

Fr. Jack's Penne Alla Vodka

Original Recipe from Carmine's in Manhattan

Ingredients

- ¼ Cup Olive Oil
- ½ Small Onion, thinly sliced
- 2 Tablespoons Coarsely Chopped Garlic
- 8 Fresh Basil Leaves, Chopped
- 3 Tablespoons Chopped Flat-Leaf Parsley
- ¼ - ½ Teaspoon Hot Red Pepper Flakes
- ¼ - 1/3 Cup Vodka
- 3 Cups Marinara Sauce (sometimes I use a can of San Marzano plum tomatoes)
- ½ Cup Heavy Cream
- 12 Ounces Dried Penne
- 1 Cup Grated Romano Cheese
- Salt & Freshly Ground Black Pepper

Directions

In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onions and reduce to medium. Cook onions, stirring until they begin to soften. Add the garlic and cook the mixture for an additional 2 to 3 minutes or until the onions (*but **NOT** the garlic*) are golden brown. (I actually cook the onions on low heat for 10- 12 minutes before adding the garlic and then I cook it for another 5-7 on pretty low heat)

Add Basil, Parsley, and Red Pepper Flakes. Cook, continually stirring for about 30 seconds.

Remove the pan from the heat, and add the vodka. Take care to stand back from the pan as the vodka can flame without lighting it. If not, light the sauce, and stir or agitate until alcohol is burned off. (You don't have to flame the vodka, but I find it really makes a world of difference in the flavor. Also, burning off the alcohol won't cause smoke but can cause your smoke detector to sound.) Return the pan to the heat and cook for about 2 to 3 minutes. Add 3 cups marinara sauce and simmer for 3 minutes. Add 1/2 cup heavy cream and bring the sauce to a boil for about 3 minutes, or until it thickens. Continually stir the sauce. Turn off the heat, cover, and cook the pasta.

Cook the penne in salted water, al dente. Drain the penne well and transfer to a bowl.

About half way through cooking the pasta, bring the sauce to a boil and then remove from the heat; stir in 1/2 cup of Romano cheese, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Drain the pasta and place it on a large platter or bowl. Pour the sauce over the pasta and combine well. Spread the remaining Romano cheese over the top along with two or three whole basil leaves.

Enjoy!