

Orecchiette with Sausage, Baby Kale, and Bell Pepper

(Even though this recipe is called orecchiette, I've made it with other shapes of pasta. Rigatoni works well.)

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoons kosher salt
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
5 garlic cloves, crushed
Freshly cracked black pepper
14 oz sweet Italian chicken sausage, casing removed
6 cups baby kale
10 oz orecchiette (or other shaped pasta)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated pecorino romano
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper (optional)

Start a large pot of water boiling, with 2 teaspoons of salt.

Meanwhile, heat a large, deep nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the olive oil, onion and red bell pepper, crushed garlic, and the rest of the salt. Cook, stirring until soft, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the sausage and cook, breaking up the sausage using a wooden spoon, and brown for 10 minutes. Add the kale, and cover, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, then remove the cover, and stir and let the moisture evaporate.

Add the pasta to the boiling water, and cook according to the directions on the package. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the pasta water. Mix the sausage mixture and the pasta and the reserved water. Cook together until the water evaporates. Remove from heat and mix in the cheese and the optional red pepper flakes.