

## Spring Pasta with Asparagus and Peas

Serves 4-6

3 T. extra virgin olive oil  
1 c. bread crumbs (leftover stale Italian bread works well)  
1 lb. orecchiette pasta (little ears), cooked al dente, according to package directions  
1 lb. fresh asparagus, rinsed and trimmed of tough ends  
½ large sweet onion, chopped small  
2 cloves fresh garlic, crushed  
¼ t. red pepper flakes, or more to taste  
1 c. fresh shelled peas  
½ c. roasted red pepper strips (jarred is fine)  
½ c. canned crushed tomatoes, with juice  
¼ c. chopped fresh basil leaves  
¼ c. chopped fresh Italian parsley  
Coarse kosher salt, to taste  
Generous grinding of black pepper, to taste

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the breadcrumbs and toast, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a shallow bowl and season with a bit of salt.

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the orecchiette and cook until al dente. Drain the pasta – retaining about ½ cup of the cooking liquid – and set aside.

Cut the asparagus spears into 1" to 1½" pieces.

Now, turn the heat up to medium-high under your skillet. When it's hot, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, then the onion and asparagus pieces and sprinkle with a bit of salt. Sauté the vegetables for 3-4 minutes until the onion begins to soften and the asparagus pieces are bright green, then add the red pepper flakes and garlic, and continue to sauté until the vegetables are crisp tender (about another 3-5 minutes).

Into the pan, add the peas, roasted red pepper strips, and the crushed tomatoes. Stir to combine, reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, for about 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and season the vegetable mixture with salt and pepper to taste.

Place the cooked pasta into a large serving bowl, pour the vegetable mixture over it, sprinkle with the basil and parsley, and toss to combine everything, adding a bit of the leftover pasta water, a couple of tablespoons at a time, if needed to moisten the mixture (you won't need it all). Top the pasta with the toasted bread crumbs and serve hot.

This pasta dish keeps well and can be enjoyed right out of the refrigerator.

Recipe courtesy of Kate Kaminski for the Delicious TV Team