

BUCATINI WITH SHRIMP AND SPINACH SAUCE

I always have my go to pasta sauces, but every now and then I like to experiment. I had an extra bunch of spinach on hand, and I thought I'd play around with it to see if I could turn it into a tasty sauce. This worked on the first try. It's a great way to get everyone to eat their greens without any complaints.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 lb medium sized shrimp, peeled and deveined

5 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup + 5 tablespoons olive oil

1 lb bucatini

1 large onion, diced

1 bunch or bag of baby spinach, rinsed and dried – about 6 ounces

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup ricotta cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan, grated

3 anchovies

salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

In a small bowl, mix two cloves of minced garlic with a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of olive oil. Season the shrimp with salt and pepper. Place the shrimp in a Ziploc with the garlic oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ of the red

pepper flakes, and marinate for 2-4 hours.

Bring four quarts of water and 1 tablespoon of salt up to a boil. Add in the buccatini and cook as per box instructions until al dente.

While the pasta is cooking, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet. Pour the shrimp and marinade onto the skillet. Cook the shrimp in the pan, turning them until they turn pink and firm, about two to three minutes each side. Set the shrimp aside.

Heat 1 more tablespoon of olive oil and add the onion, sautéing until it begins to brown, about 8 minutes. Add the remaining garlic and cook for one minute. Add the spinach and red pepper flakes and cook until the spinach is just slightly wilted, about two minutes.

Add the spinach mixture to a blender. Add in the remaining olive oil, ricotta, half of the Parmesan and all of the anchovies. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Blend until smooth.

Drain the pasta, reserving one cup of the liquid. Pour the spinach sauce back into the large saucepan and reheat on low. Add in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pasta water and stir. Add the pasta to the sauce and lightly toss. If too dry, slowly add some of the reserved pasta water until the sauce is at the consistency you like. (I usually end up using about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the pasta water in total.)

Serve in bowls. Place the shrimp on top. Garnish with the remaining Parmesan.