



orecchiette with leeks, spinach, sausage, and peas

Leeks pair well with spring ingredients like spinach and peas. The heat from the sausage balances the vegetables' sweetness. Serves 4 to 6

Kosher salt

- 3 lb. leeks (3 to 4 large)
- 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil; more as needed
- 1 lb. hot Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
- 5 oz. baby spinach (about 5 packed cups)
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen peas
- 12 oz. orecchiette, farfalle, or other short pasta
- 2 oz. Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano, finely grated (about 1½ cups); more for serving
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh mint
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Fresh lemon juice, to taste
- Pea shoots, for garnish (optional)

Lemon wedges, for serving

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil.

Trim the leeks, leaving the white and light-green parts. Slice in half lengthwise, then crosswise into ½-inch-thick half-moon slices to yield about 8 cups. Rinse well, then pat dry.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the sausage and cook, stirring occasionally, breaking up the meat into small bits, and adding more oil if needed, until cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes.

Use a slotted spoon to transfer the sausage to a bowl, leaving about 2 Tbs. of fat in the pan. Add the leeks and ¼ tsp. salt, and cook, stirring occasionally and adding more oil if the pan seems dry, until tender, 7 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Stir in the spinach and peas. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the spinach is wilted, 1 to 2 minutes more. Return the sausage to the skillet, and keep warm.

Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Reserve 1 cup of pasta cooking water, drain the pasta, and turn the pasta to the pot. Add the sausage, leek mixture, the reserved cooking water, cheese, mint, and a generous pinch of pepper. Toss to combine. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Serve topped with additional cheese and pea shoots, if you like, and lemon wedges on the side.



Pair With: AMERICAN PALE ALE The pasta has both bright flavors and rich and earthy elements. This medium-bodied beer can handle it all—it's clean, dry, and even a little herbal.