

Poppy Seed Pasta

Serves 4+ as side

Ingredients

1 # pasta of fusilli pasta, or preference
1 cup poppy seeds
¼+ cup raw sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup agave or maple syrup
Zest and juice of ½ orange, cut into thin strips

Directions

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook the pasta as directed. Drain and toss with olive oil.
2. Grind the poppy seeds in a spice grinder to a coarse powder. In a small to medium pot or pan, toast the ground poppy seeds, stirring frequently, until fragrant and crackling, about 5-6 minutes over medium heat.
3. After toasting the poppy seed powder, turn off the heat and add the raw sugar, cinnamon, vanilla extract, and stir well to combine.
4. Combine the poppy seed powder mixture, orange juice, orange zest and cooked pasta. Season with the syrup and salt. Add more orange juice or olive oil if the pasta is too dry.
5. Serve with red pepper flakes.

Context

This pasta dish is inspired by the super traditional dish from Friuli in Northeast Italy - Lasagna con Semi di Papavero. This Italian region is known for its white wines, including Pinot Grigio, is influenced by its neighbors to the north & east - Austria, Slovenia, and Croatia where the poppy seed is widely used in those cuisines. This pasta is a decadent treat here in the U.S. where imported poppy seeds are not so cheap.

This Eastern Euro-dish is a stark difference from the common pasta dishes we see in the U.S. - very savory with braised or ground meats or tossed with fresh summer vegetables. This dish is refreshingly light and rather sweet due to the different sugars added. Poppy Seed Pasta is a lovely accompaniment to our overdramatic adjustment to the rising temperatures of spring. The sweetness is balanced with an usually intense flavor of the ground poppy seeds, a very typical application of the ingredient stateside.

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Drink it how you like it - in fancy stemware, mixed with fresh fruit juice served from a spout, or over ice with a mason jar and straw. Just come back for more.