
BROCCOLI RAAB AND SAUSAGE SAUCE

(SERVED WITH CAVATELLI)

A classic from southern Italy, this robust sauce marries slightly bitter greens with garlicky sausage and comforting pasta. Please be sure to use Pecorino Romano here: its salty, pungent flavor is just right with the bold sauce. Parmigiano, no matter how delicious in other dishes, just can't stand up to such big flavors. Orecchiette are a fine alternative to the cavatelli suggested below.

Serves 2

- 1 large bunch (450 grams or 1 pound) broccoli raab, tough stems and yellow flowers removed, chopped
- 2 tablespoons plus 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 225 grams (8 ounces) cavatelli
- 60 milliliters (1/4 cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 hot or sweet Italian sausage, casings removed (115 grams or 1/4 pound)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 60 grams (2 ounces) freshly grated Pecorino Romano, plus extra for passing at the table

- 1.** Bring 6 quarts (6 liters) of water to a boil in a large pot. Add 2 tablespoons of the salt and the broccoli raab. Cook 15 minutes, or until very tender and limp.
- 2.** Add the pasta to the pot with the broccoli raab and stir well. Cook until al dente, about 10 minutes. Drain well (the broccoli raab retains a lot of water in its leaves) and reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water.
- 3.** Meanwhile, warm 15 milliliters (1 tablespoon) of the olive oil in a skillet wide enough to hold the pasta later. Add the crumbled sausage. Cook, stirring, until browned, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant. Remove from the heat.
- 4.** Add the drained pasta and broccoli raab to the sausage in the skillet. Season with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Cook over high heat 1 minute, stirring.
- 5.** Add the Pecorino and the remaining 45 milliliters (3 tablespoons) of olive oil. Taste for seasoning, adjust as needed, and serve hot.

