

Cavatappi with cauliflower, saffron, pine nuts, and currants

Adapted from *Pasta* by William Sonoma, pp. 90-91

Serves: 2

½ cauliflower, but into small florets
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
½ onion [yellow] thinly sliced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of cayenne pepper
¼ cup dry white wine [vermouth]
Cavatappi, fusilli or penne
Large pinch of saffron thread, toasted and ground, then soaked in a few tablespoons of warm water
¼ cup pine nuts [almonds or cashew), lightly toasted
¼ cup dried currants, soaked in warm water for 5 minutes and drained
Leaves from 2 or 3 small fresh dill sprigs, minced
Sprinkle of grated pecorino [Parmesan]



Photography Henri T. de Hahn

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Generously salt the boiling water and blanch the cauliflower florets for 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to a colander, reserving the cooking water. Run cold water over them to stop the cooking. Drain well
2. In a large frying pan over medium heat, warm the ¼ cup olive oil. Add the onion and sauté until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the blanched cauliflower, salt and black pepper to taste, and cayenne and sauté until tender and well coated with oil, about 2 minutes. Add the white wine and let it boil away.
3. Bring the cauliflower-cooking water back to a boil add the pasta and cook until al dente, 8-11 minutes.
4. Reduce the heat to low under the frying pan, add the saffron, and simmer for 1 minute to blend the flavors.
5. Drain the pasta, reserving about ½ cup of the pasta water. Add the pasta to the frying pan. Add the pine nuts, currants, and a few tablespoons of the pasta water to loosen the sauce, if needed. Toss briefly, just to blend. Pour the pasta into a warmed lard, shallow bowl and add the dill, 2 heaping tablespoons of the grated cheese, and a drizzle of olive oil. Toss to mix. Pass the remaining cheese at the table.