

GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET

Pasta alla Norma

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 large eggplant (about 1 ½ pounds), chopped into ¾" inch pieces
1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
4 garlic cloves, minced
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh parsley, plus more for garnish
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh basil, plus more for garnish
28 ounce can high quality crushed tomatoes, such as San Marzano
½ teaspoon dried oregano
Freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon sugar, optional
12 ounces large tubular pasta (rigatoni or we used calamarata)
¼ cup grated ricotta salata*, to serve
Grated Pecorino Romano cheese, to serve

Instructions:

In a large skillet, heat 3 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat. Add the eggplant and ½ teaspoon kosher salt. Sauté for 7 to 10 minutes until browned and tender, stirring often so the eggplant doesn't stick (the pan will be pretty dry, but this is as expected). Remove the eggplant to a bowl.

Reduce the heat to low and add 1 tablespoon olive oil, along with the garlic, parsley and basil and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until fragrant. Add the tomatoes, oregano, ½ teaspoon kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Bring to a simmer and simmer 15 minutes, until the flavors meld. Stir in ¼ teaspoon the sugar. Add in the eggplant just before serving.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Boil the pasta to al dente and drain. Add the pasta back to the pot with a drizzle of olive oil. Pour the sauce with eggplant over the pasta and gently toss to combine. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve topped with grated ricotta salata cheese, grated Pecorino Romano, and chopped fresh parsley and basil.

Cook's Note:

Ricotta salata is a Sicilian aged ricotta cheese with a hard texture similar to Parmesan and a salty flavor like feta cheese. Don't use fresh ricotta, which is soft and creamy instead of salty and aged. If you can't find either, feta cheese has a similar flavor: or you can omit and simply use Pecorino Romano cheese.

Credit: acouplecooks.com