowl with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Sprinkle over tomatoes the bread crumbs, salt, and peperoncino; toss well to coat the tomatoes evenly. Pour the tomatoes onto the parchment-lined sheet, and spread them apart in a single layer. Bake until the tomatoes are shriveled and lightly caramelized (but not dried out), about 25 minutes in all.

Meanwhile, fill the large pot with salted water, and heat to a rolling boil. When the tomatoes are nearly done, drop the pasta into the pot, stir, and return the water to a boil.

As soon as the pasta is cooking, pour the remaining olive oil into the big skillet, set it over medium- high heat, and scatter in the sliced garlic. Cook for a minute or two, until it is sizzling and lightly colored, then ladle in about 2 cups of the pasta cooking water, and bring to a vigorous boil, stirring up the garlic. Let half the water evaporate, then lower the heat, stir in the chopped parsley, and keep the sauce barely simmering.

As soon as the tomatoes are done, remove them from the oven.

When the pasta is al dente, lift it from the water, drain for a moment, and drop it into the skillet, still over low heat. Toss pasta quickly with the garlic-and- parsley sauce in the pan, then slide the baked tomatoes on top of the pasta. Scatter the basil shreds all over, and toss everything together well, until the pasta is evenly dressed and the tomatoes are distributed throughout. Turn off the heat, sprinkle on the grated cheese, and toss once more.

Mound the pasta in a warmed serving bowl. Shred the ricotta all over the top of the pasta, and serve immediately.

Notes:

I make a lot of variations of this recipe, sometimes with shrimp, sometimes with some Italian hot sausage. We generally don't add the ricotta especially if we add shrimp. I think if I could find ricotta salata which is drier I would consider adding it.

Source:

Lidia Bastianich