

PALMINA

Orecchiette with Rapini and Sweet Sausage a food pairing with Barbera, Bien Nacido Vineyard

from a recipe by Mario Batali

Serves 6

1½ pounds pork sausage, ground
2 tablespoons plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 onion, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 carrot, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1/2 rib celery, cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 cup red wine
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 cup crushed canned tomatoes and their juices
1 large head broccoli rapini, tough stems trimmed
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon red chili flakes
1 cup basic tomato sauce (see below)
Pecorino Toscano, for grating

4 cups semolina flour
1 to 1-1/4 cups tepid water

1. In a large skillet or Dutch oven, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over high heat. Place the sausage, in the pan. Allow to cook until fat has been rendered, moving occasionally to avoid sticking. Remove the meat and set aside.
2. Remove the excess fat from the pan, reduce the heat to low, and add the onion, carrot, and celery. Sweat the vegetables over low heat until tender, letting them get soft but not browned, for about 6 minutes. Add the red wine and scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon as you stir the wine in to dislodge browned bits of meat. Add the tomatoes, bring the mixture to a boil and return the sausage to the pan. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 30 to 45 minutes, until the mixture is at ragu consistency. Add more liquid if necessary to keep the meat moist.
3. Meanwhile, prepare the orecchiette: place the flour in a large in a large mixing bowl and stir to mix well. Make a well in the center of the flour and add the water a little at a time, stirring well with your hands until the dough comes together. You may need more or less water, depending on the humidity of your kitchen.

4. Place the dough on a floured work surface and knead it like bread for 8 to 10 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes at room temperature.
5. Cut the dough into four equally-sized pieces and roll each into a 3/4-inch thick dowel. With a very sharp knife, cut small disks of 1/8-inch thickness from each dowel, and press the center of each disk lightly with your thumb to form a saucer shape. Place the orechiette on a sheet tray that has been sprinkled with semolina, cover with a clean dish towel and set aside.
6. Bring 6 quarts of water to a boil and add 2 tablespoons salt.
7. Drop the orechiette into the boiling water and cook until tender yet al dente, about 2 minutes. Drain the pasta and add it to the pan with the broccoli rabe and ragu. Toss over high heat one minute, divide evenly among 6 warm pasta bowls, grate Pecorino Toscano over each bowl and serve immediately.