



Pesto Trapanese

Recipe Courtesy of Lidia Bastianich

Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb (about 2-1/2 cups) cherry tomatoes, very ripe and sweet
12 large fresh basil leaves
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of whole almonds, lightly toasted
1 plump garlic clove, crushed and peeled
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Cayenne pepper or to taste (optional)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon coarse sea salt or kosher salt, or to taste, plus more for the pasta
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 lb spaghetti
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano

Preparation:

Rinse the cherry tomatoes and basil leaves and pat them dry.
Drop the tomatoes into the blender jar or food processor bowl followed by the garlic clove, almonds, basil leaves, pepperoncino (if using), and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt. Blend for a minute or more to a fine puree. Scrape down the bowl and blend again if any large bits or pieces have survived.
With the machine still running, pour in the olive oil in a steady stream, emulsifying the puree into a thick pesto. Taste and adjust seasoning. If you're going to dress the pasta within a couple of hours, leave the pesto at room temperature. Refrigerate if you'll use it for longer storage, up to 2 days, but let it return to room temperature before cooking the pasta.
To cook the spaghetti, heat 6 quarts of water with 1 tablespoon salt, to the boil in the large pot. Scrape all the pesto into a big warm bowl.
Cook the spaghetti al dente, lift it from the cooking pot, drain briefly, and drop onto the pesto. Toss quickly to coat the spaghetti, sprinkle the cheese all over, and toss again. Serve immediately in warm bowls.