

ORECCHIETTE WITH ASPARAGUS AND PEAS

Orecchiette con Asparagi e Piselli

By Lidia Bastianich

Serves: 6

Ingredients

1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for the pasta water
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 large bunch medium-thick asparagus (about 1 pound), peeled, and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 pound orecchiette
One 10-ounce box, frozen peas, thawed (if using fresh peas, cook 3-4 minutes longer)
1 bunch scallions, white and green parts, chopped (about 1 cup)
¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
1 cup grated Grana Padano Cheese (I substituted Parmesan Reggiano)

*You can add sauteed shrimp or lobster meat. Diced smoked ham worked nicely too.

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil for the pasta. Add the olive oil to a large skillet over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the garlic, and let it sizzle a minute. Add the asparagus, and toss to coat it in the oil. Cook and toss until the asparagus just begins to soften, about 5 minutes. (Add a splash of pasta water if the garlic is in danger of burning.) Cover with a lid.

Uncover the asparagus, and at the same time add the orecchiette to the pasta water. Add the peas to the asparagus, and season with the salt. Toss to combine, and cook about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the scallions, stir, and add 1½ cups pasta water. Bring to a boil, and cook until reduced by about half, about 3 to 4 minutes.

When the pasta is al dente, remove with a spider directly to the sauce. Add the parsley, drizzle with some olive oil, and toss to coat the pasta in the sauce, adding a little pasta water if it seems dry. Remove the skillet from the heat, sprinkle with the grated cheese, toss, and serve.