



Macaroni from the Island of Ischia

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Introduction:

Tomatoes from the island of Ischia are born of a dry climate and raised in the salty air of island--the ideal ambience for tomatoes with incomparable flavor. Try this recipe with local, garden-ripened tomatoes at the peak of the season, when their flavor impact will be greatest. Dip them in boiling water for 10 to 12 seconds, then lift the skin off with a sharp knife. This dish is usually served at room temperature or a little warmer, not piping hot from the stove. Maccheroni, or macaroni, is a long, thin pasta that looks like spaghetti but has a hole in it. If you can't find maccheroni, by all means use spaghetti instead.

Preparation:

Combine 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and the garlic in a skillet over medium-low heat. Gently sweat the garlic until it is very soft, but do not let it brown. Add the anchovies and m them with a fork into the garlicky oil. Stir in the tomatoes, capers, and olives and cook about minutes. Taste and add salt if you wish. Now stir in the chili and oregano and simmer for a 10 minutes. Add a little water from time to time if the sauce starts to stick. Meanwhile, bring 6 quarts of lightly salted water to a rolling boil. In a separate small skillet, combine the bread crumbs with the remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Set over medium heat and toast the crumbs, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and crisp. Set aside. Cook the pasta until done to taste, then drain. Or cook until slightly underdone, drain, let it finish cooking in the simmering sauce. Mix the pasta and sauce together and stir in the cubes of mozzarella and some of the basil, along with a couple of tablespoons of crisp bread crumbs. Transfer to a serving dish and garnish the top with the rest of the bread crumbs and basil. Let rest for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Recipe Type:

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Ingredients:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil 1/4 cup capers, preferably salt-packed, rinsed and coarsely chopped Pinch of dried oregano 1/4 cup bread crumbs 2 plump garlic cloves, minced 1 pound maccheroni 6 anchovy fillets, coarsely chopped 1/3 cup of coarsely chopped black olives, pitted 3/4 cup diced mozzarella, preferably buffalo-milk 2 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped 1/2 cup torn basil leaves Pinch of crumbled dried red chili Sea salt (optional)

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