

THE OLIVE AND THE GRAPE

Mentor West Side Market Tower City

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JUNE 2010 Pasta of the Month FREGOLA SARDA

A traditional Sardinian pasta made from hard durum wheat, fregola (or fregula) sarda resembles Israeli couscous. The pasta dough is rolled into tiny, not-entirely-round balls and toasted lightly.

With origins in the Moorish cuisine of North Africa brought to Sardinia by sailors and traders, fregola is great for salads, soups, and main course pasta dishes. Use it like couscous, topped with a Moroccan vegetable stew. Add it to soup, in place of barley. Boil it in water or stock, drain, and top with your favorite pasta sauce and lots of cheese. Cook it like risotto. Serve fregola as a cold pasta salad, or tossed with olive oil and fresh herbs, as a side dish with grilled meats or fish.

Fregola Sarda with Zucchini and Parmesan

- 170 grams (6 ounces) **fregola sarda**
- 2 medium zucchini, about 280 grams (10 ounces)
- a chunk of good parmesan, or other aged cheese, about 60 grams (2 ounces)
- 2 handfuls cherry tomatoes
- a handful of **pine nuts**, toasted
- **olive oil**
- **sea salt**, freshly ground **black pepper**

Serves 2.

Bring salted water to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Add the pasta, bring back to a simmer, and cook over medium-high heat for however many minutes the package recommends.

While the water is heating and the pasta is boiling, cut the zucchini in thin half-moons and grate the parmesan coarsely (using the largest holes of the grater). Halve the cherry tomatoes.

Two minutes before the pasta is supposed to be cooked according to the package, add in the zucchini, stir, bring the water back to a simmer, then cook for 2 more minutes. (The addition of the zucchini will make the water temperature drop, so the overall cooking time is slightly more than it would be if you were cooking the pasta alone.)

Drain and divide between two shallow bowls. Add the cherry tomatoes if using, drizzle with olive oil, and sprinkle with pepper, parmesan, and pine nuts. Serve hot or at room temperature, possibly the next day (in which case I add the parmesan after the pasta has cooled).

Items in **bold italic** are available at THE OLIVE AND THE GRAPE

Additional recipes are available by request, recipes@theoliveandthegrape.biz