



Jamie Oliver's Working Girls Pasta

Serves 4

Jamie Oliver: *"This is a pasta dish that Gennaro Contaldo used to make for our staff dinners when we worked at the Neal Street Restaurant in Covent Garden in London. In Italian this is called "pasta puttana," which basically translates as "whore's pasta"! I wanted to know why, as I'd never heard of this before. Maybe it's because the dish was cooked very quickly, with no effort involved, or maybe it's something the local prostitutes used to eat at home—who knows?"*

But this is the way my darling Gennaro taught me to make it. He comes from the Amalfi coast, where fresh bluefin tuna would have been available. If you can get hold of some, it will make the dish much more luxurious and an event to eat. But if you can't, then tinned will do."

Ingredients

A handful of fresh basil

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

Extra virgin olive oil

2 x 225g tuna steaks, chopped into bite-size chunks (or 2 tins of good-quality tuna, drained)

400g penne or spaghetti

8 anchovy fillets

2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped

2 handfuls of soaked capers

A handful of black olives, pitted and roughly chopped

1 to 3 small dried chillies, crumbled to your taste, or 1 fresh red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced

2 handfuls of really ripe tomatoes, finely chopped

Optional: a swig of white wine A handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

Method

Smash the basil to a pulp with a pinch of salt and pepper. Add the lemon zest and juice and 2 good lugs of extra virgin olive oil. Mix this up and either rub over your chopped-up fresh tuna or mix with your broken-up canned tuna and allow to marinate.

Get a large pan of salted boiling water on and cook the pasta according to the package instructions. As soon as you put the pasta on, put 3 or 4 good lugs of extra virgin olive oil into a large frying pan and put on the heat. As the pan starts to get warm, add your anchovy fillets and allow them to fry and melt. At this point add your garlic, capers, olives, and chilli and stir around for a couple of minutes. If you have used fresh tuna, add it to the pan now with all of the marinating juices and sear it on both sides. When done, add the tomatoes and a little swig of white wine if you have some. If you have used tinned tuna, add it to the pan at the same time as the tomatoes. Bring to a boil, then simmer for around 5 minutes, stirring regularly with a spoon, breaking the tuna up into smaller pieces. What you don't want to do is overcook the tuna so it goes tough. You want it to be soft and silky. Correct the seasoning carefully with salt and pepper.

The pasta should now be ready, so drain it in a colander, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Toss the hot pasta with the hot tuna sauce, add the parsley, and mix well. You may need a few more lugs of olive oil and a spoonful of cooking water to make the sauce nice and loose.