

Spaghetti with Lobster Pomodoro

4 SERVINGS *Nduja, a spicy salami now produced domestically, blends cured pork fat and chiles in a spreadable, meltable consistency. Combining it with lobster is transformative, taking this basic pasta Pomodoro to the next level.*

- Kosher salt
- 2 1 ¼-lb. live lobsters
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. ghee or unsalted butter
- ¼ small red onion, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 sprigs basil
- 1 14-oz. can whole peeled San Marzano tomatoes
- 12 oz. spaghetti
- 4 oz. nduja, broken into small pieces
- Tarragon and parsley leaves (for serving)

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Working one at a time, cook lobsters 3 minutes, then transfer to a large bowl of ice water. Let cool just until you can comfortably handle them, about 1 minute, then twist off claws where the knuckles meet the body and return them to pot of boiling water. Cook 2 minutes (leave bodies in ice water). Add claws back to ice water and let both claws and bodies cool completely. (The lobsters are intentionally undercooked at this point but will finish cooking in the sauce.)

Remove bodies and claws from ice water. Twist tails off bodies with your hands; discard heads (you won't get enough meat to make it worth your time). Working with 1 tail at a time, place on a cutting board and, using a chef's knife or cleaver, cut lengthwise all the way through tail in one motion. You should now have 2 even halves. Remove any tomalley or eggs from tails and discard. Remove meat from shells; discard shells. Using the back of a cleaver or a lobster cracker, crack claws on all sides and pick out meat; discard shells. Cut tail and claw meat into bite-size pieces. Place in an airtight container; cover and chill until ready to use.

Heat oil and ghee in a large skillet over medium. As soon as ghee is melted, add onion and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is very soft, about 5 minutes. Add basil and as soon as it is wilted, add the tomatoes, crushing well with your hands as you go.

Bring to a gentle simmer and cook sauce until thick and flavors have melded, 20–25 minutes. Season sauce with salt and pluck out basil.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in another large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until very al dente (about 1 minute less than package directions).

Using tongs, transfer pasta to skillet with sauce, then add nduja and a splash of pasta cooking liquid and reduce heat to medium-low (high heat can cause the sauce to break). Cook, tossing gently and adding splashes of pasta cooking liquid as needed to get sauce to cling tightly to pasta, until sauce and nduja are combined, about 1 minute. Taste and season pasta with salt if needed.

Add chilled lobster meat to pasta and cook, tossing gently, just until lobster meat is warmed all the way through, about 2 minutes.

Divide pasta among bowls and top with tarragon and parsley leaves.

DO AHEAD: Lobster can be cooked 1 day ahead; keep chilled. Tomato sauce can be made 3 days ahead. Let cool; cover and chill. Reheat over medium before using.

Chocolate Budino with Candied Walnuts

MAKES 6 *This deliciously wobbly, very special pudding isn't thickened with cornstarch or gelatin. Instead, it's made with chocolate, milk, cream, and eggs and spiked with olive oil and salt, which complement the bittersweet and fruity flavors of the chocolate. To die for!*

CANDIED WALNUTS

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- Kosher salt

BUDINO AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 cup bittersweet chocolate wafers (disks, pistoles, fèves; preferably 70%–74% cacao) or 5 oz. chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- 6 large egg yolks
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil (preferably *Olio Verde*), plus more for serving
- Flaky sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Salted caramel gelato or ice cream (for serving; optional)

CANDIED WALNUTS Bring sugar and ½ cup water to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat, swirling occasionally to dissolve sugar. As soon as the sugar is dissolved, add walnuts and bring syrup back up to a simmer. Cook, swirling saucepan occasionally for even cooking, until walnuts look slightly translucent and are softened, 30–35 minutes.

Drain walnuts in a mesh sieve and arrange in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet lined with a silicone baking mat or parchment paper. Sprinkle walnuts with salt.

Place a rack in upper third of oven and preheat to 300°. Bake walnuts in oven, stirring once or twice, until well browned, 15–18 minutes. Let cool, then break up into small pieces.

DO AHEAD: Walnuts can be candied 1 week ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

BUDINO AND ASSEMBLY Place chocolate in a medium bowl; set aside. Bring cream and milk to a bare simmer in a large saucepan and remove from heat.

Vigorously whisk egg yolks and sugar in another medium bowl until pale yellow and sugar is dissolved (rub between fingers to check), about 2 minutes.

Gradually pour cream mixture into egg yolk mixture, whisking vigorously. Immediately pour egg yolk mixture into saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a heatproof rubber spatula and making sure to get into the corners of the pan, until an instant-read thermometer registers 175° (custard should be thick enough to coat a spoon; do not let it simmer or allow thermometer to go above 180°).

Pour custard over reserved chocolate and let sit until chocolate is melted, about 5 minutes. Using an immersion blender or a whisk, blend until emulsified (if using a whisk, you may want to strain budino through a fine-mesh sieve after to ensure a silky texture). Add kosher salt and 1 Tbsp. oil to chocolate mixture and blend to incorporate.

Divide budino evenly among six 8–12-oz. glasses. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until firm, at least 1 hour.

Top each budino with candied walnuts, sprinkle with sea salt and pepper, and drizzle with a little oil. Serve with scoops of gelato if desired.

DO AHEAD: Budinos (without toppings) can be made 3 days ahead. Keep chilled.