Spaghetti alla Puttanesca

History

There are almost as many explanations for the origins of spaghetti alla puttanesca as there are ways to make it. ostensibly this dish originated in the 19th century and was prepared by prostitutes, i.e., puttanesca, to lure customers with its powerful aroma. Or, they prepared this dish as a simple meal between clients. Whatever the origin, no better simple pasta sauce has been presented.

Puttanesca can be made entirely with dry ingredients from the pantry except optional fresh herb garnish. The base is a garlicky tomato sauce using canned tomatoes. The sauce is brought to a complex salty harmony by the addition of anchovies, capers, olives, red pepper flakes and traditional Parmesan rind. A fresh herb garnish raises the sauce to another level. Spaghetti alla puttanesca is perfect for any working person.

Ingredients

- 2 Tbs olive oil + drizzle to serve
- 3 or more garlic cloves diced
- 2 or more anchovy fillets oil packed, to taste
- Crushed red pepper flakes to taste, start with ¼ tsp
- 400g can or jar of crushed, peeled tomatoes
- Ground black pepper & salt to taste
- 1 tsp dry Herbs de Provence
- ½ cup imported black olives, e.g., Kalamata or Niçoise, pits in (flavor)
- 2 Tbs capers
- <optional> small thumb-sized leftover rind of Parmesan cheese
- 300g spaghetti (traditional dry) or other pasta
- Chopped fresh parsley or other herbs as garnish
- Grated Parmesan cheese to top

Equipment

- 1 large pot to cook the spaghetti
- 1 medium pot for the sauce

Instructions

1. In a small pot over medium-low heat, warm 2 tablespoons olive oil then add garlic, anchovies and
2. crushed peppers. Cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is soft and fragrant and the anchovies are ‘melted’
3. Add crushed tomatoes to the pot and season to taste with salt, pepper & Herbs de Provence. Raise heat to

4. medium and cook. Stir occasionally, until tomatoes break and the sauce becomes thick, 10 minutes or less
5. Add olives and capers to the sauce and stir. A splash of red wine complements. Add the rind of Parmesan [you
6. can eat it]. The sauce can be prepared in advance and continue to simmer or reheated.
7. In parallel, in a large pot, bring to a boil salted water
8. Add pasta to the boiling water stirring occasionally until the pasta is just al dente
9. Once pasta has cooked, quickly transfer the pasta to the pot of sauce using tongs without completely draining the
10. pasta. Extra pasta water will thicken the sauce. Toss and serve into generous bowls
11. Add a generous drizzle of olive oil. Top with chopped fresh herbs and grated Parmesan cheese.

Serving

Accompany with a glass of rich red Italian wine

Notes, Tips, Variations

Variation

There are many variations of `puttanesca` but most ingredients should be from the cupboard in keeping with tradition.

Tip

Chopped fresh herbs can be sprinkled on the bowl of `puttanesca` for serving.

Notes

A softer cheese like Gryuère is too 'melty' to sprinkle on the dish. Stick with a dryer finely grated cheese like parmaseano_regiano.

See Also

- Spaghetti alla puttanesca
- Cuts of Beef
- Whiskey

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