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MENU IDEAS

Dinner Tonight: Spaghetti Carbonara + Chard Salad

By Joy Belamarich • November 26, 2013 • 1 Comment

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Spaghetti carbonara is one of those dishes that you talk about the entire time you're eating it. It's impossible *not* to comment on how tasty it is -- hot, salty, a little creamy, a tad smoky, a handful of simple ingredients tossed together result in such pasta perfection that it's a little bit creepy. It makes you wonder the whole time you're twirling your pasta why you don't make it every night, for every dinner, forever.

Well, you shouldn't. But you should make it every week. You should have a "Carbonara Night", and your quality of life will improve, I promise. Pair it with a simple, bright chard salad, and you have yourself dinner for tonight.

Click through on the recipe photos or titles to see (and save and print) the full recipes, but we've also written you a handy grocery list and game plan below.

Spaghetti Carbonara



Chard Salad with Garlic Breadcrumbs and Parmesan



The Grocery List

Serves 4

1/4 pound guanciale or pancetta, cut into 1/3-inch cubes

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7 large egg yolks, plus 1 large egg
1 pound spaghetti
1/2 cup pecorino
1 bunch swiss chard

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3/4 cup grated Parmesan


We're assuming you already have salt, black pepper, olive oil, and a clove of garlic. If not, be sure to pick those up, too!


The Plan


1. Get your pasta water rolling on the stove.
2. Put guanciale in a large skillet and place over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until fat renders but guanciale is not browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer the guanciale to your serving bowl; reserve the drippings.
3. Add egg yolks and egg to your serving bowl; whisk to blend.
4. Wash and dry the chard and remove the stems from the leaves. Set aside. Zest and juice the lemon.
6. Combine the lemon juice (you should have about 2 1/2 tablespoons), 1 teaspoon of the lemon zest and a few generous pinches of salt in a small bowl. Slowly whisk in 1/4 cup of the olive oil. Set aside.
7. Warm the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil in a small, heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the breadcrumbs and cook, stirring frequently, until they are crisp and golden brown (about 5 minutes). Be careful not to burn them! Stir in the garlic and let them toast for another minute, then remove from the heat.
8. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain, reserving around a 1/2 cup pasta cooking liquid.
9. Separate the chard leaves from their stems. Chop the stems, and shred the leaves. Put them all into a large bowl and toss gently with the Parmesan and about 2/3 of the lemon dressing. Taste and add more dressing if you like. Toss in the toasted breadcrumbs.
10. To egg mixture, immediately add spaghetti, 2 tablespoons pasta cooking liquid, and 1 teaspoon guanciale drippings; toss to coat. Working in 3 batches, gradually add Pecorino, stirring and tossing to melt between batches. Add lots of black pepper (around 2 teaspoons). Toss until the sauce thickens, adding more pasta water by tablespoonfuls if needed. Season to taste with salt and black pepper.
11. Divide among bowls (or don't). Garnish with Pecorino. Serve immediately.

OH, PASTA!

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Tags: menu ideas, dinner tonight, pasta, winter meals, carbonara, chard



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Joy Belamarich

I cook with music and salt my pasta water.

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