



PastaMania #4. "Spaghetti alla Puttanesca"

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This celebrated Southern dish is comparatively young for Italian standards; its popularity spiked in the 1960s. It gets its name from the word "puttana", meaning (pardon our Italian) "whore." Nobody really knows where this name comes from, but some argue that it's a reference to the sauce's hot, spicy flavor. It's also a quick, cheap meal--not politically correct, but definitely tantalizing.

INGREDIENTS

- Serves 4
- First you'll need 24 oz De Cecco spaghetti



- 8 oz diced tomatoes
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 pound of black olives
- 6 anchovy filets
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 tablespoon of capers
- A sprig of parsley
- De Cecco extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

- Pour extra virgin olive oil into a deep pan and add a clove of garlic, stirring to give flavor to the oil.
- Meanwhile, cut the tomatoes, discard the center, and then finely dice the remaining tomatoes.
- Add the anchovy filets to the pan and stir thoroughly.
- Add 1/3 pound of black olives and continue stirring. Most Italians would use whole olives; you may use pitted olives if you prefer—but buy them fresh and untreated, and pit them yourself.
- Coarsely chop some anchovies so that they release flavor more rapidly.
- Add capers.
- Add pepper and salt to taste—but don't overdo it: capers and anchovies are already pretty salty.
- Remember to remove garlic as soon as it turns golden—don't let it burn
- Add diced tomatoes and let the sauce cook for about 15 minutes
- Now comes the pasta! Check to make sure the spaghetti 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.
- When the water comes to a boil, add coarse salt and toss in the pasta, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick.
- Cook spaghetti for 12 minutes. If you cook it longer, Italians won't like it! Pasta must be "al dente"—or firm to the bite.
- When ready, strain the spaghetti with a colander—but do not rinse. Rinsing would cool the pasta and prevent it from absorbing the sauce
- Pour the spaghetti into the saucepan and mix thoroughly with the sauce.
- You may sprinkle with fresh chopped parsley if you wish.
- Spaghetti alla puttanesca should be paired with a young, well-bodied red wine. A good choice would be Ischia Rosso, from the famous island just in front of Naples. But you may stick to more popular wines from Sicily such as Nero d'Avola or Primitivo.

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

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