



. Spring Pasta .

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A story about quick one bowl lunch or supper made with the greens of the season

Making a good pasta with fresh ingredients doesn't have to take forever . in fact pasta in Italy . especially at lunch time, and during the work week . is typically "real fast food"

What I mean by that is that most pastas focus around a seasonal vegetable, often simply "dressed" with a fresh grating of Parmesan or Pecorino cheese.

It is interesting to know that the tradition of combining pasta with aged cheese like Parmesan dates back centuries (think XIV and possibly even the XIII centuries !)

This morning I will cook along with you, making a simply delicious pasta dish, that you can put on the table in about 20 minutes. If you're up for it, we'll also make a lovely salad too

The menu, you might ask? Well it's all based on the beautiful greens of the spring season, namely green peas and asparagus

. The Menu .

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Ribbon Tagliolini Pasta with Parmesan . Lemon and Green Peas

served with

Tray Baked Green Asparagus

Vegan and dairy-free options will be explained during our cook along

Tagliolini Pasta with Lemon . Parmesan & Fresh Green Peas

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Let me preface this recipe with a remark of importance . Peas are normally paired with a short pasta like penne, mezze rigatoni or orecchiette in Italy. This is because the short pasta shape "catches" and holds the peas together i the dish

Here, I have chosen a ribbon-like tagliolini pasta, even though it does mean I am breaking with tradition. Your peas will definitely fall in your plate when twisting the pasta around your fork, but that's part of the fun of it

Now on to our recipe

Ingredients for Tagliolini with Lemon and Green Peas . for 2 persons as main course

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200 grams tagliolini egg pasta
or
200 grams angel hair or capellini pasta
250 grams fresh peas . shelled .
or
250 grams frozen peas
2 organic lemons
75-100 ml extra virgin olive oil
1250 ml water
75 grams Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
1 bunch of fresh greens of your choice like turnip greens . purslane .
or arugula
sea salt
1 teaspoon black pepper . preferably whole pepper corns

Step 1 . Gather your ingredients and your equipment

For the pasta you will need :

1 cheese grater or Microplane . 1 citrus zester or paring knife . 1 small sauce pan . fine-meshed seive
1 medium sized pasta pan . 1 colander . 3 small mixing bowls . 1 whisk or a fork . 1 clean tea towel
1 large serving bowl . Serving spoons . Plates

For the asparagus you will need:

1 oven platter or a casserole dish with low edges . 1 pair of tongs . parchment paper . oven gloves

Step 2 . Preparing the kitchen equipment

For the pasta . Fill a large pan with 1500 ml water and put it on low heat on the stove

For the salad . Preheat the oven to 190 degrees Celsius, with convection fan on

Step 3 . Preparing the ingredients for the pasta

Scrub the lemons with a brush under cold running water. Grate the peel of the lemons with a zester catching the thin lemon curls into a small bowl. (You won't need all the lemon zest, but you can save it to make lemon salt . more about that later). If you don't have a citrus zester, use the fine side of a cheese grater or a microplane. Otherwise, use a paring knife to cut away the bright yellow skin of the lemon.

Make sure you only grate the outer skin of the lemon as the white pith underneath the skin is very bitter!

If at all possible, always choose organic (everything :-)) but definitely organic lemons when working with their zest.

Cut the lemons in half and squeeze the lemon juice in a small mixing bowl

Grate the Parmesan cheese on the fine side of a cheese grater or Microplane and set aside in a small mixing bowl.

Shell your peas, if you are using fresh — Otherwise, measure your frozen peas and bring them towards room temperature

Note: *If you are using fresh peas, save the shells! You can either use them to flavor your pasta water today, or make a quick broth for a risotto later on in the week*

Wash and dry the greens of your choice, whether arugula, turnip greens, winter purslane or spinach. Shake dry in a colander, then wrap it in a clean tea towel

Make a lemon-olive oil dressing by adding a pinch of sea salt flakes in a bowl with half the lemon juice. Whisk in 100 ml extra virgin olive oil. Keep stirring and mixing until the two ingredients are incorporated. Taste it to see if it needs some salt. It should be on the tart side!

Crush black peppercorns with a pestle and mortar, if you don't have a pepper grinder

Step 4 . Preparing the ingredients for the roasted asparagus

Wash the asparagus spears. Cut off or break the tough root ends. With a vegetable peeler, peel half the asparagus spears from the bottom towards the top end of the asparagus. Cover an oven platter with parchment paper. Arrange the asparagus in one layer on the platter and set aside.

Wash and dry the mint leaves carefully. Then pick the leaves from the stems.

Smash the pistachios into a coarse crumb with a pestle and mortar, with a bottom of a pan or with a chef's knife.

Step 5 . Preparing the vegetables for the pasta and the asparagus salad

Sprinkle the asparagus with sea salt, then roast them 8-10 minutes or until "al dente" and beginning to char along the edges. Remove the asparagus from the oven and drizzle them with 50 ml extra virgin olive oil.

Once cool enough to handle, arrange the asparagus on a serving platter. Sprinkle them with crushed pistachios and dress them with the fresh mint leaves

Step 6 . Making the pasta

First things first . . . Set your table ! Once your pasta is done, you will want to serve it immediately!

In Italy in fact, whoever is cooking the pasta will let everyone in the household know, by saying “butto la pasta” meaning “I’m throwing in the pasta now”. In other words, get ready to come to the table !

Now to the pasta! Bring the pasta water to a rolling boil. Add 2 tablespoons of sea salt (don't worry you won't be consuming all this salt, it just flavors the pasta)

Once the pasta water is boiling, add the green peas, followed by the pasta. Cook both al dente in about 3-4 minutes (check the timing on your package. If you are using dried pasta without egg, it might take longer)

Drain the pasta in a colander, saving a 1/4 cup of the pasta cooking water — this is the magic ingredient to making a smooth sauce.

Return the pasta to the dry, empty pan (which will still have retained some heat from the cooking process). Toss the pasta and peas with the lemon and olive oil dressing on the stove at a very low heat. Add a few spoons of pasta water, if it is looking a bit dry. Add sea salt (if needed).

Place your raw greens in the bottom of your serving bowl. Arrange your pasta on top of them, then add the grated Parmesan and toss.

Garnish the pasta with lemon zest and freshly ground black pepper —

Now enjoy your pasta with the grilled asparagus !

Notes : Do you want to prepare this pasta dairy free — replace the Parmesan with toasted breadcrumbs