

THE COLOR OF SUMMER



Pasta and cream is a culinary marriage made in heaven. There are times when only the best will do; when only a bowl of fresh Mafaldini tossed in a rich creamy sauce and topped with Parmesan shavings and cracked black pepper will satisfy your hunger with a taste of decadence. Traditionally, long and thin pastas are served with cream sauces and this rainbow ribbon variety I found goes perfect in this recipe.

By Bob Skolnick
Photography by
Marty Snortum Studio



Rainbow Mafaldini Primavera

Serves 4

1½ lbs	Rainbow Mafaldini*
4 oz	asparagus - trimmed about 2½ inches long
4 oz	sugar snap peas
4 oz	French green beans - ends trimmed
2 each	zucchini - cut into ½ inch cubes
4 each	garlic cloves sliced thin
1½ cups	heavy cream
¼ lb	whole salted butter
¼ cup	freshly grated Parmesan cheese
¼ cup	freshly grated Romano cheese
2 oz	chopped Italian parsley
	salt and pepper to taste

* Rainbow Mafaldini is generally imported and can be found at specialty food stores like the Greenery Market in El Paso and The End of the Vine in Ruidoso, however any colorful pasta such as tomato or spinach fettuccini will do.

PREPARATION

Prepare ¾ of a gallon of mild chicken stock and season with garlic powder. Bring the stock to a gentle simmer and carefully drop in the asparagus, sugar snap peas, zucchini cubes and French green beans into the hot stock for just a minute or two to blanch the vegetables - you want to keep them crisp. Once blanched, remove the vegetables to a platter and cool and dry thoroughly on a paper towel, and then cover tight at room temperature. Bring the now vegetable-flavored chicken stock to a boil and add the Mafaldini. This pasta is delicate and the ribbons can break easily, and the dish is most effective when the strands of cooked Mafaldini are whole and long. Carefully stir the pasta as it cooks. Taste and touch to determine when the pasta is cooked al dente. Drain and rinse the Mafaldini with hot water and serve immediately. If you have cooked the pasta ahead, rinse with cold water and plunge the al dente Mafaldini into ice water to stop the cooking process. Next, drain the pasta and shake it dry, and coat it lightly with olive oil.

To make the sauce, slowly melt the butter in a heavy bottom sauté pan and add the garlic to simmer without letting the butter turn brown. Add the heavy cream and simmer until hot. Careful not to boil the cream or it will separate. Add the room temperature blanched vegetables and simmer gently until hot again. Heat the pasta by dipping it in hot stock for a minute or two and then drain thoroughly. Place the pasta in the serving bowls and spoon over the primavera sauce and vegetables. Toss gently to coat the pasta completely with the sauce. Sprinkle the top with Parmesan and Romano cheese and garnish with chopped fresh Italian parsley.



NOTE: A nice accompaniment side dish is a half-broiled tomato topped with Italian breadcrumbs or sautéed broccoli rapini.

Variation

Try using Gorgonzola cheese and a few ounces of whipped ricotta instead of the Parmesan and Romano cheeses.

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