



CUT THE PASTA INTO FETTUCCINE: If necessary, attach fettuccine blades (to cut 1/4-inch-wide strips) to pasta machine. Feed one end of driest pasta sheet (the first one you rolled out) into cutters, holding other end straight up, then catch strips from underneath machine before sheet goes completely through rollers and gently lay across floured baking sheets. (Alternatively, lightly flour strips and hang over backs of straight-backed chairs.) Repeat with remaining sheets of pasta. Let pasta dry for at least 5 minutes before cooking.

COOK'S NOTE

- The fettuccine can be dried until leathery but still pliable, about 30 minutes, then transferred to plastic bags and refrigerated for up to 12 hours.

Fettuccine Alfredo

SERVES 6 AS A FIRST COURSE, 4 AS A MAIN COURSE
ACTIVE TIME: 35 MINUTES ■ START TO FINISH: 40 MINUTES

- We can't claim this is the definitive version of the creamy classic, but it is unbeatable. We call for dried pasta to make it work for a quick meal, but don't let us stop you from making fresh fettuccine if so inclined—it was meant for this kind of sauce. ■

- 3/4 pound good dried egg fettuccine or Fresh Fettuccine (opposite page)
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) plus 1 tablespoon unsalted butter

- 1/2 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus additional for sprinkling
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Cook fettuccine in a 6- to 8-quart pot of boiling salted water (1 tablespoon salt per every 4 quarts water) until al dente. Reserve 1/4 cup cooking water and drain pasta.

Meanwhile, thinly slice 3 tablespoons butter; set aside.

When pasta is cooked, melt remaining 3/4 stick (6 tablespoons) butter in a 2- to 3-quart flameproof gratin dish (see Cook's Note) over low heat. Add pasta and toss to coat, lifting strands. Add cheese, reserved cooking water, cream, reserved butter, salt, and pepper and toss to combine well. Sprinkle with additional cheese and serve immediately.

COOK'S NOTES

- You can use a large deep skillet to sauce the pasta. Serve the pasta on plates and sprinkle with additional cheese.
- De Cecco's dried egg fettuccine, sold in coils in boxes, is an excellent brand.

Pasta Primavera

SERVES 10 AS A FIRST COURSE, 6 AS A MAIN COURSE
ACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR ■ START TO FINISH: 1 1/2 HOURS

- First introduced at the starry Le Cirque in New York City in the 1970s, pasta primavera rapidly became one of the most popular pasta dishes in America. Don't let the long list of ingredients faze you; once you've done the prep work, it's easy to throw together. One of the nice things about this version is that it calls for dried morels, frozen peas (more consistently sweet and tender than "fresh" peas), and asparagus (for better or worse, practically seasonless these days), so you don't have to wait until spring to make it. ■



- 1 ounce dried morel mushrooms
- 1½ cups warm water
- ½ pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- ¼ pound green beans, preferably *haricots verts*, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ¾ cup frozen baby peas, thawed
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- Rounded ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1½ pints grape tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1 pound spaghetti
- ½ stick (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- ⅔ cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 2 ounces)
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh basil
- ⅓ cup (1½ ounces) pine nuts, lightly toasted (see Tips, page 938)

OPTIONAL GARNISH: Parmigiano-Reggiano shavings

PREPARE THE VEGETABLES: Soak morels in warm water in a small bowl for 30 minutes.

Lift mushrooms out of water and squeeze excess liquid back into bowl. Pour soaking liquid through a sieve lined with a dampened paper towel into a small bowl; reserve. Rinse morels thoroughly to remove grit, then squeeze dry. Cut off and discard any tough stems. Halve small morels lengthwise and quarter large ones.

Add asparagus and beans to a 6- to 8-quart pot of boiling salted water (1 tablespoon salt per every 4 quarts water) and cook, uncovered, for 3 minutes. Add peas and cook until beans and asparagus are just tender, 1 to 2 minutes more. Immediately transfer vegetables with a large slotted spoon to a bowl of ice and cold water to stop the cooking; reserve pot of water for cooking pasta. Drain cooled vegetables.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a 10- to 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately low heat. Add 1 teaspoon garlic and rounded ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, just until garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute. Add drained vegetables and salt and pepper

to taste and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl; set skillet aside.

COOK THE TOMATOES: Cut half of tomatoes into quarters and halve remainder lengthwise, keeping quarters and halves separate. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in same skillet over moderately low heat. Add remaining 1 teaspoon garlic and remaining rounded ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, just until garlic is fragrant, about 1 minute. Add quartered tomatoes, with salt and pepper to taste, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes are softened, about 3 minutes. Add halved tomatoes, vinegar, and water and simmer, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thickened and halved tomatoes are softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat and keep warm, covered.

COOK THE SPAGHETTINI: Return pot of water to a boil and cook spaghetti until al dente; drain in a colander.

Immediately add butter, cream, zest, and morels to (empty) pasta pot, bring to a simmer, and simmer gently, uncovered, for 2 minutes. Stir in cheese, then add pasta, tossing to coat and adding as much of reserved morel soaking liquid as necessary (½ to ⅔ cup) to keep pasta well coated. Add green vegetables, parsley, basil, pine nuts, and salt and pepper to taste and toss gently to combine.

Serve pasta topped with tomatoes and, if desired, Parmigiano-Reggiano shavings.



Sicilian Pasta with Eggplant

Pasta alla Norma

SERVES 8 AS A FIRST COURSE, 4 TO 6 AS A MAIN COURSE
ACTIVE TIME: 20 MINUTES ■ START TO FINISH: 45 MINUTES

■ *Pasta alla norma*, one of Sicily's most beloved dishes, is widely believed to have been named after the heroine of the opera of the same name by Vincenzo Bellini, a native Sicilian. But some insist that it derives from the Italian word *normale*, a reference to the fact that the dish has long been a staple of the islanders' daily diet. Whoever or whatever *norma* may have been, the perfectly calibrated mix of eggplant, ricotta salata, tomatoes, and pasta provides a great introduction to Sicily's vibrant cuisine. ■