

04/23/12 - Pasta With Mushrooms and Heirloom Cherry Tomatoes

The Desert Southwest, more specifically Palm Desert area in the Coachella Valley was shimmering with heat this past weekend. The floral perfumed air was dry and still, nature's blast furnace had fired up about one and one half months ahead of schedule. The mercury reached its zenith about 3 PM at 102° F. We, meaning my sister's and I spent a wonderful Shabbat together, visiting, eating, and floating in the pool. The food of course, was spectacular.

Along about 3 PM Sunday we had all had our fill of summer heat and decided to drive back to Los Angeles. On the drive down to the freeway entrance the car thermometer went from 102° to 110° F to our amazement. After a brief stop to indulge a fit of crazy outlet mall consumerism we continued our drive. It started to become hazy, then kind of cloudy, then downright gloomy. The bright clarity of the desert gave way to a deepening marine mist and by the time we arrived home it was 62° F and felt like beach weather! The low cloud deck and fog obscured all but the closest houses, no mountains, no sky scrapers no horizon, just the dark abyss.

We quickly prepared our spectacular dinner of Turkey Schwarma and salads. So, now to the point of this story; I have been eating a little too well these last two weeks and in order to reign in the calorie count I made this dinner one night for two. I cooked a light pasta dish with vegetables, vegetarian, even one could say vegan if you pass on the cheese, to give my stomach a rest without forfeiting flavor and satisfaction.

Serves 1 to 2

Large pot of boiling water

1/ 2 box of Spaghetti #12 (1 pound box)

3 tablespoons olive oil

6 large button mushrooms, cleaned and sliced medium

8 large pieces frozen Porcini mushrooms, cleaned and sliced medium

2 peeled and minced garlic cloves

1 cup heirloom cherry tomatoes or grape tomatoes, cut in half

1 whole roasted red bell pepper, peeled, seeded, and sliced julienne

Sea Salt and fresh cracked pepper



1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Drizzle of Extra Virgin Olive Oil (optional)



Bring the large pot of water to a boil over high heat. I use a stock pot or large Dutch oven. Add a pinch of sea salt and 1 tablespoon olive oil to water and then, add pasta. Cook pasta for about 8 minutes, until al dente and then, drain in a colander.

While pasta is cooking, heat a large skillet on high heat, add oil, add mushrooms, and sauté until golden crust is forming on mushrooms, then add garlic, and season with salt and pepper. Next, add tomatoes and stir.



Sauté mushrooms and tomatoes until tomatoes are getting very soft and then, add bell pepper. Stir and season with salt and pepper, sauté for two more minutes. Add



Adjust seasoning , garnish with chiffonade of basil and sprinkle with Parmigano.



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