



IMPROVISED NOT-TOO-SAUCY SUMMER PASTA

- 8 ounces whole-grain pasta (pappardelle, penne, cavatappi, etc.)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced (more if you like!)
- 2-3 tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ½-1 teaspoon Calabrian chile paste or harissa (optional)
- 6-8 cups baby spinach
- ¼ cup pesto, homemade or jarred (optional)
- 1 ounce feta, goat or blue cheese
- 1 ounce grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add pasta and cook according to package directions until al dente.

While the pasta cooks, heat oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook 30-60 seconds or just until it's starting to turn golden. Carefully add the tomatoes (they'll sizzle), a generous pinch of salt and chile paste, if you like a little heat. Cook 5 minutes or until the tomatoes are pretty well broken down. Depending on the variety and ripeness of the tomatoes, this may take more or less time, so focus on what's happening in the pan rather than watching the clock. If the pan starts to look dry, ladle in a few tablespoons of pasta water, scraping up any browned bits (which add lots of flavor). Again, depending on the heat the pan, the variety of tomatoes, etc., you may need to do this several times. When the tomatoes have pretty well broken down, start adding the spinach a big handful at a time, adding more as the previous addition wilts down. This will look like a lot of spinach at first, but, ya know, it cooks down to very little. Stir in the pesto, if using.

By now, the pasta should be ready. Using tongs or a sieve, fish it out of the pot and drop it into the pan with the sauce, tossing to coat. If it looks dry, just add another few tablespoons of pasta water.

Divide the pasta evenly among 3-4 shallow bowls. Top evenly with cheeses.

Serves 3-4.

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