

Penne with Cauliflower and Green Olive Pesto

Penne con Cavolfiore e Pesto d'Olive Verdi

Serves 6

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Cooking a vegetable along with the pasta, in this case cauliflower, is a great way to stretch a pound of pasta with healthy ingredients, without dirtying another pan. You could do the same here with broccoli or broccolini, green beans, or snap or snow peas.

- Kosher salt
- 1 cup pitted Italian green olives, such as Castelvetrano
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted
- 2 cups loosely packed fresh Italian parsley leaves
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
- Peperoncino flakes
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pound penne
- 1 small cauliflower, cut or broken into small florets
- ½ cup freshly grated Grana Padano

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for the pasta. In the meantime, combine the olives, walnuts, parsley, garlic, and a large pinch of peperoncino in the work bowl of a mini-food processor. Pulse to make a chunky paste. With the machine running, add the olive oil in a steady stream to make a smooth pesto. Remove it to a serving bowl. Season with salt.

Add the penne to the boiling water. After about 2 minutes, add the cauliflower. When the pasta is al dente and the cauliflower is tender, remove them with a spider to the serving bowl with the sauce. Add the grated cheese; toss, adding up to ½ cup pasta-cooking water if it seems dry, to coat the pasta with the sauce, and serve.