

Rich Mushroom Ragu with Pappardelle



I am sitting at my computer, looking at this image, drooling and wondering how I am going to get through writing this recipe without hitting the fridge for some kind of sustenance to eliminate the watery mouth feeling I have from a severe case of wanting. This was so good. The flavour scale was off the charts, porcini are the best, you need to make this today. Enough said.

You will be committing a minor food crime as far as this dish is concerned but if you really need to make it vegetarian, eliminate the pancetta. To all of my Vegan friends, eliminating the cream is an absolute no go zone. That would be a major food crime. Sorry.

Diet Warningprobably not the best idea if you are trying to lose weight. You could be a rebel though and have a night off. I reckon it is totally worth it.

Prep time: 15 Minutes

Cooking time: 25 Minutes

\$\$ Medium Budget

Serves 4

400gm of pappardelle pasta, cooked according to packet instructions

40gm of butter

1 tbs of olive oil

4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

1 brown onion, finely diced

200gm of diced pancetta

16 thyme sprigs, leaves removed from the stems and stems discarded

400gm of assorted mushrooms, sliced (please use flavour packed ones, portobellos, swiss brown, chestnut, black fungus etc with good earthy flavour)

20 gm of dried porcini, soaked in boiling water for 15 minutes, reserve 1/2 a cup of the liquid

1/2 a cup of port

1 cup of red wine

300ml of pure cream

1/2 a cup of freshly grated parmesan

Sea salt and cracked pepper

1 bag of chopped kale

1/2 a cup of chopped toasted hazelnuts for garnish

Extra thyme leaves for garnish

Fresh grated parmesan to serve

Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

Heat a large heavy based pan (with a lid if possible) until nice and hot and then fry the pancetta until golden and lightly crispy. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Melt the butter with the oil in the same pan and add the onions. Fry until translucent then add the garlic, mushrooms and thyme leaves. Leave the heat nice and hot and pop a lid on, stirring every few minutes to sweat the mushrooms down but trying to get some nice colour on them. Drain the porcini (reserving the liquid) and squeeze any water out of them before giving them a rough chop and adding them to the pan along with the crispy pancetta.

Once the mushrooms have softened, pour in the port and wine. Use a wooden spoon to scrape any golden bits from the bottom of the pan and allow the wine to reduce by about half before adding in half a cup of porcini liquid. Season with salt and pepper and again, allow the liquid to reduce by about half before pouring in the cream. Stir to combine and allow to simmer for approximately 5 minutes.

If the mixture looks a little thick, add a little of the starchy pasta water to thin it out slightly, before stirring the kale through the mixture. Pop a lid on and allow the kale to wilt for a few minutes.

When your pasta is al dente`, add the parmesan to the sauce and toss it and the drained pappardelle through the sauce. Divide between bowls and top with toasted hazelnuts, thyme leaves, extra parmesan and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.