

HAZELNUT PASTA WITH SPINACH AND RICOTTA CREAM

SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

6 cups tagliatelle pasta (you can use pasta made with hazelnuts as well)
3/4 cup fresh ricotta
5 cups baby spinach leaves washed
2 shallots peeled and sliced
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
1/4 cup crushed hazelnuts not too fine
1 sprig fresh thyme
1 pinch nutmeg
salt for pasta and to taste
black pepper to taste
100 ml fresh cream optional
3-4 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

METHOD

1. Put a pot of water on to boil for the pasta. Add salt once it starts to boil and bring to the boil again.
2. Peel the shallots, cut them into thin rings and fry them in a large pan with heated olive oil until they start to soften. Add the well washed and dried spinach and continue cooking for another 3-4 minutes.
3. Cook the pasta al dente according to the instructions on the packet. When ready, save some of the cooking water and drain.
4. Cream the ricotta with some of the saved pasta water. Work it until you have a nice smooth thick creamy sauce. You can use a fork or handheld blender for this. If you prefer, instead of pasta water, you can use heavy cream for a richer sauce. In that case, you can prepare it before cooking the pasta. Season the ricotta cream with nutmeg, salt and pepper as required.
5. Add the pasta to the pan with the spinach, add the creamed ricotta, some of the grated Parmesan and crushed hazelnuts and a little fresh thyme. Mix everything together well and sauté for a few moments. Serve hot with another sprinkling of crushed hazelnuts.