

Doomsday Pasta- penne with creamed asparagus and artichoke hearts

Serves 4-5

This meal was inspired by a day (September 9th) in the year of our lord 2020 when the skies turned a ghastly orange hue and the world appeared to be ending. The eerie atmosphere created by the California wildfires spewing smoke high above the marine layer, producing beautifully scattered light across the mist. Luckily for us we had made a run to the greatest bargain grocery store known to man and picked up a couple cans of asparagus and artichoke hearts over the weekend along with some pasta and anchovies, a combination for the gods or the common man alike.

1 lb penne pasta

2 15 oz cans of asparagus spears (basically overcooked lightly brined asparagus), drained

2 14 oz cans of artichoke hearts, drained

2 oz an of anchovy fillets (about 5-6 small anchovy filets), drained of oil and chopped

1 tsp chili flake (or more if you like)

1 tbsp ground fennel (or seeds crushed with your fingers)

6-7 garlic cloves chopped

2 tbsp dried sage (or whatever herb you have, oregano, thyme)

1.5-2 cups white cooking wine

1 medium red onion, chopped

1 handful of chopped parsley (~1/4 cup)

¼ up of olive oil

Grated hard aged cheese (Parmesan, Romano, asiago)

Bring a large pot of water to boil for the pasta, add a few hefty pinches of salt once boiling (think taste like the sea). Cook the pasta to the package directions, erring on the side of slightly more al dente than usual (will finish cooking in the sauce). Save a coffee mug (about 1.25 cups) of the pasta water for making the sauce later

While the pasta water is coming to boil, add the olive oil to the pot over medium heat add in the onion and sauté for 4-5 minutes. Add in the garlic, chili flake, anchovies, fennel and sage and cook until aromatic, about 2-3 minutes. Add in the white wine and increase the heat to medium high. Reduce the wine by half and add in the canned asparagus, which should be slightly overcooked and soft. If the asparagus is still firm, cook until very tender and then using an immersion blender puree the contents of the pot until slightly pureed but still with some texture. If you don't have an immersion blender a regular blender works well. Add in the saved pasta water and canned artichoke hearts and cook for about 2-3 minutes over high until boiling. Add in the drained cooked pasta and chopped parsley and cook over medium high heat until the sauce begins to coat the pasta. Mix in a generous handful (~ 1 cup) of cheese and fresh ground black pepper and top with more cheese, if you so desire. Grab a plate and say a prayer, this might be your last meal.