

## **Rachel Ray's Pasta alla Norma**

1 large whole eggplant  
1 large head of garlic  
Extra Virgin Olive Oil for drizzling  
1 lb of fresh tomatoes chopped  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 pound cavatappi-shaped pasta (or other)  
1 large handful (about 20 or so) fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces  
1/4 pound of ricotta salata, crumbled ( or 1 cup whole milk ricotta)

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Cut 4 to 5 slits on one side of the eggplant and place it slit-side-up on a baking sheet. Trim about an inch off the top of the head of garlic, just exposing the tops of the cloves inside. Place the garlic on a piece of aluminum foil, drizzle with a little olive oil, wrap it up and place it in the oven alongside the eggplant. Roast them both for about 30-40 minutes, until the eggplant looks like a flat tire. When the eggplant and garlic only have about 15 minutes left to roast, put the chopped tomatoes on a baking sheet, drizzle them with olive oil and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Transfer to the oven and roast for about 15 min.

Place a large pot of water over high heat with a lid on it and bring up to a boil. Once boiling, add some salt and cook the pasta according to the package directions to al dente. Right before draining the pasta, remove and reserve about 1 cup of the pasta-cooking water.

Once the eggplant, garlic and tomatoes are all roasted, remove everything from the oven. Split the eggplant open and scoop out all of the roasted flesh with a spoon, discarding the skin. Transfer the flesh to a large serving bowl along with the roasted tomatoes.

Squeeze out the roasted garlic flesh from the papery shell and add to the eggplant and tomatoes. With the back of a fork or a potato masher, smash up the eggplant, tomatoes and garlic until thoroughly combined. Add some salt, freshly ground black pepper, and the reserved pasta-cooking liquid to the bowl, stirring and smashing to combine.

Add the pasta and toss to coat. Let the pasta sit for a couple minutes to absorb the flavors of the sauce. Just before serving, top with the torn basil and crumbled ricotta salata or a large dollop of the ricotta cheese.