

BLT Bucatini

Adapted from *The Glorious Pasta of Italy* by Domenica Marchetti

If you like BLT sandwiches, you'll love this clever variation. Pancetta stands in for the bacon, arugula for the lettuce, and pasta for the bread. Also, while the recipe instructed me to roast cherry tomatoes for 2 to 3 hours in a low oven, I roasted mine for only 15 minutes on the convection setting. I tell you, the results were fantastic, and even with more time on my hands, I'd probably cheat like this again in a heartbeat.

Serves 4

1 pound grape or cherry tomatoes, halved
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 cloves garlic, minced
6 ounces thickly sliced pancetta, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 pound bucatini or thick spaghetti
8 ounces arugula (baby or regular)
1/2 cup freshly shredded pecorino romano (or parmesan) cheese

If you have a convection setting on your oven, preheat it to 250 degrees / convection. (If not, preheat it to 275 degrees, and cook the tomatoes about 25 percent longer, or as long as time allows. The longer, the better.) On a rimmed baking sheet, set the tomatoes cut-sides up and drizzle with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Sprinkle with the garlic, and season well with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven until their juices exude and they begin to shrivel, about 15 minutes, or longer if time allows.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil.

Warm the remaining one tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet and over medium heat. Add the pancetta and saute until the fat renders and the meat turns crispy, 12 to 15 minutes. Tip off about half the rendered fat. When the tomatoes are ready, scrape them (and their juices) into the skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Cover to keep warm.

Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to package directions, until al dente. Before draining, reserve 1 cup of pasta water. Drain.

Transfer the pasta to the skillet with the tomatoes and toss to combine thoroughly. Add a bit of the pasta water to loosen the sauce, then toss in the arugula one handful at a time, turning everything with tongs so the heat wilts the arugula. Serve hot, sprinkled with the shredded pecorino.