



Spaghetti D'Abruzzo

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| Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) | ¼ cup |
| Button mushrooms | ½ pound |
| Garlic, minced | 1 teaspoon |
| Bay leaf | 1 each |
| Salt | 1 Tablespoon + 1 teaspoon divided |
| Black pepper, fresh ground | 1 teaspoon |
| Dry white wine | ¾ cup |
| Crushed tomato | 2 cups |
| Water | ½ cup |
| Red pepper, ¼" julienned | ¼ pound |
| Yellow pepper, ¼" julienned | ¼ pound |
| Spaghetti | 1 pound |
| Butter | 2 Tablespoons |
| Pecorino Romano | ¼ cup |

For the Ragu:

Using a food processor, pulse the mushrooms to mince them and set them aside. Be careful to not over process and turn the mushrooms into paste.

In a 4 quart pot, heat the EVOO over medium heat being careful not to smoke the oil. Once the oil is hot, add the mushrooms and the salt and saute (sweat) for 4-5 minutes. Next, add the garlic, bay leaves and fresh cracked pepper and saute for 2-3 minutes. Then, add the white wine and simmer for 10 minutes. After the wine has simmered, add the red sauce and water. Bring the sauce back to a simmer and cook for 35-40 minutes until it has thickened slightly. Now that the sauce has simmered, stir in the julienned red and yellow peppers and cook until the peppers are tender, but not falling apart--10-15 minutes. Taste the ragu and adjust the salt if needed. Use the ragu immediately or cool in the refrigerator for later use (It will be better the next day!).

Cooking spaghetti:

Bring 1 gallon of water to a boil and add 1 Tablespoon of salt. Once the water comes to a boil, add the spaghetti and cook it to just under al dente. Drain the pasta reserving 1 cup of the pasta water. If you are not using the pasta immediately, do not rinse it and place it into your refrigerator to cool. Once the pasta is cool, cover it tightly with plastic wrap.

To finish the dish:

Place a saute pan over medium heat and add the ragu, ¼ cup of pasta water and the butter. Cook the ragu for 2 minutes and add the pasta (if you cooled the pasta, you can add it cold and it will reheat in the ragu). Continue to cook until the pasta is cooked through and the sauce thickens and binds to the noodle. If necessary, adjust the sauce with pasta water to reach the proper consistency. Once the pasta is done, remove it from the heat. Check for salt and adjust if needed. Add the finished pasta to your favorite serving dish and garnish with pecorino. Enjoy!

Serves 3-4

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