

Pasta with a simple tomato sauce is ideal summer fare

By Gretchen McKay
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pasta is a favorite for dinner because it doesn't generally require a lot of special ingredients or equipment.

CHERRY TOMATO PASTA

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup tom rustic Italian or ciabatta bread
- Pinch of dried basil, dried oregano and crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 pound spaghetti, fettuccine or other long-cut pasta
- 4 cups red and/or yellow cherry tomatoes, some sliced in half and others whole
- 2 large cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese



Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette-TNS

Pasta tossed with charred cherry tomatoes, basil and mozzarella makes an easy dinner.

1 large handful fresh basil, thinly sliced
1 cup mini mozzarella balls

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. While water is heating up, heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet set over medium heat. When it shimmers, add the bread and a pinch of dried basil, dried oregano and red pepper flakes.

Cook until breadcrumbs are toasted and golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and transfer breadcrumbs to a plate. Cook pasta according to package directions until al dente. Set aside 1 cup of the pasta cooking water, then drain. While pasta is cooking, heat remaining 2 tablespoons of olive

oil in the same skillet. Add the tomatoes, garlic, thyme and oregano and give it a good stir. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add a pinch or two of red pepper flakes, depending on how spicy you like things. Cook until the tomatoes begin to soften and pop, about 5 minutes. Pour in the wine, and cook for 1 minute. Add the drained pasta to the

skillet, along with a splash or two of the pasta cooking water. Toss gently to combine, then stir in Parmesan cheese and shredded basil. If needed, you can thin the sauce with a little more pasta water. Remove from heat, and add mozzarella balls and breadcrumbs. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

— Gretchen McKay

Turnips and other nutrition superstars

By Barbara Quinn
The Monterey County Herald

Some of our very best friends this time of year are neighbors who have gardens. About once a week, I'll get a text messages from Ginny and Bob who live across the street.

"Would you like some vegetables?" Uh, yes, please!

Last week I brought home fresh zucchini, one big enough to stuff. Yum. And turnips.

"Let me know how you like the taste of these," Ginny asks. "I want to know if this is a good variety."

Honestly, turnips are not on my usual shopping list. I like them, although the only way we had them when I was kid was boiled, sliced and mixed with cheese.

Turnips are root vegetables. That means they grow under the ground like beets and carrots. In fact, the part of these vegetables we eat is actually the well-developed root that stores energy for the plant. As they grow, the top part of these mostly white vegetables turns purple or red as it begins to protrude above the ground and meets the sun. Turnip leaves or "greens" are also edible and highly nutritious.

Turnips and their green leafy tops are nutrition superstars for several reasons. Low in calories (35 per cup



Dreamstime/TNS

Turnips and their green leafy tops are low in calories, a good source of dietary fiber, and their greens are also a good source of vitamin C and a host of other essential vitamins and minerals.

for turnips; 18 per cup for greens) and a good source of dietary fiber; turnips and their greens are also a good source of vitamin C and a host of other essential vitamins and minerals.

Turnips belong to the family of Cruciferous vegetables along with the likes of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower. This class of vegetables has been studied extensively for their role in the prevention

of cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute. So ... how do they taste? I'd describe turnips as a cross between a radish and a potato. Cooking mellows their flavor. And plant experts

say small to medium turnips are the best for eating raw. Unlike potatoes, though, fresh turnips do best stored in the refrigerator. Use them within a few days. (They tend to get bitter if they hang out too long before being used.) How to use these highly good for you vegetables? Use them as you would potatoes, say experts at fruitandveggies.org : bake, boil, roast or mash them. Grate them raw in place of cabbage in coleslaw. Add them to salads or serve sliced or julienned with your favorite dip. Use turnip greens as you would spinach or collard greens. Add them to soups, stews or pasta for a turbo boost of nutrition. Roast them in a hot oven with other vegetables. Or sauté in olive oil, garlic, onion and lemon. Yes! As soon as they are ready, Ginny and Bob will have beets and green beans to share. Gotta love these neighbors.

Barbara Quinn is a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator affiliated with Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. She is the author of "Quinn's Essential Nutrition" (Westbow Press, 2015). Email her at to barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.

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