

Eitan's Favorite Pasta: Linguine with Brie and Tomatoes

Serves 6

Eitan first had this pasta at our friend Theresa Thompson's house a few years ago. It immediately became his favorite entrée, and was his meal of choice for his birthday for the past two years.

Note: I never used to add salt to the pasta water, but an Italian friend insisted it made a difference. I tried it, and lo and behold, it does! Not so much in flavor (tho it helps) as texture: makes the pasta less starchy and sticky. And I do NOT add oil to the water, which doesn't add anything helpful (even tho the original recipe called for it – it also called for a full 1 cup of olive oil in the sauce, egads!). It called for garlic too, but Eitan was not a fan (gave him indigestion), so we did not use it.

This is very rich and very delicious, something teenage boys can enjoy with impunity. And the rest of us can just enjoy.

Adapted from *The Silver Palate Cookbook*.

4 ripe large tomatoes, cut into cubes
1 pound Brie cheese, rind removed, torn into irregular pieces
1 cup julienned basil leaves
1/3 to 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 pounds linguine
grated Parmesan cheese, optional

1. In a large bowl, mix together tomatoes, Brie, basil, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Prepare at least 2 hours before serving and set aside, covered, at room temperature.
2. About 20 minutes before serving, bring 6 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot. Add a heaping teaspoonful of salt, stir, then add the linguine. Cook just until al dente, about 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Drain pasta and immediately toss with tomato mixture. Serve warm. Top with grated Parmesan if desired.

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