

ORECCHIETTE WITH SAUSAGE RAGU

(Source: "Milk Street")

Servings: 4-6

1/4 cup	extra-virgin olive oil
4	medium garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 cup	dry white wine
1/4 tsp	saffron (optional)
14-1/2 oz can	(1-1/2 cups) tomato puree *
1 lb	sweet or hot Italian sausage, casings removed, broken into 1/2" or smaller pieces
Kosher salt	
1 lb	orecchiette pasta **
1 oz	(1/2 cup) pecorino Romano cheese, finely grated, plus more to serve
1/2 cup	roughly chopped basil, plus more to serve



1. In a 12" skillet over medium, combine oil and garlic. Cook, stirring, until garlic is golden brown, 4-6 minutes. Add the wine and saffron (if using), then cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced by about half, 6-8 minutes. Stir in the tomato puree, sausage and 1-1/2 tsp salt. Bring to simmer, cover and reduce to medium-low. Cook, stirring once or twice, until the pieces of sausage are no longer pink at the center, 5-7 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in a large pot, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Add 1 Tbsp salt and the pasta and cook, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Reserve about 1/2 cup of cooking water, then drain the pasta and return to the pot.
3. Transfer the sausage mixture to the pot with the pasta, then stir in the cheese and 2 Tbsp of reserved pasta water. If the sauce is too thick, stir in additional pasta water, 1 Tbsp at a time until desired consistency is reached. Taste and season with salt, then stir in basil. Serve sprinkled with additional basil and cheese.

Notes:

* Don't use or substitute canned tomato sauce instead of puree.

** Can also use medium pasta shells