

Spaghetti alla Puttanesca

This is absolutely one of my favorite pastas dishes. The name may be a bit naughty, but the flavor is savory and a bit addicting. I make a large batch of the sauce and serve it over whole roasted fish, white beans, veggies, and pizza

Created in Naples as a sultry, quick and fragrant dish to lure in customers, the hard-working ladies in the brothels of the Spanish Quarter, needed a satisfying dish that would cook quickly. A legend was born in a sauté pan and the rest is history.

Loaded with umami (savory flavors) the key to the sauce is the generous use of anchovies. (Don't even think of leaving out the anchovies to make this sauce.) The anchovies melt in hot extra virgin olive oil leaving behind a nutty and very heady flavor. Lots of fresh parsley rounds out the sauce and liberal amount of cheese make this an addicting and quick dish.

When I owned my restaurants, we made this dish for the staff, at least once a week (without the cheese!) and everyone looked forward to closing when we could sit down to platters groaning with this delicious and potent dish.

Have all of your ingredients ready as the sauce cooks quickly and you don't want to burn anything.

Extra virgin olive oil

8 cloves of garlic, sliced thinly

6 anchovy filets, crushed with a knife

1 teaspoon crushed red chili flakes

Freshly cracked black pepper

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 1/2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes or canned (for a modern-seasonal version, use heirloom tomatoes)

3 tablespoons capers

¼ cup chopped kalamata olives

¼ cup chopped flat leaf parsley

¼ cup grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Sea salt

1. Heat a large sauté pan, coated with evo0, over medium heat.
2. Add anchovies, garlic, crushed red chilies and pepper. Stir constantly until anchovies start to break down and melt. Add tomato paste and stir to combine until paste darkens slightly.
3. Add tomatoes, capers and olives. Stir to combine and continue cooking for a few minutes until the sauce comes together and thickens.
4. Add cooked pasta directly to the sauce and toss until pasta absorbs some of the sauce, or, pour sauce over veggies or pizza crust. Top with parsley and cheese if using.