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Bucatini Puttanesca

If ever there was a reason to can those juicy ripe Roma or San Marzano tomatoes in the summer, it's so you can make this pasta all year long. Most know that the history of Puttanesca sauce is credited to Italian "working girls". Some say it was created as a fast meal to enjoy between customers. Others say that the scent of the spicy sauce drew customers into their "business". There is also a question about the herbs with some favoring oregano, some basil, and some flat Italian parsley. Who knows the real truth? But I do know that in the time it takes to boil your pasta, you have your sauce made and dinner is on the table in less than 15 minutes! Why bucatini pasta? Well, it's my favorite cut of pasta and, honestly, I just like saying the name!

½ pound dry bucatini pasta (can use spaghetti or linguine)
2 tablespoons olive oil
6 large garlic cloves, finely diced or crushed
6 anchovy filets, drained of their oil
½-1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes (depending on how spicy you like your sauce)
One quart homemade canned whole tomatoes, prefer Romas or San Marzanos, coarsely crushed with your hand
¼ cup pitted Kalamata or black olives, left whole
3 tablespoons capers in brine, drained and rinsed in cold water
1-2 tablespoons local honey
¼ cup chopped oregano, basil or flat leaf parsley
Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper
1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar

Prepare pasta according to package directions.

While the pasta is cooking, put a large flat bottom pan or skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil, garlic, anchovies, and hot pepper flakes. Using a wooden spoon, stir the mixture constantly to prevent burning for 2 minutes. The anchovies will completely disintegrate into the oil. (Do not omit the anchovies from this recipe!)

Add the crushed tomatoes, olives, and capers. Bring sauce to a gentle simmer and cook for 5 minutes. Taste the sauce and add honey if needed for sweetness. Season with salt and pepper.

When the pasta is done cooking, drain it well and add it to the sauce in the pan. Top with the herbs and gently stir to combine the pasta and sauce.

Drizzle the Balsamic vinegar over the pasta and serve immediately.

Makes 2 very generous servings.

Victoria Wesseler

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