Tomato and Red Pepper Penne

2 penne portions, each with half the tomato-pepper sauce, olives and capers | Active 20 min | Cook 32 min | Total 50 min

Ingredients

- 140 g (5 oz) dry penne, with a package boiling interval around 10-12 minutes
- 900 ml water (about 3 3/4 US cups), for cooking pasta, drained
- 150 g (5 1/3 oz) prepared red bell pepper, seeds removed and cut into 1 cm/3/8 in pieces
- 50 g (1 3/4 oz) peeled red onion, finely chopped
- 200 g (7 oz) canned chopped tomatoes with their juice
- 10 ml olive oil (2 tsp)
- 30 ml water (2 tbsp), for softening the pepper
- 30 g pitted ready-to-eat black olives (1 oz), sliced
- 6 g drained capers (about 2 tsp), chopped
- 3 g dried basil (about 1 1/2 tbsp)
- 0.3 g ground black pepper (about 1/8 tsp)

Set out

1000 W microwave with turntable, Kitchen scale and measuring jug, Knife and board, Spoon, Oven mitts, Two serving bowls, Microwave-safe pasta bowl, at least 3 L/about 3 1/4 US qt measured capacity, about 22 cm/8 3/4 in inside diameter and 11 cm/4 1/4 in deep, Second microwave-safe sauce bowl, at least 1.5 L/about 1 2/3 US qt measured capacity, about 18 cm/7 in inside diameter, Two microwave-safe vented covers, Colander, Fork or tongs, Can opener, Food thermometer for leftover reheating checks

Allergens

Wheat. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Put the penne and all 900 ml pasta water in the 3 L bowl. Cover with the vent open. Microwave at 1000 W full power for 6-8 minutes, stopping after 3 and 6 minutes to stir. When the water begins to bubble steadily, reduce to 70% power.

2. Continue for the full pasta-package boiling interval, normally 10-12 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes and keeping a gentle bubbling cook. Remove the cover sooner if foam rises high; keep attending it. The pasta must be fully swollen and tender, with no hard, chalky line at the center when a piece is cut. Use further 1-minute bursts if needed. Carefully drain in the colander and return the pasta to its bowl; cover loosely while the sauce cooks.

3. In the 1.5 L sauce bowl, combine the pepper, onion, oil and 30 ml water. Cover with a vent and heat at full power for 5-7 minutes, stirring after 3 and 5 minutes, until the pepper is soft. Add all the tomatoes and juice, olives, capers, dried basil and black pepper. Stir, cover with a vent and heat for 3 minutes, stirring halfway, until bubbling and hot throughout.

4. Scrape all the sauce into the drained pasta bowl. Fold together, cover with a vent and heat at full power for 1-2 minutes, stirring halfway, until the assembled pasta is hot throughout. Stand covered for 2 minutes, stir and divide every component equally between two serving bowls.

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Drain away from the oven

Set the colander securely in the sink before lifting the hot bowl. Use both mitts and keep hands clear of steam.

The short wait is part of one cook

The drained pasta waits only while this measured sauce is heated, then the combined dish is warmed immediately. It is not a room-temperature holding method.

Ingredient labels

Penne contains wheat/gluten. Check olives, capers and dried tomatoes for sulfites or other label allergens. No cheese is included in the base recipe.

A useful detail

The 50-minute plan allows 10 minutes of preparation, up to 32 minutes of sequential heating, the 2-minute stand and 6 minutes for draining, combining and serving. Pasta and sauce do not heat at the same time. The starting oven is 1000 W; use the actual pasta package interval after bubbling starts, and extend the plan for additional endpoint bursts.

Another way

Use 140 g/5 oz dry fusilli with a similar 10-12-minute boiling interval instead of penne. Keep the 900 ml cooking water and check its center after the full interval.

Replace 30 g/1 oz olives with 30 g/1 oz finely chopped ready-to-eat sun-dried tomatoes drained of oil. Their stronger tomato flavor changes the sauce; keep the measured 10 ml oil unchanged.

Keep it well

Refrigerate shallow portions within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or below. Use within 3 days or an earlier opened-tomato or olive deadline. Add 15 ml/1 tbsp water to a chilled portion, cover with a vent and reheat in short stirred bursts; stand 2 minutes and verify 165°F/74°C throughout. Never leave the drained pasta at room temperature for a later sauce session.