
RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Pasta with Nduja & Ricotta

Italy is a bit like a food thermometer in reverse - snow, cold, cream and comfort food at the top and sun, sea, heat, chilli and excitement at the bottom.



The North/South divide is no greater than in Calabria which is home to *cucina povera* or 'peasant cooking' whose extended rhythm is handmade and handpicked - the famed peperoncino chilies, flour and water pasta, ricotta and olive oil - all of which feature cheap common and fresh ingredients paired with preserves from the family 'cantina'. Most famous of these is nduja (pronounced *nnn-doo-jah*) which is a spicy preserved Calabrian sausage-meets-salami made with up to 50%

peperoncino peppers and the fattier parts of the pig in thick sausage skins then heavily smoked for a few days to make a very unique spicy paste with a lingering smokey flavour.

*2 tablespoons unfiltered rustic olive oil
120g 'nduja calabrese or Alex's Napoli, Viagra or Sardinian sausage, casing removed*

200g chunky pasta like ziti, paccheri or fusillo Calabro

a handful of sourdough breadcrumbs

1 x 250g tub fresh ricotta or ricotta salata (or see my recipe how to make the ricotta)

Trapani sea salt

A good pinch finely chopped basil or flat leaf parsley

Warm a splash of olive oil in a deep frying pan or casserole and get the water on to cook the pasta. When the water comes to the boil add a teaspoon of water then drop in the pasta when it comes back to the boil. Add a good knob of nduja, skin and all, to the olive oil and melt whilst stirring continuously so it doesn't stick and burn. You can add an anchovy if you want to season the nduja.

When the pasta is *al dente* drain lightly and toss into the pan of nduja the stir to coat, adding a sprinkle of breadcrumbs as you turn. Add a little pasta water if necessary but no so much that the mix becomes soggy. Seve with a good dollop of ricotta or crème fraîche and a snipping of basil.

Serves 2.

To download this recipe go to www.squisitodeli.co.uk
