



PastaMania #6. "Fusilli alla Carbonara con Carciofi" (Fusilli with eggs, guanciale and artichokes)

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"Fusilli alla Carbonara con Carciofi" is a variation on the better known "carbonara", a very popular traditional Roman pasta dish commonly made with eggs and bacon. Yet adding artichokes (carciofi) and replacing bacon with "guanciale" (or pork cheeks) makes this dish even more Roman. It has now become one of the most widespread national and international Italian dishes.

INGREDIENTS

Serves 4

- First you'll need 12 oz De Cecco fusilli



- 2 artichokes
- 1 lemon
- 4 tablespoons De Cecco extra virgin olive oil
- 3.5 oz guanciale
- 2 eggs
- 8 oz pecorino romano
- 2 teaspoons of freshly ground black pepper

PREPARATION

- Cut the guanciale in little cubes and pour into a large saucepan with a dash of extra virgin olive oil. Cook over a high flame until crisp. Mind that 'guanciale' is not the same as bacon. Guanciale is an Italian cured meat prepared from pork jowl or cheeks, whereas bacon is made from pork belly.
- Add the artichoke hearts to saucepan.
- Before doing so, remove the tough leaves and stems, and soak the artichoke hearts in water with lemon.
- Cook over a high flame for a few minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Meanwhile, beat eggs in a bowl with pecorino.
- When the water comes to a boil, add coarse salt and toss in the fusilli, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick.
- Check to make sure the fusilli you are using is made in Italy with durum wheat semolina. The best Italian pasta stays firm after cooking and has a rough porous texture that the sauce sticks to better.
- Cook the fusilli for about 12 minutes.
- If you cook it longer, Italians won't like it!
- Pasta must be "al dente"—or firm to the bite.
- When it's ready, don't strain the fusilli—just remove it from the pot using a large slotted spoon and add it to the saucepan. The starch in the water will help the sauce stick to the pasta.
- Cook over a high flame for a minute or so, stirring.
- Take off burner, add eggs, and whisk quickly until eggs thicken a little.
- Add pecorino romano and pepper and stir again before serving
- Fusilli alla carbonara con carciofi should be paired with a dry red wine with good acidity, essential for cutting through the spicy pork flavor of the Roman sauce. You may try a smooth Montepulciano, from nearby Abruzzo,
- or a Chianti from Tuscany if you are in the mood for a little more spice.

... AND REMEMBER: To make an excellent pasta dish, use excellent pasta!

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