

Spaghetti with Willapa Bay clams

Dish features local catch, vegetables

BY DAVID CAMPICHE

Some of our favorite recipes emerge spontaneously. They are generally coordinated by the availability of what restaurateurs call “product” and by an inquisitive mind. Many of the wild ingredients are gathered locally and during a particular season, mushrooms being a fine example.

Recently, I plucked a few pounds of little neck clams from the mudflats of Willapa Bay, from the state-owned Nahcotta Tidelands. Later, perusing the refrigerator, I found a nice hunk of ham and diced it into ¼ inch pieces. Zucchini and collard greens were picked fresh from the garden, diced and shredded respectively. I gathered red pepper and asparagus, both gifts from a neighbor.

This is a fun and spontaneous dinner, a one dish repast of spaghetti with clams. A feast served in a large flat bowl to show off color and texture, then finished with a grating of Parmesan cheese like snow on the mountains. There are three separate steps here. The prepara-

tion takes less than an hour and serves four generously.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon garlic
- 3 tablespoons virgin olive oil
- 6 ounces diced ham
- One small zucchini diced into ¼ inch squares
- Half a red pepper, diced finely
- 2 cups of collard greens, torn into medium sized pieces
- 8 stems of asparagus spears, diagonally diced, a half-inch or so
- 16 ounces of par-boiled spaghetti
- 2 pounds of steamed little neck clams, shelled and reserved
- ½ cup of white wine
- 3 tablespoons of butter
- A splash of soy sauce
- Reserved pasta liquid, about a ½ cup
- A splash of fish oil
- ¼ cup red chili paste
- 1 tablespoon of Gochujang or other spicy pastes, diluted in a 4 tablespoons of water
- 2 tablespoons corn starch and pasta water to thicken sauce
- A bit of chopped cilantro or parsley

- Parmesan to finish, finely chopped
- ¼ cup heavy cream (optional)
- Salt and pepper

Precook the spaghetti in salted water.

When firm, drain pasta, reserving about a cup of the liquid. Add a splash of olive oil to the pasta to keep it from sticking.

Lightly brown the garlic in olive oil. Add ham and sauté briefly. Add zucchini. Sauté for another minute, then scatter in the diced red pepper and asparagus tips. Sauté until tender but not overcooked. Stir in the kale. Hold over low heat.

Simultaneously, steam the clams with ½ cup of white wine, three tablespoons of butter, a dab of soy sauce and a ¼ cup of red chili sauce. I like to add a teaspoon of Gochujang, a hot Korean pepper paste, and a few drops of fish sauce. The chili paste and cream are optional but add lovely flavor. If reduced, the cream helps to thicken the preparation. You can also thicken the liquid with corn starch and a splash of starch water.

Add the pasta and clams to the vegetables and ham mixture and marry all together. Add some of the pasta water or heavy cream to create the perfect texture. Toss. Serve immediately with grated Parmesan and desired herbs.



David Campiche

The pasta, ready to be eaten.

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