

**09/08/11 - Porcini and Fig Farfalla**

Even though it is only early September and we are thinking of autumn, for me in Southern California it is more a nexus of seasons rather than a change. Los Angeles grows hotter in September, more than any other month. This past week has been in the 90's to over 100° F every day. Next week the Santa Ana winds will kick up, erasing any speck of humidity in the air, the skies will be scoured crystal clear and the temperatures will stay high accordingly .

At this nexus the ripe summer produce lingers, while the fall crops start to appear at local farm markets. While it is virtually impossible to find fresh porcini mushrooms anywhere I did come across a couple. Fresh figs are everywhere along with luscious and fragrant basil. Take a break from barbecue one night, for lighter fair and try this pasta dish. Substitute whatever mushrooms are available where you



Farfalla with Porcini

3 quarts water

1 teaspoon salt

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided

3 cups farfalla (bow tie pasta)

3 cloves minced garlic

2 cups washed, dried, and sliced porcini mushrooms (you can substitute any mushroom)

3 medium figs sliced in ½ pieces

Salt and fresh ground pepper

½ cup pasta cooking liquid

10 fresh chiffonade basil leaves (roll leaves into a cigar and cut with scissors)

Parmesano Reggiano

Bring water to boil on high heat, in a large stock pan and add salt, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and farfalla. Boil pasta for 7 to 8 minutes or until tender. Drain pasta in a colander over a dish to collect the cooking liquid. Set farfalla aside and reserve the cooking liquid.

Heat a medium sauté pan, non stick works perfectly, over medium-high heat. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil, and then add garlic and mushrooms. Sear mushrooms, so that they don't release liquid but develop a golden crust. Add figs and sauté until tender. Season figs and mushrooms with salt and pepper. If the mixture is dry with no liquid, add ½ cup of the farfalla cooking liquid. Add cooked farfalla to mushrooms and figs, stir to combine, and garnish with basil ribbons.

Place farfalla with mushroom in a medium serving dish and garnish with freshly grated Parmesan cheese. Serves 2



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