

Kate's Pasta Alla Norma

A Typical Sicilian Dish

Ingredients

- 1 pound/450 g penne rigate pasta

- 4 tablespoons/5 ml, extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for deep-frying eggplant
- 1/2 white onion, chopped
- 1 (14-ounce/400 g) can peeled plum tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp Sugar
- Red Pepper Flakes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 small-size eggplant, 1" cubed
- Fresh basil leaves, torn or coarsely chopped
- Ricotta salata cheese, freshly grated
- Ciabatta loaf, warm and crunchy

Directions

Cook the penne in a pot of boiling salted water. Stir to prevent the pasta from sticking together. While the pasta is cooking, saute' the eggplant. Heat olive oil and fry the eggplant cubes until golden. Drain the eggplant cubes on a paper towel to remove the excess oil. You'll use this pan to make the sauce.

To make the sauce: In a saucepan, heat up 4 tablespoons of olive oil. Gently sauté the chopped

onions until tender, then add the plum tomatoes and liquid from the can. With your hand, crush the tomatoes into little chunks. Add the sugar. Season the sauce with salt, and red pepper flakes, to taste. Cook the tomato sauce for a few minutes, until the sauce has thickened.

In the pan you used to cook the pasta, Add the drained pasta, which you cooked approximately 2 minutes before the 'al dente' stage. Finish cooking the pasta in the sauce. Add the fried eggplant, basil leaves. Mix the ingredients together well in the saucepan so that the pasta and the sauce are well combined. Be careful not to overcook or break up the pasta.

Transfer the pasta to a warm serving bowl or divide the pasta among warm plates and sprinkle ricotta salata generously on top and serve immediately with a large piece of crusty Italian Ciabatta.