



## PASTA WITH BROCCOLI, GARLIC & LEMON

*Recipe serves 4.*

### INGREDIENTS

1½ lb (675g) broccoli, cut into small florets, stems peeled and cut into ½” pieces (~8C) (note 1)

1 lb (450g) dry short pasta of choice

¼ C good quality extra virgin olive oil (note 2)

5-6 garlic cloves, minced (~ 2 tbsp)

1 medium sized shallot, finely chopped (~ ¼ C)

1-2 tbsp capers, drained and minced into paste-like consistency (optional – note 4)

1 C (90g) grated Parmigiano Reggiano or Pecorino Romano, separated (note 2)

Zest of half a lemon

Squeezes of lemon juice to taste

Kosher salt

### ***To serve:***

Reserved grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Dried red pepper flakes

Freshly ground black peppercorn



## METHOD

Preheat a 5- or 6-quart Dutch oven or pot over medium heat.

Separately, fill a pasta pot with 3 quarts of water and bring to a boil. Add 2 tablespoons of kosher salt (or amount needed for water to “taste as salty as the sea”) and place broccoli pieces in to blanch about 2 minutes or just becoming tender but still bright green and firm.

While broccoli is blanching, add olive oil, shallots, garlic and capers into the other pot to sauté. Once broccoli is done, use a slotted spoon or handheld colander to transfer from boiling water into the pot with the shallots-garlic-caper mixture. Toss and turn down the heat to medium-low. Salt to taste and let it continue to cook, stirring occasionally.

Add pasta into the same pot of boiling water used to blanch the broccoli. Cook according to package instructions for al dente, minus 1-2 minutes. Use slotted spoon or handheld colander to transfer pasta to broccoli, reserving the pasta water (or reserve 1 cup pasta water before draining pasta).

Turn heat down to low. Add ½ cup pasta water and cook for 1-2 minutes more until pasta is the desired texture, adding more splashes of pasta water as needed. Add ¾ cup of the grated cheese (keeping the remaining ¼ cup for serving), lemon zest and lemon juice. Adjust with more pasta water as needed to get a starchy, silky sauce (I tend to use the full 1 cup of pasta water). Mix well and serve with reserved cheese, red pepper flakes and black pepper as desired.

## RECIPE NOTES

1. Broccoli stems: There is absolutely no reason to not use broccoli stems in the same exact way as the florets, ever. The trick is to trim the end, cut stem off crown, then cut or peel off the fibrous outer layer of the stem before using. The amount you have to shave off depends largely on how fresh the broccoli is – sometimes only a thin layer, sometimes quite a bit. The inner stem is tender and delicious and can be cooked exactly the same as the florets. I cut the stem into ½” pieces for this recipe. Tip: my favourite tool for peeling off the outer layer is a Y-shaped vegetable peeler.
2. Quality olive oil and cheese: Since there are relatively few ingredients in this easy recipe, do use a quality extra virgin olive oil and quality cheese (i.e. not pre-grated parmesan in a tub) for best results! *(notes continued below)*



3. Pasta water: Take care to ensure pasta water is salted perfectly. I can't emphasize this enough especially for simple recipes like this. It makes the difference between a flavourful versus bland dish. If you don't season pasta from within (during cooking), it is difficult to salt at the end to achieve the same result. I add 2 tbsp kosher salt per pound of pasta cooked in about 3 quarts of water. That said, even kosher salt varies in salinity from brand to brand. Your best bet is to taste and adjust until the water "tastes like the sea".
4. Capers: I love mincing capers into a paste to flavour pastas. My family never knows it's there but it creates a little more depth in flavour in the background with its brininess. Skip it or use less if you don't like capers.