

Catalan Pasta (Fideos) with Garlic Sauce – Dame Pat Mozersky

1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 large onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
2 medium ripe tomatoes, seeded and finely chopped, OR one 14.5 -ounce can diced tomatoes
1/8 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, plus additional as needed
5 cups bottled clam juice (all or part can be replaced with chicken broth)
Pinch of saffron
8 ounces fideos, preferably "Q and Q original Vermicelli" brand
1/2 to 1 teaspoon salt, plus additional if needed

Heat the 1/2 cup of oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy bottomed pot, and when it shimmers, add the onion. Lower the heat, and stirring frequently, cook until almost caramelized, but not burnt. Add the garlic and cook another few minutes, then stir in the tomatoes, cayenne, and pepper, and continue to cook until all of the juices are gone. Add the clam juice and the saffron to the onion and tomato mixture. Reserve. (This can be done several days ahead of serving.)

Just before serving, reheat the clam juice mixture. Heat remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large heavy skillet or a medium-sized paella pan over medium-low heat, and when hot stir in the fideos, stirring constantly until very golden (be very careful as it can easily burn). Add the clam juice mixture, a cup at a time, stirring continually until the liquid is almost all absorbed and the *fideos* is tender. (Amount of liquid will vary every time you cook this dish. Use whatever amount it takes for the fideos to be tender). Taste for salt and pepper, and add if needed.

Divide *fideos* among 4 to 6 dinner plates. Top each serving with about a tablespoon of the Fresh Garlic Sauce. Pass the rest of the sauce and encourage each person to swirl in more as they desire.

FRESH GARLIC SAUCE (MAKES ABOUT 1 1/2 CUPS)

PREPARE-AHEAD NOTES: If using the raw egg yolks, prepare the sauce shortly before using. If you want to make it further ahead, use the prepared mayonnaise version.

1/2 teaspoon salt
6 to 8 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 large egg yolks at room temperature *
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
OR: substitute for the raw eggs and olive oil, 1 cup of good quality mayonnaise and about 1/4 cup of olive oil