

Simple food

Orecchiette with salsa verde



This recipe is a whisper of springtime green in the middle of a wintry June. We still have herbs aplenty in the garden at our place, even some basil that is remaining sweet, though it should have gone to seed long ago. The herbs called to me to make something bright and fresh and satisfying. Salsa verde, the result, is full of basil, mint and parsley, and spiked with capers, pickled baby cucumbers, lemon and olive oil. It is marvellous when served with orecchiette, the perfect pasta for it. The little indentations in the pasta catch the salsa verde and provide bursts of deliciousness with every mouthful. With a few pieces of creamy soft bocconcini and some fresh baby herbs on top, you will be transported to early September and the beginning of spring.

Serves 4

- 2 cups basil leaves
- 1 cup flat leaf parsley
- 1/2 cup mint leaves
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tablespoon capers
- 2 tablespoons cornichons, or other small gherkins
- zest and juice of 1/2 a lemon
- 150 ml extra virgin olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 500 g orecchiette
- 125 g bocconcini, torn into small pieces
- a handful of tiny basil, parsley, and mint leaves, for garnish

In a food processor combine the parsley, mint, garlic, capers, cornichons, lemon zest and juice, and the olive oil and process until well combined, but still a bit chunky, rather than very smooth. Season to taste with the salt and pepper and set to one side. Bring a large saucepan of lightly salted water to the boil and then add the orecchiette and cook for 8 – 10 minutes, or until al dente. Drain the pasta well and then tumble onto 4 serving plates, or shallow pasta bowls. Drizzle over the salsa verde and top with the bocconcini and fresh herbs. Serve immediately with your favourite white wine.

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