
RECIPE OF THE WEEK

'Viagra' Carbonara

Pasta Carbonara is one of those magic 15-minute recipes that elevate pasta to a food of elegant simplicity whose sum is more than equal to the ingredients. I eschew the traditional combination of *guanciale* (cheek bacon) or *pancetta* (Italian dry cured streaky bacon) and inject excitement with my *Viagra dei Poveri* sausages so-called because they contain fresh chilli known



colloquially as '*Viagra for people*' in Southern Italy! Organisation and speed are the keywords of carbonara since the result should not be scrambled eggs and pasta with fried sausage but a harmonious combination that coats and clings to the pasta with the gentle kick of chilli - not hot 'n spicy but creamy, rich and comforting and not overcooked. Truly a refined peasant dish with peasant ingredients made by a practised hand.

1 or 2 *Viagra* or Tuscan sausages

a splash of olive oil

240g Barilla 'Oro Chef' spaghetti, pennette or Astorino fresh maccherione (pinci)

2 large free range eggs

50-80g finely grated Grana Padano or Pecorino Romano or a mix of both

sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

a table spoon of hot pasta water

Warm your plates and get all you ingredients and tools ready then skin the sausages, finely grate the cheese and beat the eggs with a pinch of salt and a bit of the cheese. Next, warm a splash of olive oil in a deep frying pan or casserole and get the water on to boil the pasta. When the water comes to the boil add a teaspoon of salt then drop in the pasta and when it comes back to the boil and check your watch.

As the oil heats crumble in your sausagemeat and fry gently poking with a wooden spoon occasionally. Don't burn the oil or the sausagemeat.

At about 8 minutes on the boil test the pasta - you want it just *al dente* which means '*with bite*' but not hard in the middle. It will take 10-12 minutes with Barilla pasta but less with fresh pasta - 8 minutes top whack.

When you are happy with the pasta, quickly drain it with a slotted spoon or sieve whilst reserving some of the pasta water and toss straight into the pan with the sausagemeat. Raise the heat a touch and stir the pasta with one hand a tip in the grated cheese with

the other then add a couple of tablespoons of hot pasta water to help melt the cheese and lubricate the pasta. Tip in the egg stirring continuously and plate up as soon as you have an even coating and before the eggs stick to the pan. Sprinkle with a grating of cheese and a pinch of fresh black pepper then enjoy. Serves 2.

To download this recipe go to www.squisito-deli.co.uk
