

Summer Caprese Pasta with Salame

When the weather becomes oppressively hot and the world seems to move in slow motion, cooking can seem like an impossible task. This simplest of pastas, made from the best of summer's bounty with tomatoes, basil and mint, takes so little effort – the only cooking is boiling water! The heat of the pasta itself takes the edgy bite off of the raw garlic so that only its nutty, allium-filled glory remains. Coupled with sea salt, fresh mozzarella and Volpi salame, you have a gratifying, barely-earned lunch. Share it with Nonna on the back patio in vinyl chairs and take in the stillness of summer.

ingredients

3 tablespoons kosher salt
2 pints cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered, if large
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves of garlic, sliced very thinly
Pinch sea salt, plus more for serving
1 pound ziti
12 ounces bocconcini or ciliegine, halved or quartered, if large
5 ounces Volpi salame (any variety), cut into ⅓-inch cubes
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
20 basil leaves, torn
20 mint leaves, torn

instructions

Bring 6 quarts of water and 3 tablespoons of kosher salt to a rolling boil.

In a bowl, combine tomatoes, olive oil, garlic and sea salt. Stir, then let sit for about 10 minutes to marinate and allow the juices to release.

Add the ziti to the the salted water. Cook until al dente, according to the package instructions.

Add the pasta to the marinated tomatoes and stir to coat. Add the mozzarella, salame and crushed red pepper. Stir to distribute. Tear the herbs over the pasta and toss to combine. Season to taste with additional olive oil, sea salt or crushed red pepper as desired.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

total time: 20 minutes

active prep: 10 minutes

serves: 4

difficulty: *easy*

