

PASTA WITH PARMESAN MUSHROOM SAUCE

I know this is sacrilege, but I'm not a big fan of tomato based pasta sauces, mostly because they give me terrible heartburn. So, I'm always trying to think of new sauces to create. I was playing around with some ideas, and I thought I'd do a spinoff of an Alfredo sauce, but not quite as heavy as most. With the addition of mushrooms and some white wine, this sauce really sings!

INGREDIENTS (serves 3-4)

1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced

4 strips bacon

4 shallots, diced

4 cloves garlic, minced

olive oil (optional)

3 tablespoons of butter

3 tablespoons of flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup white wine

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cream

pinch of ground nutmeg

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes

salt and pepper to taste

1 pound pasta of your choice

1 cup parmesan cheese, large grate

parsley, chopped for garnish

PREPARATION

In a large non-stick skillet, render the bacon. Remove bacon strips and chop into small pieces, and set aside. Sauté the shallots in the bacon drippings until translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for 4 minutes. If too dry, add some olive oil. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove all from pan and set aside.

Prepare the pasta as per boxed instructions. When ready, strain out pasta, but reserve one cup of the pasta water.

Remove skillet from heat and wipe down with a paper towel. Place skillet back on burner on low heat. Melt the butter. Add the flour and mix using a wooden spoon. Cook until the mixture looks like a smooth paste and is a blond color. Slowly add the white wine, cream, nutmeg and red pepper flakes. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a light boil and then immediately lower to a simmer. (When you add in the liquids, the mixture may clump. Don't worry, just keep stirring and it should all come together.)

Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cheese and stir. Add in the mushrooms and gently fold into the sauce.

Add the strained pasta to the sauce in the pan and lightly toss with the sauce. If the sauce is too thick or you feel you need a bit more, add some of the pasta water a little bit at a time until it's the consistency you like. I usually use about 1 cup or less.

Serve in bowls. Garnish with remaining parmesan and parsley.