



ITALIAN AND FRIULIAN RECIPES



PASTA ALLA CARBONARA

- 1 pound dry spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces pancetta or slab bacon, cubed or sliced into small strips
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more for serving
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 handful fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Directions

Prepare the sauce while the pasta is cooking to ensure that the spaghetti will be hot and ready when the sauce is finished; it is very important that the pasta is hot when adding the egg mixture, so that the heat of the pasta cooks the raw eggs in the sauce.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add the pasta and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender yet firm (as they say in Italian "al-dente.") Drain the pasta well, reserving 1/2 cup of the starchy cooking water to use in the sauce if you wish. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a deep skillet over medium flame. Add the pancetta and saute for about 3 minutes, until the bacon is crisp and the fat is rendered. Toss the garlic into the fat and saute for less than 1 minute to soften.

Add the hot, drained spaghetti to the pan and toss for 2 minutes to coat the strands in the bacon fat. Beat the eggs and Parmesan together in a mixing bowl, stirring well to prevent lumps. Remove the pan from the heat and pour the egg/cheese mixture into the pasta, whisking quickly until the eggs thicken, but do not scramble (this is done off the heat to ensure this does not happen.) Thin out the sauce with a bit of the reserved pasta water, until it reaches desired consistency. Season the carbonara with several turns of freshly ground black pepper and taste for salt. Mound the spaghetti carbonara into warm serving bowls and garnish with chopped parsley. Pass more cheese around the table.



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PASTA POMODORO E BASILICO

Ingredients

- High-quality extra-virgin olive oil
- Fresh cloves of garlic (1-2 per person)
- High-quality durum wheat spaghetti or linguini (about one pound for every 3-4 people)
- One can of organic, diced and peeled tomatoes (per person) or 2 1/2 pd fresh organic tomatoes peeled and seeded.
- Fresh, chopped basil (approximately one small handful per person).
- salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Freshly grated (not shredded) Pecorino-Romano cheese and/or Parmesan (half and half if you prefer)

Directions

Use only the highest quality and freshest ingredients.

Start a pot of water boiling and follow the instructions for "How to Make Pasta" for the spaghetti or linguine. Meanwhile pour some olive oil in a medium saucepan and add 3 cloves of garlic unpeeled. Cook over medium heat until the garlic peel is brown. Turn the heat off and discard the garlic. Add tomatoes, salt and pepper to the oil. Add water. A good estimate is half a can of water for each can of tomatoes or for each three tomatoes. Stir periodically over low heat until the sauce thickens. Pour the sauce over the pasta in a mixing bowl. Add the fresh uncooked basil. Add grated pecorino and Parmesan cheese (half and half). Separate into serving dishes and sprinkle cheese on top



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FRICO E POLENTA

FRICO

3-4 oz. Shredded or grated cheese - any hard cheese will work, as will some softer cheeses, like mozzarella and Monterey Jack. Soft cheeses like brie cannot be used in this recipe.

12" non-stick skillet

Spread the cheese in the skillet in a thin, even layer (some varieties will require more cheese than others to completely cover the skillet). Place the skillet over medium heat and cook until the cheese releases all of its moisture and looks oily and bubbly over its entire surface. The cheese will melt together and form one large cheese pancake. Use a spatula to lift one edge of the frico - the bottom should be well browned and the cheese should hold together firmly (i.e., it shouldn't be stringy or goopy). Flip the frico and brown the other side for a minute or two, then remove the frico from the pan and place on paper towels to drain. It will firm up and become very crisp as it cools.

Frico Tips

While any hard cheese will work, cheddar, parmesan and romano seem to make the crispiest and most flavorful frico. Mozzarella cheese contains more moisture and tends to make a slightly chewy frico. Be sure to choose a cheese whose flavor works with the other elements in your meal - frying cheese concentrates its flavor. If you desire a larger quantity of frico, simply drain the skillet of grease and repeat the process with more cheese. Frico can also be made in the oven by baking a thin layer of cheese on parchment paper, but be careful to choose a baking sheet with sides so that the oil from the cheese doesn't drip.

POLENTA

The process is straight forward. You'll need:

- 1 pound or slightly more of coarsely ground corn meal (you want corn meal the consistency of fine to medium-grained sand, not flour, and if possible stone-ground)

- 2 quarts boiling water (have more handy)
- A heaping teaspoon of salt

Set the water on the fire in a wide bottomed pot and add the salt. When it comes to a boil, add the corn meal in a very slow stream (you don't want the pot to stop boiling), stirring constantly with a wooden spoon to keep lumps from forming. Continue stirring, in the same direction, as the mush thickens, for about a half-hour (the longer you stir the better the polenta will be; the finished polenta should have the consistency of firm mashed potatoes), adding boiling water as necessary. The polenta is done when it peels easily off the sides of the pot.

Serves 4.

This is the standard technique you will find in all Italian cookbooks, and it does take a fair amount of effort because if you stop stirring the polenta will stick and burn -- enough effort that a company makes *paioli* (traditional copper polenta pots) that have motorized attachments to take care of the stirring. They work quite well, but you do have to buy one.