

Orecchiette with Asparagus, Mushrooms & Peas

From the blog For Love of the Table

1 T. olive oil, divided
1 oz. minced pancetta
4 oz. mushrooms, sliced 1/4-inch thick
2 T. butter, divided
2 to 3 spring onions or scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced (about 1/3 to 1/2 c.—use equal quantity of white and green portion)
1/2 T. chopped fresh thyme
1/2 c. peas
2 oz. (trimmed weight) asparagus, cut on a short diagonal 1/3- to 1/2-inch thick (to make 1/2 cup)
1/2 c. chicken stock or water
1/2 lb. orecchiette
1/4 c. (3/4 oz.) finely grated Parmesan

Render the pancetta in 1/2 T. of the olive oil in a wide sauté pan (large enough to hold the vegetables in a snug single layer and also accommodate the cooked pasta) set over medium low heat. When the pancetta is crisp (after about five minutes), remove to a plate. Add the remaining olive oil to the pan and increase the heat to medium high. Add the mushrooms and sauté until browned and tender (about five minutes). Season with salt & pepper and reduce the heat to medium.

Add a half tablespoon of the butter to the pan. Add the spring onions, along with a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally until wilted and tender—about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the thyme, peas, asparagus and the cooked pancetta, stirring to coat the vegetables in the onions and fat. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Add the stock and bring to a gentle simmer. Cover the pan, leaving the lid slightly ajar and continue to simmer gently—checking occasionally to make sure the liquid hasn't evaporated—until the vegetables are just tender...about 6 to 8 minutes. Set aside until the pasta is ready.

About the time you add the stock to the vegetables, drop the pasta in a large pot of boiling well-salted water. Cook until the noodles are al dente. Drain the pasta, saving a half cup or so of the pasta cooking liquid. Add the pasta to the vegetables and toss to combine. Cut the remaining butter into 3 or 4 pieces and add. Toss and stir the pasta until the butter has emulsified into the sauce and the noodles and vegetables are coated in a light, buttery film of sauce. If the pasta seems dry, add enough pasta water to obtain a fluid sauce. You may add some of the cheese to the pasta, tossing/stirring to combine—or save it all to pass at the table.

Pasta serves 2 to 3. Recipe is easily doubled—simply choose a pan wide enough to accommodate the vegetables and pasta as described above.

<http://www.forloveofthetable.com/2018/04/early-spring-pasta-with-asparagus-peas.html>

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