

# Orecchiette with Asparagus, Ricotta, and Lemon

## Ingredients

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| 1 lb. (500 gr) orecchiette             | 250 gr ricotta (or Lemon-Macadamia Ricotta for a dairy-free version)                        |
| 1/2 Cup of reserved pasta water        | Freshly ground black pepper (be generous!)  |
| 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil         | A handful of fresh herbs, chopped (dill, basil, mint, parsley, or a combination works well) |
| 2 Tbsp. minced garlic                  | Grating of parmesan (optional)  |
| 1 large lemon (or 1 Tbsp. lemon juice) |   |
| 2-4 tsp. red chili flakes              |   |
| 1 small bunch (500 gr) asparagus       |   |
| 1/2 tsp. salt, divided                 |   |
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## Directions

1. Bring a large pot of pasta water to the boil. Salt the water and drop pasta. Cook 1-2 minutes shy of package directions for al dente pasta. Don't forget to reserve 1/2 cup of pasta water before draining.
2. In the meantime, heat a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add oil, garlic, zest from the entire lemon, and chili flakes. Sauté for a few minutes, until fragrant.
3. Snap away woody stems of asparagus and cut stalks into coins. Add to skillet along with 1/4 tsp. salt. Sauté for 3 minutes, or until asparagus is crisp-tender.
4. Remove from heat. Stir in ricotta, the juice from half the lemon, and a few splashes of pasta water to loosen the sauce. Add orecchiette, the remaining 1/4 tsp. of salt and a few generous grinds of black pepper. Add more pasta water as needed to loosen the sauce. Taste, adjust for seasoning, adding more salt or lemon if desired. (If using the vegan lemon ricotta, you may not need all of the lemon juice called for in the recipe. Taste as you go.)
5. Serve immediately with a sprinkling of herbs and an optional grating of parmesan.