

PASTA W/ RUBY CHARD AND CHERRIES

(from the Moosewood's "Cooking for Health")

Ingredients

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| 1/2 cup dried cherries | 1 tsp salt |
| 16 oz chunky-shaped whole grain pasta | ground black pepper to taste |
| 1 bunch Ruby Chard | pinch of red pepper flakes
<i>(optional for added spiciness)</i> |
| 1/4 cup olive oil | 1/4 cup chopped toasted walnuts |
| 4 garlic cloves, minced or pressed | grated parmesan or crumbled
ricotta salata cheese <i>(optional)</i> |

Instructions

- 1.** Bring a large covered pot of salted water to a boil. When the water comes to a rapid boil, ladle a few tablespoons of it into a bowl, add the dried cherries and set aside to soak. Cook the pasta until al dente and drain.
- 2.** While the water is heating, rinse the chard and remove the bottom 1/2 inch or so of the stems. Cut any of the large ones in half again (to make them thinner). Chop the leaves. Set aside.
- 3.** While the pasta cooks, warm the oil in a large skillet on high heat. Add the chard stems and sauté for a minute. Add the garlic and chard leaves and cook uncovered, stirring often, until the chard is limp but the leaves are still bright green, about 5 minutes. Stir in the salt and a sprinkling of pepper and add the red pepper flakes, if you wish.
- 4.** Toast the walnuts.
- 5.** Drain the soaked cherries.
- 6.** Put the pasta into a serving bowl and top with the garlicky chard, plump hot cherries and toasted walnuts. Offer cheese at the table if you like.