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## Pasta with Cauliflower, Bacon, and Bread Crumbs

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 16: Dinner in Italy

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Pasta, nutty cauliflower, meaty bacon and crispy bread crumbs are a wonderful combination when the flavors and textures are all balanced. We brown our cauliflower in a skillet to develop its flavors and drive off some of the water to keep it from becoming mushy. By employing a risotto method and cooking our pasta in a small amount of water, we skip the draining step and make a creamy sauce for this dish as the pasta cooks. Finally, we top our pasta with bacon-flavored bread crumbs to add texture and another layer of flavor.

### Serves 4 to 6

Farfalle, orecchiette, or gemelli can be substituted for the campanelle. If the pasta seems too dry, stir in up to 1/4 cup of hot water.

### INGREDIENTS

- 3** slices bacon, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1/2** cup panko bread crumbs
- Salt and pepper
- 2** tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1** large head cauliflower (3 pounds), cored and cut into 1-inch florets
- 1** onion, chopped fine
- 1/2** teaspoon minced fresh thyme
- 1** pound campanelle
- 5 1/2** cups chicken broth
- 1/2** cup dry white wine
- 3** tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 1** teaspoon lemon juice, plus lemon wedges for serving

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Cook bacon in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until crispy, 5 to 7 minutes. Add panko and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook, stirring frequently, until panko is well browned, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer panko mixture to bowl and wipe out skillet.
- 2.** Heat 5 teaspoons oil in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add cauliflower and 1 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until cauliflower is crisp-tender and browned in spots, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove pan from heat and cover to keep warm.
- 3.** Heat remaining 1 teaspoon oil in Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, thyme, and 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring frequently, until onion has softened, 4 to 7 minutes. Increase heat to high, add pasta, broth, and wine, and bring to simmer. Cook pasta, stirring frequently, until most of liquid is absorbed and pasta is al dente, 8 to 10 minutes.
- 4.** Remove pot from heat; stir in parsley, lemon juice, and cauliflower; and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve, passing panko mixture and lemon wedges separately.

