

## Linguine with Saffron, Tomatoes and Herbs

- 1 pound cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup chopped pitted black olives, such as Gaeta (2 ounces)
- 2 Tablespoons salted capers—soaked briefly, rinsed and coarsely chopped
- 2 anchovy fillets, mashed
- 1 celery rib, finely chopped
- 1 scallion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced thyme
- ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup chopped basil
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- 2 Tablespoons minced chives
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 8 asparagus (about ½ pound), cut on the diagonal into 1-inch lengths
- 4 slices lean bacon (3 ounces), cut crosswise into 1/4-inch matchsticks
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 4 quarts vegetable stock
- 1/4 teaspoon saffron threads
- 1 ½ pounds linguine



In a large, shallow serving bowl, combine the tomatoes with the olives, capers, anchovies, celery, scallion and thyme. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and half of the basil, cilantro and chives and season with salt and pepper. Cover and set aside for up to 2 hours.

In a large skillet of boiling salted water, cook the asparagus until almost tender, about 1 minute. Drain and refresh in cold water.

In the same skillet, cook the bacon over moderate heat until crisp, about 4 minutes. Add the wine and boil over high heat for 3 minutes. Stir in the asparagus and the remaining 1/4 cup of olive oil and remove from the heat.

In a large pot, bring the vegetable stock to a boil with the saffron. Cover and simmer over low heat for 5 minutes. Salt the stock generously and return to a boil over high heat. Add the linguine and cook, stirring, until al dente. Drain the linguine and add it to the bowl with the tomatoes. Add the asparagus mixture, season with salt and pepper and toss well. Sprinkle the linguine with the remaining half of the basil, cilantro and chives and serve at once.

To make vegetable stock, combine 5 quarts of water with 1/4 cabbage, 2 carrots, 2 celery ribs, 6 garlic cloves, 1 medium onion, 4 scallions, 1/2 bunch of parsley, 2 bay leaves, 1 teaspoon whole peppercorns and 4 thyme sprigs and bring to a boil. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface. Season with salt and simmer over low heat for 1 1/4 hours. Strain the stock.

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