Meanwhile, in a large pot, bring 5 quarts water to a rapid boil over high heat. Add the kosher salt and pasta and cook for 5 minutes. Add the cauliflower and continue to cook until the cauliflower is tender and the pasta is al dente, according to the package instructions.

Just before the pasta is ready, add 2 Tbs. of the cooking water to the bowl with the goat cheese and whisk until creamy. Drain the pasta and cauliflower, reserving 1 cup of the cooking water. Transfer the pasta and cauliflower to the serving bowl and toss with the cheese sauce to coat the pasta. Add the leeks, garlic and olives and season with pepper. Toss to combine well, adding some of the cooking water if needed to moisten the sauce so that it coats the pasta nicely. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma The Pasta Book, by Julia della Croce (Weldon Owen, 2010)

## Stir-Fried Pork and Sugar Snaps with Soba Noodles

Newly picked sugar snap peas, young green onions and just a small amount of pork are the basis for a novel dish made with Japanese buckwheat noodles and bold Asian flavors. Finish the meal with ginger cookies and fresh strawberries.

In a bowl, combine 1½ Tbs, of the soy sauce and the cornstarch and stir to dissolve the cornstarch. Stir in the 1½ tsp. sesame oil. Add the pork and a generous amount of black pepper and stir to coat. Let stand at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the remaining 2 Tbs. soy sauce, the 1 Tbs. sesame oil, the vinegar and sugar and stir to dissolve the sugar. Set the sauce aside.

Bring a large pot three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add the sugar snap peas and cook until just crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the peas to a bowl. Add the noodles to the boiling water and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 4 minutes. Drain the noodles and return them to the pot. Add half of the sauce to the noodles and stir to coat. Stir in the sugar snaps and all but 2 Tbs. of the green onions. Cover to keep warm.

In a large nonstick fry pan over medium-high heat, warm the peanut oil. Add the ginger and red pepper flakes and stir until fragrant, about 5 seconds. Add the pork, separating the pieces, and stir constantly just until the pork is cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the remaining sauce and stir until thickened, about 30 seconds. Immediately add the pork and sauce to the noodles and toss to coat. Divide the noodles between 2 warmed plates. Sprinkle with the remaining 2 Tbs. green onions and serve immediately. Serves 2.

Quick Tips: This recipe is also delicious at room temperature, so leftovers can be refrigerated overnight; bring them to room temperature before serving again. Double the quantity of ingredients to serve four.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Weeknight Fresh & Fast, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).

#### February 26, 2012

	Notes
Ingredients for Stir-Fried Pork and Sugar Snaps with Soba Noodles	
3½ Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce	
1½ tsp. cornstarch	
1½ tsp. plus 1 Tbs. Asian sesame oil	
½ lb. boneless center-cut pork chops or pork sirloin, cut across the grain into thin strips	
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste	
2 Tbs. rice wine vinegar	
1½ tsp. sugar	
½ lb. sugar snap peas, strings removed, peas cut in half on the diagonal	
6 oz. soba noodles	
1 bunch green onions, white and	
green portions, thinly sliced	
1 Tbs. peanut oil	
1 Tbs. peeled and minced fresh ginger	
1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes	
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#### WILLIAMS-SONOMA

## Technique Class: Fresh, Fast & Easy Pasta

Pasta has long been a part of the Italian national diet. Dried pasta, called maccheroni or pasta secca, is typically made of nothing more than hard-wheat flour (semolina) and water and comes in countless forms: long or short, flat or cylindrical, wide or narrow, with holes, twists or divots.

The term "pasta" is also a broad umbrella for numerous other noodles from around the world. Asia offers the largest variety of noodles and dumplings outside of Italy. Cooks in kitchens from Saigon to Bangkok, Beijing to Seoul turn out pastas that honor both culinary tradition and local ingredients. They fashion them primarily from wheat flour, rice flour, buckwheat or mung bean starch and serve them in soups or tossed with sauces.

## Cooking Italian Pasta

To ensure your pasta moves freely as it cooks, use at least 5 quarts of water to cook 1 lb. of fresh or dried pasta. Add 2 Tbs. kosher salt at the same time you add the pasta to the water. This may seem like a lot of salt, but the amount is necessary to flavor the pasta properly. Do not, as some books suggest, add oil to the water. It will coat the pasta, which will cause it to repel the sauce. Stir the pasta often as it cooks to keep it from sticking together, and maintain the pot's high heat to keep the water moving. Cook stuffed pastas, such as tortellini and ravioli, at a slightly lower temperature to prevent them from knocking against one another and breaking open.

Because most dried pasta cooks within 10 to 12 minutes, keep an eye on the pot to prevent overcooking. As soon as the pasta is ready, add a glass of cold water to the pot to immediately stop the cooking. Scoop out a little of the cooking water in case you need to add moisture to encourage smooth and easy distribution of the sauce, and then drain the pasta. Don't overdrain it, however, or it may stick together and/or absorb too much sauce.

## Cooking Asian Pasta

Fresh and dried Asian noodles—wheat, rice, buckwheat—are typically cooked in boiling water before they are added to soups to remove the starchy coating that would otherwise cloud the broth. These same noodles are also boiled before they are combined with other ingredients in a stir-fry. Some dried Asian noodles, such as cellophane (bean thread) noodles, need only be soaked in hot water to cover until pliable before they can be used in stir-fries or other dishes.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma The Pasta Book, by Julia della Croce (Weldon Owen, 2010).

#### Ingredients for Spaghetti alla Norma

1 large or 2 medium eggplant, about 1½ lb. total

Salt for eggplant, plus more, to taste

Vegetable oil for frying

1 yellow onion, finely chopped

⅓ cup olive oil

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lb. fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped, or 1 can (28 oz.) plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped, with juices

Freshly ground pepper, to taste

½ cup fresh basil leaves, torn into small pieces

1 lb. spaghetti

½ cup coarsely grated ricotta salata cheese, plus more for garnish

½ cup grated pecorino romano cheese

## Spaghetti alla Norma

Sicilians are masters of cooking eggplant, and their island home is the source of countless delicious and interesting ways to prepare it. In the past when meat was scarce, eggplant, with its meaty look and flavor, was often substituted. This recipe, named for the opera Norma, by Catania-born Vincenzo Bellini, is typical of Sicilian cooking.

Salting the eggplant slices draws out their bitter juices. If the eggplant is very fresh, this step is not essential, but if you are unsure about their provenance, it is good insurance against a disappointing dish. Ricotta salata is a salted, pressed form of ricotta. If unavailable, use a mild feta cheese.

Cut the eggplant crosswise into slices ½ inch thick. Make a layer of slices in a colander and sprinkle with salt. Continue layering and sprinkling with salt until all of the slices are used. Top with a plate and a heavy weight, such as a pot. Place the colander over a bowl or in the sink. Let stand for 1 hour to drain off the bitter juices. Rinse off the salt and dry the eggplant slices with paper towels.

In a large fry pan over medium heat, pour in vegetable oil to a depth of ½ inch. Add enough of the eggplant slices to make a single layer in the pan. Fry the slices, turning once, until tender and lightly browned on both sides, about 8 minutes total. Transfer to paper towels to drain. Repeat with the remaining slices.

In a large saucepan over medium heat, sauté the onion in the olive oil until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 30 seconds more. Add the tomatoes and their juices, and season with salt and pepper. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered, until thickened, about 20 minutes.

Remove the tomato sauce from the heat. Cut the eggplant into strips and stir them into the sauce along with the basil.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and salt and cook, stirring frequently, until al dente (tender but firm to the bite).

Drain the pasta and pour it into a warmed serving bowl. Add the sauce and the ½ cup *each* ricotta salata and pecorino cheeses, and stir and toss well. Top with grated ricotta salata cheese and serve immediately. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Savoring Series, Savoring Italy, by Michele Scicolone (Time-Life Books, 1999).

# Braised Turkey Meatballs with Quick Tomato Sauce

Spoon these meatballs and their flavorful sauce over cooked spaghetti. Add a tossed green salad and crusty bread, and dinner is served.

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, warm 1 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the onion, carrot and a few pinches of salt and cook, stirring, until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool.

Add the ground turkey, bread crumbs, egg, sage, the 1 tsp. salt and the  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. pepper to the bowl and mix gently but thoroughly with your hands. Form the mixture into 12 meatballs, each about 3 Tbs.

In the same pan over medium-high heat, warm 2 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the meatballs and cook until browned, about 1 minute per side. Transfer to a plate.

Put the tomatoes and their juices in a food processor. While pulsing, slowly stream in the ¼ cup olive oil through the feed tube until the tomatoes are pureed but still a bit chunky. Stir in the garlic and oregano, and season with salt and pepper.

Pour the tomato sauce into the same pan, place over medium heat and heat until the sauce is warm. Add the meatballs, cover and reduce the heat to low. Simmer, stirring once or twice, until the meatballs are cooked through, about 30 minutes.

Divide the meatballs and sauce among individual pasta bowls. Sprinkle with cheese and serve immediately. Serves 4.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

## Orecchiette with Cauliflower and Leeks

In this recipe, leeks and garlic are roasted until nicely browned and sweet, and then tossed with small cauliflower florets and tangy goat cheese to make an unctuous cheese sauce. Small, sturdy cap-shaped "little ears," orecchiette are the perfect pasta to carry the chunky sauce.

Preheat an oven to 400°F. Select a large, shallow serving bowl for the pasta, place the cheese in the bowl and set aside.

Cut off and discard the dark green tops from each leek, leaving the pale green portion intact, and trim away the root end. Cut each leek in half lengthwise and clean thoroughly under cold running water. Oil a rimmed baking sheet with 1 Tbs. of the olive oil. Brush the leeks and garlic cloves all over with the remaining 4 Tbs. olive oil and arrange in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Season with sea salt.

Roast until the vegetables are nicely browned and thoroughly softened, about 20 minutes. When cool enough to hand, chop the leeks into ½-inch pieces and cut the garlic cloves into quarters. Set aside.

Continued next page

## Ingredients for Braised Turkey Meatballs with Ouick Tomato Sauce

- 3 Tbs. plus 1/4 cup olive oil
- ½ yellow onion, grated
- ½ large carrot, peeled and grated
- Kosher salt, to taste, plus 1 tsp.
- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1½ cups fine fresh bread crumbs
- 1 egg, whisked
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh sage
- ½ tsp. freshly ground pepper, plus more, to taste
- 2 cans (each 28 oz.) whole San Marzano tomatoes, with juices
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp. dried oregano

Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese for serving

#### Ingredients for Orecchiette with Cauliflower and Leeks

- 1/4 lb. fresh goat cheese, cut into 4 pieces
- 4 leeks
- 5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 large garlic cloves, peeled but left whole
- Fine sea salt, to taste
- 2 Tbs. kosher salt
- 3/4 lb. orecchiette
- 1 small head cauliflower, trimmed and cut into small florets to measure 4 cups
- ¼ cup Gaeta or Niçoise olives, pitted and cut in half lengthwise

Freshly ground pepper, to taste