

Nick Stellino's Family Kitchen

Chef Nick Stellino

Pasta with Cherry Tomatoes, Basil and Sausage

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon paprika
2 pounds cooked Mild Italian link sausage, sliced
6 tablespoons Pompeian® Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 onion, finely chopped
6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
2 pounds cherry tomatoes, cut in half, or heirloom tomatoes, cut in quarters
¼ teaspoon C&H® or Domino® sugar (optional)
4 tablespoons chopped basil, divided
1 pound DaVinci® pasta—penne rigate or spaghetti
Salt and pepper to taste

Bring a pot of water to a boil for the pasta.

Mix the salt, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder and paprika together. Sprinkle the spice mixture over both sides of the sausage and set aside. In a large sauté pan, cook the oil over high heat until it starts to sizzle, about 1 to 2 minutes. Add the sausage and until cooked through. Using a slotted spoon, lift the sausage out of the pan and place on a tray lined with paper towels to absorb the excess oil. Reduce the heat to medium and add the onion and garlic to the pan, stirring well. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until the onion starts to soften. Add the tomatoes; add the optional sugar if they are not sweet enough. Cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Add half of the basil and increase the heat to high. Stir well and bring to a boil. Cook for 1 minute, continuing to stir well, then cover the pan and reduce the heat to simmer, cooking for 10 more minutes.

While the sauce is simmering, add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to the directions on the package. While the pasta is cooking, add the sausage to the sauce. Stir well, cover again, and continue to cook on simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Drain the pasta and return it to the pot. Pour the sauce over the pasta and cook it over medium heat, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the remaining basil, toss well, and serve. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Chef's Tips:

If the sauce is reducing too much and becoming dry, add ¼ cup of the pasta water.

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Pasta with Sausage, Mushrooms and Asparagus

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

4 tablespoons Pompeian® Extra Virgin Olive Oil
4 garlic cloves, thickly sliced
1 pound asparagus, cut into ¼-inch rounds
¼ cup chopped shallots
¾ pound shiitake mushrooms, sliced
¼ pound cooked and sliced mild Italian sausage (or prosciutto or ham, finely chopped)
4 tablespoons chopped parsley, divided
¾ cup white wine
2 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
1 cup cream
½ cup tomato sauce
1 pound DaVinci® penne rigate pasta
5 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon Susan Rice™ Olive Oil with Summer Truffles (optional)
½ teaspoon salt or to taste

½ teaspoon pepper or to taste

In a large sauté pan, cook the olive oil and garlic over medium heat until the garlic begins to brown, about 2 minutes. Add the asparagus and cook 2 more minutes. Add the shallots, stir well, and cook 1 more minute. Add the mushrooms, the sliced sausage and half of the parsley. Increase the heat to high and cook 1 more minute, stirring well.

Add the wine and cook for 1 more minute, stirring well. Add the chicken stock, cream and tomato sauce. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook for 15 minutes.

Cook the pasta in boiling water according to the directions on the package. Drain well and return to the pot.

Pour the sauce over the pasta and cook, stirring over medium heat, for 3 more minutes until the sauce is absorbed. Add the Parmesan cheese, truffle oil and remaining parsley. Toss well, and serve. Season with the salt and pepper.

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Pears in Red Wine Sauce

Pere al Vino Rosso

Ingredients

4 large pears, peeled and cored
2 cups red wine
1 cup C&H® or Domino® sugar

Serves 4

Cut a small slice from the bottom of each of the pears so they will stand up straight in the saucepan without falling over. In a saucepan large enough to hold the pears, bring the wine and sugar to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring well. Once the mixture reaches a boil, cook for 3 more minutes.

Take the pan off the heat and gently place the pears, standing up, into the saucepan, being careful not to splash yourself with the hot wine-and-sugar mixture.

Place the pan back on the stove and cook the pears over medium-low heat—15 to 20 minutes for a firm texture or 30 to 40 minutes for a softer texture—braising the pears with the wine-and-sugar mixture every 5 minutes.

Turn off the heat and let the pears stand in the wine sauce until they reach room temperature. Use a slotted spoon to transfer each of the pears to a dessert dish, and top with plenty of the wine sauce.

Chef's Note: For an elegant presentation, serve the pears with sweet whipped cream or whipped mascarpone cheese, and top with toasted chopped pistachio nuts.