

Raw Tomato Sauce with Whole Wheat Orecchiette

Serves 4:

Ingredients

2 pints of cherry or grape tomatoes, or 2 pounds heirloom or plum tomatoes
3 or 4 garlic cloves, minced
4 tablespoons julienned basil leaves, divided
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more for finish
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
chili pepper flakes (optional)
1 pound whole wheat orecchiette, penne, or fusilli pasta
Parmesan cheese shards or grated ricotta salata

Preparation

Chop the grape or cherry tomatoes in half; if using larger tomatoes, dice them into bite-sized pieces. Finely mince 3 or 4 large garlic cloves and roughly julienne fresh basil leaves. Stir all together in a large bowl, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and kosher salt and ground black pepper. If you want to add a bit of heat, stir in a pinch of chili pepper flakes. Let the mixture stand for at least 1/2 hour (and up to an hour) so that flavors can meld. The tomatoes will exude their juices, creating a tangy, tasty sauce.

Bring a large pot of water to boil and season well with sea salt. Add the pasta--whole wheat works especially well in this dish. Cook according to package directions, keeping it on the al dente side. Reserve a cup of the pasta cooking water before draining the pasta well.

Toss cooked pasta in the bowl with the raw tomato sauce, adding more freshly chopped basil. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding some pasta water, if needed, to loosen up the sauce.

Serve in bowls, topped with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Use shards of Parmesan cheese to garnish pasta. Or, customize to your liking: top with grated ricotta salata, goat cheese or crumbled feta.

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