

Easy Pasta alla Norma | By Chef Amanda DeLaura

Okay okay okay. So I've made it to Italy, and I've begun my time studying under the local chefs of Firenze! Pasta alla Norma is traditionally from Sicily, but just the fact that it uses parsley and pecorino Romano makes me still feel like I'm in Firenze while eating it. You can find pecorino on every street you visit here in Firenze, whether it is on the street markets or in the finer restaurants. It's more delicate and palatable than most Parmesans, and makes for the perfect cheese to pair with a meatless pasta.

While I admit I should be sharing a recipe with y'all from the region of Toscana, I *had* to first share one of the most simple (and delicious) pasta dishes that I know of. Don't worry, there will be many recipes inspired by the native dishes of Firenze to come, but till then, please give this pasta a chance and buon appetito (*you won't regret it*) !!

Ciao and arrivederci,
Chef Amanda DeLaura

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs eggplant, sliced into 1/2" rounds

3 cloves Garlic, minced

1 tsp chili flakes

1 1/2 lbs fresh tomatoes, chopped

1 tsp dried oregano

1 lb Jovial's Brown Rice Fettuccine

1/2 cup fresh basil, chiffonade

1/4 cup fresh basil, minced

1/2 cup pecorino Romano, grated

Directions:

1. After slicing eggplant, place each piece on a layer of paper towels. Season with salt and let sit for 5 minutes. Once the eggplants are sweating, soak up the excess liquid with a paper

towel.

2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to boil and add a generous pinch of salt. Separately heat about 1/4 cup olive oil in a large skillet. Cook eggplant on both sides, till very soft and browned, working in batches and adding olive oil as necessary. Remove cooked eggplant and place in a medium sized bowl, allowing excess olive oil to sit at the bottom of the bowl (the more olive oil the eggplants absorb, the better).
3. Once you've cooked and removed all of the eggplant, add the garlic and chilis to the pan. Heat until just aromatic. Add the tomatoes and oregano and season with salt and pepper. Cook on medium to low heat, allowing the tomatoes to break down.
4. While the tomatoes are cooking, boil the pasta till al dente, about 9 to 11 minutes. Slice the eggplant into thin strips and add to tomato mixture. Drain the pasta and toss with the eggplant sauce. Plate each serving and top with basil, parsley and pecorino Romano.