

Casarecce with Basil Pesto, Cherry Tomatoes, and Sirloin Tips

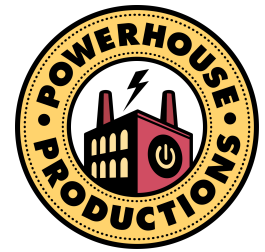
Recipe courtesy of Bren Herrera

For the Pesto

6-8 cloves garlic
4 cups fresh basil
¼ cup pine nuts
2 teaspoons chopped walnuts
1 cup Parmesan or Romano cheese
Pinch of raw or granulated sugar
Kosher salt
Black pepper
1 cup olive oil

For the Pasta

Olive oil
½ pound sirloin tips, cut into 1 inch strips
salt/pepper for seasoning and more to taste
1 medium yellow onion, sliced
2 bay leaves
½ teaspoon dried oregano
1 orange bell pepper, cut into 1 ½ inch pieces
½ cup sundried tomatoes, rough chopped
1-½ cups halved yellow and red cherry tomatoes
1 pound squid ink casarecce
¾ cup calamari rings
½ cup chicken broth
Chopped chives for garnish
Parmesan or Romano cheese for grating
Red pepper flakes for serving



Method:

1. *For the pesto:* In a small food processor add the garlic, basil, pine nuts, walnuts, cheese, sugar, and a seasoning of salt and pepper.
2. With the processor running, stream in the olive oil. Transfer to a bowl and adjust for salt.
3. In a large skillet over medium high heat add olive oil to coat the bottom of the pan.
4. Season the sirloin with salt and pepper. Add the sirloin tips to the pan, and cook until browned. Remove the meat to a plate with all of its juices.
5. *Make the sofrito:* add the yellow onions, bay leaves, and oregano to the same skillet and cook until the onions are translucent and golden in color.
6. Add the bell pepper and sundried tomatoes and continue to cook until they begin to soften. Add one cup cherry tomatoes to the sofrito and sundried tomato mixture and allow them to cook, about 2-3 minutes.
7. In the meantime bring a pot of salted water to a boil and cook the casarecce for about 7-9 minutes or al dente.
8. Strain the pasta and toss into the sofrito. Add back in the sirloin along with its juices and gently stir. Adjust for salt if needed.
9. Fold in the calamari rings, more cherry tomatoes, pesto, and chicken stock.
10. Bring the sauce up to a gentle simmer and cook for a few minutes to reduce the chicken stock so it creates a sauce to coat the pasta.
11. Serve the pasta with chives, grated cheese, and red pepper flakes for additional heat.