

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

Spaghetti Arrabiata

BY RACHEL WALKER



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WHEN IT COMES TO VALENTINE'S DAY, there's all sorts of pressure on a romantic meal—pity the person who spends the evening shucking oysters and tenderising expensive steaks.

In my book, there aren't many more loving things than a beautiful bowl of pasta with a sauce made from scratch. So rather than splashing out on sirloin, treat yourself to really quality versions of the ingredients below. It'll still be a fraction of the cost, meaning you can use the difference to buy a special bottle and make a real night of it.

Serves 2

- 1 chilli, deseeded and finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 anchovy fillets, roughly chopped
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 200g quality dried spaghetti
- 12 black olives, pitted
- 2–4tbsps freshly grated parmesan
- 2tbsps flat-leaf parsley

1. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan. Add the chilli, garlic cloves and anchovies. Cook on a medium heat for 2–3 minutes, making sure the oil doesn't brown.

[Note: anchovy fillets might seem an odd ingredient to add, but they melt into the sauce and impart a delicious saltiness rather than any sort of fishy flavour.]

2. Add the oregano and then the chopped tomatoes into the frying pan. Lower the heat and let the sauce

gently simmer uncovered for 8–10 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, bring a pan of salted water to the boil and cook the spaghetti according to the instructions on the packet.

4. Once the spaghetti is almost cooked, stir the olives through the pasta sauce, taste and season accordingly.

5. Use tongs or a spaghetti server to lift the spaghetti from the water and transfer it to the pan of sauce. Move it carefully in the pan and stir it gently to make sure all the strands are coated in the sauce.

6. Divide the spaghetti and sauce between two plates. Garnish with the flat-leaf parsley and top with the grated parmesan cheese.

TIPS...

Good-quality spaghetti makes a huge difference. Look for 100% durum wheat on the ingredient label and peer through the pack to examine its texture. Authentic spaghetti has a coarse texture, which means the sauce clings to it.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM & ZOE HILL

Finding Your Wine

THERE'S CERTAINLY ROMANCE in tailoring a meal to your loved one's tastes. As well as cooking their favourite foods, why not pair this year's Valentine's dinner with a bottle of wine they'll love too?

If you're not sure where to start, then look no further than the concept of "vinotyping," pioneered by master of wine Tim Hanni. He argues that everyone perceives tastes differently—so what one person finds delicious, another won't like at all.

What's interesting is how Hanni's theory undermines the way we currently buy wines, which is often based around expert guidance or shop recommendations. Hanni has



created a quiz to help people work out which vinotype they are, so they can buy wine according to their "persona": Tolerant, Sensitive, Hypersensitive or Sweet. It asks participants simple questions such as how they take their coffee or whether they like spicy foods.

Just think how your loved ones would answer the quiz and surprise them with a bottle they'll love...

■ **Take the quiz at myvinotype.com**



RACHEL RECOMMENDS...

- **TOLERANT:** Fans of bold reds should look to Portugal and Argentina. Try *The Waxed Bat Reserve* (£9.49).
- **SENSITIVE:** This category contains the most adventurous drinkers. Try *The Society's Pinot Noir* (£7.25).
- **HYPERSENSITIVE:** Dry or off-dry whites will woo hypersensitive drinkers. Try *Tu Meke Pinot Grigio* (£8.99).
- **SWEET:** Sweet vinotypes should ease in to drinking wine. Try *Tim Adams Clare Valley Riesling* (£9.75).



pudding
of the
Month



Scotch Pancakes

These are just as simple and delicious as French-style crêpes—and perfect for Pancake Day.

- 200g self-raising flour
- 75g caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 300ml milk
- 20g butter
- To serve: fresh fruit, fromage frais, your favourite toppings

Tip the flour and sugar into a bowl and make a little well in the middle. Add the eggs to the well with a big splash of milk. Whisk into a thick batter, then slowly add the rest of the milk, whisking it constantly to make sure there are no lumps. Melt the butter in a non-stick pan and use a tablespoon to make circles of the batter round the edge. When bubbles start to rise, flip the pancakes using a spatula and cook for another half-minute on the other side. Serve with your favourite topping. ■

DVD



The Ways of the Wine, Simply Media, £9.99. Fascinating docudrama following top sommelier Charlie Arturaola.

BUDGET



Frozen fruit is brilliantly cost-effective. Turn into compote to serve with your Scotch pancakes, Tesco, £2/500g.

BLOW-OUT



Nom Living pasta bowl. Serve the spaghetti arrabiata in this beautiful hand-thrown dish. £15 each.