

Smoky Bucatini with Butter and Basil

Serves 4

Time 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Kosher salt

12 ounces fresh or dried bucatini

2 large shallots, finely chopped

4 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

1 tablespoons fennel seeds, ground with a mortar and pestle or finely chopped

4 oz [‘nduja](#) - I like this brand

2 tablespoons butter, unsalted or salted

A fistful of torn basil leaves, plus more for serving

Pecorino cheese and freshly ground black pepper for serving

METHOD

Bring a large pot well-salted to a boil and cook the pasta according to package instructions until it's just short of al dente. Drain and reserve 1 cup pasta water.

In a large Dutch oven or deep-sided skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. When it shimmers add the shallots, garlic and fennel seed and season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallots soften and the garlic and fennel seeds are aromatic, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the ‘nduja and cook until it melts into the shallot mixture, 1 to 2 minutes more.

Add in the crushed tomatoes and continue to simmer for about 20 minutes, so everyone gets to know each other a bit better. Taste and adjust seasonings accordingly with salt.

Add the pasta, butter and the basil and a bit of the reserved pasta water directly to the sauce and toss until glossy. Adding some more of the reserved pasta water, if needed, to loosen up the sauce.

Plate in bowls and top with ample amount of grated pecorino. A few turns of freshly ground black pepper would also be nice. Top with more basil.

A Note: If you'd like to keep this vegetarian, swap in 2 tablespoons tomato paste and ½ teaspoon of chili flakes for the 'nduja.

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