

Sun-Dried Tomato Pasta with Chicken and Creamy Mozzarella Sauce



Ingredients:

- 3 garlic cloves , minced
- 4 oz sun-dried tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 lb chicken breast tenderloins , sliced
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- 1 cup half and half (or use ½ cup heavy cream + ½ cup milk)
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded (do not use fresh Mozzarella)
- 8 oz penne pasta
- 1 tablespoon basil
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ cup reserved cooked pasta water or more
- ¼ teaspoon salt to taste

Method:

1. In a large skillet, sauté garlic and sun-dried tomatoes (drained from oil) in 2 tablespoons of olive oil (reserved from the sun-dried tomatoes jar) for 1 minute on medium heat until the garlic is fragrant.
2. Remove the sun-dried tomatoes from the skillet, leaving the olive oil.
3. Add sliced chicken (salted and lightly covered in paprika for color) and cook on high heat for 1 minute on each side. Remove from heat.
4. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Reserve some cooked pasta water. Drain the pasta.
5. Slice sun-dried tomatoes into smaller pieces and add them back to the skillet with chicken.
6. To make creamy pasta sauce, add half-and-half (see substitution for half-and-half in the Recipe Notes section below) and Mozzarella cheese to the skillet, and bring to a gentle boil.
7. Immediately reduce to simmer and cook, constantly stirring, until all cheese melts and creamy sauce forms.
8. Add cooked and drained pasta to the skillet with the cream sauce, and stir to combine.
9. Add 1 tablespoon of basil, and at least ¼ teaspoon of red pepper flakes. Stir to combine.
10. If the creamy sauce is too thick, add about ½ cup of reserved cooked pasta water to thin it out. Do not add all of pasta water at once - you might need less or more of it.
11. Season the chicken pasta with salt and more red pepper flakes, to taste, if needed. Let it simmer for a couple of minutes for flavors to combine.
12. Make sure to salt the dish just enough to bring out of the flavors of basil and sun-dried tomatoes.