

PASTA WITH GARLIC AND HERB BREADCRUMBS

One of the easiest things I've started making regularly, is pasta with herbs and garlic breadcrumbs. I begin with salty water boiling away, ready to cook my pasta - any type of pasta will do, and a non-stick skillet over medium heat with a small pool of olive oil warmed through. Into that pool I toss some breadcrumbs and dried herbs, allowing them to begin toasting before I add in lots of garlic. The fragrant, toasty breadcrumbs are then simply tossed with the al dente pasta, and a bit of pasta water and served with some grated parmesan cheese, lemon zest, a few more of the breadcrumbs, a hefty drizzle of olive oil, and a sprinkling of flakey salt. The finished result also benefits from a handful of thawed frozen pea for a bit of color and pop, or can be topped with a lacy-edged olive oil fried egg. With meals like that in the queue, who needs a fully stocked chest freezer?

Ingredients.

- 1 lb. pasta
- 3 garlic cloves, finely minced
- zest of 1 lemon
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1 1/2 cups fresh breadcrumbs
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley (or a small palmful minced fresh parsley)
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- grated Parmesan cheese (optional)
- extra virgin olive oil
- kosher salt
- flake salt
- freshly ground black pepper or red pepper flakes
- olive oil fried eggs (optional)

Directions.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.

In a non-stick skillet, heat 1/4 cup olive oil over medium heat. When the oil is just starting to shimmer, add in the breadcrumbs and dried herbs, stirring to coat them in the oil.

When they are just to turn a light golden brown, use your spatula to move the breadcrumbs to the outside of the pan, leaving an exposed space in the center. Pour another tablespoon of olive oil into the center of the pan and allow it to heat up a bit before adding the minced garlic, and a pinch of red pepper flakes if you're using them. Gently sauté the garlic for a minute or so until fragrant, then mix the garlic into the breadcrumbs.

Stir occasionally until the breadcrumbs are deep, warm caramel color, and smell wonderfully toasty. Transfer the breadcrumbs to a large bowl and season well with salt

and freshly ground black pepper (skip the black pepper if you used red pepper flakes). Scoop out about 1/2 cup of the breadcrumbs and set aside for topping the pasta.

Cook your pasta to al dente. Drain it, reserving about 1/2 cup of the starchy pasta water.

Add the pasta to the large bowl with the breadcrumbs and begin to toss it together, adding splashes of the pasta water as needed to help the breadcrumbs adhere to the pasta. Toss in the peas, lemon zest, and fresh parsley if you have it on hand.

Transfer the pasta to serving bowls, drizzle with a bit more olive oil, top with a sprinkle of Parmesan, an extra bit of breadcrumbs, and a pinch of flake salt.

Serve on it's own or top it with an olive oil fried egg.

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