

Penne alla Vecchia Bettola

- 1/4 cup good olive oil
- 1 medium Spanish onion, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 cup vodka
- 2 (28-ounce) cans peeled plum tomatoes
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 pound penne pasta
- 4 tablespoons fresh oregano
- 3/4 to 1 cup heavy cream
- Grated Parmesan cheese

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1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large oven proof saute pan over medium heat, add the onions and garlic and cook for about 5 minutes until translucent. Add the red pepper flakes and dried oregano and cook for 1 minute more. Add the vodka and continue cooking until the mixture is reduced by half.
3. Meanwhile, drain the tomatoes through a sieve and crush them into the pan with your hands. Add 2 teaspoons salt and a pinch of black pepper. Cover the pan with a tight fitting lid and place it in the oven for 1 1/2 hours. Remove the pan from the oven and let cool for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the pasta al dente. Drain and set aside.
5. Place the tomato mixture in a blender and puree in batches until the sauce is a smooth consistency. Return to the pan.
6. Reheat the sauce, add 2 tablespoons fresh oregano and enough heavy cream to make the sauce a creamy consistency. Add salt and pepper, to taste, and simmer for 10 minutes. Toss the pasta into the sauce and cook for 2 minutes more. Stir in 1/2 cup Parmesan. Serve with an additional sprinkle of Parmesan and a sprinkle of fresh oregano on each plate.

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