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KITCHEN KNEADS

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Easy, Fresh Tomato Pasta

Serves 2-3

This pasta is an easy and delicious solution for the common weeknight question, "What's for dinner?" Slice and dice the garlic and tomatoes, and prepare the sauce while pasta boils. It's all ready by the time the pasta's "al dente" point is reached. The two secrets to restaurant-quality results are: (1) Generously salt the pasta water (it should be as salty as ocean water), and (2) When stirring the cooked pasta into the sauce, add a little of the pasta cooking water, and a pat of butter for a super-silky finish.

Ingredients:

1/2 lb linguine, cooked according to package instructions
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
3 tablespoons butter, divided
6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
Kosher salt, to taste
Fresh ground pepper
2 lbs. ripe Roma tomatoes, diced
Shaved parmesan, for garnishing
Fresh basil, for garnishing

Directions:

1. Sauté the sliced garlic in 2 tablespoons of olive oil and 2 tablespoons of butter in a large sauté pan over medium heat for about 30 seconds. (Do not allow the garlic to brown.)
2. When the garlic turns fragrant, add the Roma tomatoes.
3. Simmer the tomatoes and garlic until any released liquid reduces and the sauce concentrates and thickens slightly (about 15 minutes).
4. Meanwhile, in a large pasta pot, boil the pasta until cooked to the just tender, al dente stage. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water.
5. Add the cooked pasta directly to the sauce using tongs to transfer from the boiling water to the sauce pan. Add up to 1 cup of reserved pasta water, as needed, so that the sauce easily coats the pasta. For a silky, "restaurant-style" texture, stir in the final tablespoon of butter. Mix all together with tongs until nicely combined.
6. Serve the pasta with generous shavings of Parmesan cheese and a garnish of fresh basil.