

Pasta of the Month – Penne with Carbonara Style Vodka Sauce

I love pasta – any kind of pasta! Who doesn't like pasta? It's eaten all over the world in some form or another. Noodles are pasta, but not all pasta is a noodle! Merriam-Webster (you know, those word experts?) tell us that a noodle is "a food paste made usually with egg and shaped typically in ribbon form". They also tell us that the word came from the German "nudel", which is simply, a noodle. So where did we get all these weird shapes and tubes? The one this month, Penne, originated in southern Italy in a region called Campania. Their name is from the Italian word for pen (penna), because the ends are angled like the end of a quilled pen. They are also one of the most popular pasta varieties in the US – partly because they work so well with rich, creamy sauces – like the one this month!

So, this month's pasta is....



Penne with a Carbonara Style Vodka Sauce

The history of carbonara sauce is unclear. No one quite knows how bacon and eggs got started as a sauce for pasta, but it's

been around a long time. You'll often see it with spaghetti noodles – long and thin tossed in the thick and cheese sauce, but some stories tell of the coal workers in Rome being the creators of this sauce and they used penne. Penne is easier to toss and the sauce sticks to it inside and out, making a richer dish. Well this one is inspired by those stories, and I added a twist – Vodka! There is no alcohol, it all cooks out, but there is a richness in the flavor that puts it just a step above your plain ol' carbonara.

Ready to give it a go?

What you need:

- 3 cups of dry penne pasta
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chopped, raw bacon (about 2/3 pound)
- 3/8 cup half and half
- 3 egg yolks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 6 Tablespoons shredded parmesan (not the dried in a can stuff)
- 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of vodka
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons of garlic
- 4 Tablespoons of chopped chives

How to Do it:

Cook the pasta according to the package directions. Drain and set aside.

In the bottom of a large sauce pan, cook the bacon until it begins to crisp. Add the garlic and cook on low until it becomes fragrant, but not brown. Deglaze the pan with the vodka (that means to loosen all the brown bits into the sauce). Put the pasta into the pan and stir.



Add the $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of parmesan and mix well.

Beat the egg yolks into the half and half.

Slowly pour the cream mixture into the pasta and cook on medium, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens.

Put in serving bowls topped with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the remaining parmesan and 1 Tablespoon of chopped chives.



Serve hot!

Serves 4



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