



Orecchiette, Broccoli, Anchovies & Chilli

This classic dish from Puglia is also popular in neighbouring Basilicata. It highlights one of the many reasons to love pasta – it's literally on the table in less time than it takes for a pizza delivery to arrive! It may look simple, even a little odd, but it's so delicious that everyone will be asking for seconds. This is an exception to the 'don't overcook vegetables' rule, the idea is that the broccoli breaks up completely to form the sauce. If you're serving this as a standalone meal add a tomato salad for a bit of colour contrast (perhaps with some red onion and olives). Any leftovers make a fabulous frittata the next day too.

Serves 4 as a starter (or 2 as a main course)



INGREDIENTS

- 600g broccoli (about 1 large head)
- 500g orecchiette pasta
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 6 anchovy fillets (see note below)
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes

Toasted Breadcrumbs

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs

For a vegetarian/vegan version, simply omit the anchovies.

METHOD

1. Make Toasted Breadcrumbs: heat oil in a small frying pan over medium heat, add breadcrumbs and stir for 3–5 minutes, until crisp and lightly coloured. Remove from pan and set aside.
2. Cut broccoli into small florets, discarding thick stalks (see Tip below).
3. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to the boil (10g/litre of water). Add pasta and broccoli and cook until pasta is al dente.
4. Meanwhile, place oil, anchovies, garlic and chilli flakes in a large frying pan over a low heat. Cook for 3–4 minutes, stir to break up the anchovies, until garlic starts to colour.
5. Remove pan from the heat, stir for 30 seconds or so to cool it down a little then set aside.
6. When pasta is cooked, drain it, reserving the cooking water.
7. Return the frying pan to medium–high heat, tip the pasta and broccoli into it and stir well to combine with the oil mixture.
8. Add ½ cup of the cooking water and continue stirring, crushing any large pieces of stem; add a little more cooking water if necessary to create a creamy sauce.
9. Spoon into shallow bowls, sprinkle with Toasted Breadcrumbs and serve immediately.