



## **PastaMania #3. "Rigatoni Zucca e Salsiccia" (Squash and Sausage Rigatoni)**

(June 19, 2014)



"Zucca", or squash, was imported from America to Europe, thanks to Christopher Columbus. For a long time it hasn't really been appreciated in Italy; it was used mainly by southern peasants and was considered "poor people's food." Over time, however, it became a very popular ingredient for pasta dishes and this variation, pairing squash with Italian sausage, is really a must.

### **INGREDIENTS**

Serves 4



- First you'll need 24 oz De Cecco rigatoni
- 2 sausages
- 16 oz squash
- 1 scallion
- 4 fl. oz white wine
- 4 tablespoons De Cecco extravirgin olive oil
- 4 tablespoons grated Pamigiano

### PREPARATION

- Chop scallion and brown in a deep thick pan with extra virgin olive oil
- Remove sausages from skins and add them to the saucepan, stirring and mincing the meat with a fork. Let the meat cook for about 5 minutes until brown.
- Cube squash and add it to the pan, stirring in with the meat for a few minutes.
- Add white wine and cook for another 5 minutes until it evaporates.
- Lower the flame, cover and let it cook for 10 minutes
- Meanwhile, when the water comes to a boil, add coarse salt and toss in the rigatoni, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick
- Check to make sure the rigatoni you are using is made in Italy with durum wheat semolina. The best Italian pasta stays firm after cooking and has a rough porous texture that the sauce sticks to better. You'll recognize it by the touch.
- Cook rigatoni for 14 minutes. If you cook it longer, Italians won't like it! Pasta must be "al dente"—or firm to the bite.
- When it is ready, don't strain the rigatoni—just remove it from the pot using a large slotted spoon and add it to the saucepan. The starch in the water will help the sauce stick to the pasta.
- Cook over a high flame for a minute or so, stirring thoroughly
- Before serving add some extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese
- Rigatoni zucca e salsiccia may be paired with a red wine, not too dry, such as Lambrusco, from central-northern Italy.

... AND REMEMBER: To make an excellent pasta dish, use excellent pasta!

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