

Creamy Corn Pasta With Basil

By Melissa Clark

YIELD 3 to 4 servings

TIME 30 minutes

There's no cream in this wonderfully summery pasta dish, just a luscious sauce made from puréed fresh corn and sweet sautéed scallions, along with Parmesan for depth and red chile flakes for a contrasting bite. Be sure to add the lemon juice and fresh herbs at the end; the rich pasta really benefits from their bright, fresh flavors. And while this is best made at the height of corn season, it's still quite good even with out-of-season supermarket ears, or with frozen corn.

INGREDIENTS

Fine sea salt

12 ounces dry orecchiette or farfalle

1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for drizzling

1 bunch scallions (about 8), trimmed and thinly sliced (keep the whites and greens separate)

2 large ears corn, shucked and kernels removed (2 cups kernels)

½ teaspoon ground black pepper, more for serving

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, more to taste

½ cup torn basil or mint, more for garnish

¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes, or to taste

Fresh lemon juice, as needed

PREPARATION

Step 1

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until 1 minute shy of al dente, according to the package directions. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup of pasta water.

Step 2

Meanwhile, heat oil in large sauté pan over medium heat; add scallion whites and a pinch of salt and cook until soft, 3 minutes. Add 1/4 cup water and all but 1/4 cup corn; simmer until corn is heated through and almost tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper, transfer to a blender, and purée mixture until smooth, adding a little extra water if needed to get a thick but pourable texture.

Step 3

Heat the same skillet over high heat. Add butter and let melt. Add reserved 1/4 cup corn and cook until tender, 1 to 2 minutes. (It's O.K. if the butter browns; that deepens the flavor.) Add the corn purée and cook for 30 seconds to heat and combine the flavors.

Step 4

Reduce heat to medium. Add pasta and half the reserved pasta cooking water, tossing to coat. Cook for 1 minute, then add a little more of the pasta cooking water if the mixture seems too thick. Stir in 1/4 cup of the scallion greens, the Parmesan, the herbs, the red pepper flakes, 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Sprinkle with fresh lemon juice to taste. Transfer to warm pasta bowls and garnish with more scallions, herbs, a drizzle of olive oil and black pepper.

PRIVATE NOTES

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