

Pasta with Sausage, Eggplant and Basil

BON APPÉTIT MARCH 2000

Yield Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

1 large eggplant, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 tablespoon salt

7 tablespoons olive oil

1 3/4 pounds spicy Italian sausages, casings removed, meat shaped into 1 1/4-inch meatballs (about 46)

1 pound cherry tomatoes, halved

6 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 1/2 serrano chilies, seeded, finely chopped (about 1 tablespoon)

1 1/4 cups canned low-salt chicken broth

2/3 cup whipping cream

1 pound cavatapi or penne pasta

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1 cup (lightly packed) fresh basil leaves, torn into 1/2-inch pieces

2/3 cup pine nuts, toasted

Additional grated Parmesan cheese

Preparation

Toss eggplant with 1 tablespoon salt in large colander. Place over bowl and let stand 30 minutes.

Heat 3 tablespoons oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add eggplant; saut

until golden, about 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl. (Can be made 8 hours ahead. Cover; chill.)

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, cook meatballs until brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer meatballs to paper-towel-lined plate. Wipe out skillet.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in same skillet over medium-high heat. Add tomatoes, garlic and chilies; sauté until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add meatballs, broth and cream. Simmer until meatballs are cooked through, about 5 minutes. Add eggplant and simmer 1 minute.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite. Drain. Transfer to large bowl.

Toss pasta with sauce and 1 cup Parmesan cheese. Mix in basil and pine nuts. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve pasta, passing additional Parmesan cheese separately.