Cheesy Baked Pasta & Spinach

with Arugula & Clementine Salad

The key to a great "pasta al forno," also known as a pasta bake, is to build layers of flavor. Ours starts with a base of crushed tomatoes. simmered with aromatics to create a delicious sauce, and incorporates tender leaves of garlicky spinach chopped with refreshing basil. After tossing perfectly cooked tubes of pasta in the sauce, we're layering it all into a baking dish with Fontina and Parmesan, ensuring cheesy goodness in every bite. Clementine segments-small in size, big on citrus flavor-provide a seasonal winter touch to our arugula salad.



Fabre Fitou Red, 2015 Helen Foggo Shiraz, 2015





Ingredients

- 10 Ounces Elicoidali Pasta
- 1 28-Ounce Can Whole Peeled Tomatoes
- 6 Ounces Fontina Cheese
- 4 Cloves Garlic
- 4 Ounces Arugula
- 2 Clementines
- 1 Yellow Onion
- 34 Pound Spinach
- 1 Bunch Basil

Knick Knacks

- 2 Tablespoons Red Wine Vinegar
- 1 Shallot
- 1/3 Cup Grated Parmesan Cheese

Makes: 4 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes | Cook Time: 35-45 minutes





Prepare the ingredients:

Preheat the oven to 475°F. Wash and dry the fresh produce. Heat a large pot of salted water to boiling on high. Pick the basil leaves off the stems; discard the stems. Peel the garlic; mince 3 cloves. Mince the remaining clove; smash with the side of your knife until it resembles a paste (or use a zester). Peel and small dice the onion. Place the tomatoes in a bowl; gently break apart with your hands. Grate the Fontina cheese (discarding any rind). Peel the shallot and mince to get 2 tablespoons (you may have extra); place in a bowl with the vinegar. Peel the clementines; separate the segments.

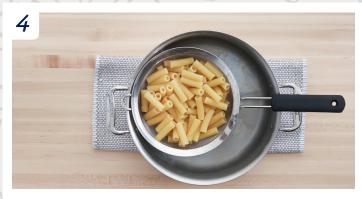


Make the sauce:

In the same pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Add the onion and chopped garlic; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 3 minutes, or until slightly softened and fragrant. Add the tomatoes; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, 6 to 7 minutes, or until slightly thickened. Remove from heat; season with salt and pepper to taste.



In a large pan (nonstick, if you have one), heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil on medium-high until hot. Working in batches, add the spinach; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, 2 to 4 minutes per batch, or until wilted. Transfer to a strainer; hold or rest over a bowl. Using a spoon, press down on the cooked spinach to release as much liquid as possible; discard the liquid. Transfer the cooked spinach to a cutting board with half the basil; finely chop. Transfer to a bowl; add the garlic paste and stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Wipe out the pan.



Cook the pasta:

While the sauce cooks, add the pasta to the pot of boiling water and cook 6 to 8 minutes, or until just shy of al dente (still slightly firm to the bite). Turn off the heat. Drain thoroughly and return to the pot.



Assemble & bake the pasta:

Add the sauce and chopped spinach and basil to the pot of cooked pasta; drizzle with olive oil and stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer half the pasta mixture to a baking dish. Evenly top with half the Fontina cheese. Repeat with the remaining pasta mixture and Fontina cheese. Evenly top with half the Parmesan cheese; season with salt and pepper. Bake 15 to 17 minutes, or until the cheese is lightly browned. Remove from the oven and let stand for 2 minutes before serving.



Make the salad & serve your dish:

While the pasta bakes, to make the vinaigrette, slowly whisk 2 tablespoons of olive oil into the shallot-vinegar mixture until well combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving, in a large bowl, combine the arugula and clementines; season with salt and pepper. Add enough of the vinaigrette to coat (you may have extra). Toss to mix; season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish the baked pasta with the remaining Parmesan **cheese** and **remaining basil** (tearing before adding). Enjoy!