

Crab Fra Diavolo

As boys, my uncles Michael and John often went crabbing in Barnegat Bay off the coast of New Jersey with their cousins. They'd bring back the day's catch to my great-aunt Mary's house, where she would make a marinara sauce, throw in the cleaned crabs, and then serve them straight from the pot with either pasta or bread. This recipe is inspired by their memories; even with shelled crab for ease and hot pepper for kick, the sentiment is the same. **SERVES 4**

¼ cup olive oil

4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

One 28-ounce can diced San Marzano tomatoes

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

¾ pound bucatini

¾ pound crabmeat, picked over for bits of shell (Dungeness, blue crab, and jumbo lump crab all work well)

¼ cup chopped flat-leaf Italian parsley, plus more for garnish

¼ cup chopped fresh mint, plus more for garnish

¼ cup chopped fresh chives, plus more for garnish

1. Heat the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and cook until the garlic is pale golden, about 2 minutes.

2. Add the tomatoes and season with salt and black pepper. Reduce the heat to low or medium-low heat and cook the sauce for 20 minutes. While the sauce simmers, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add 2 tablespoons of the salt and return to a rolling boil. Add the pasta and cook until al dente according to package directions.

3. About 3 minutes before the pasta is done cooking, add the crab and cook until just heated through. Scoop the pasta directly into the skillet and toss to coat. Sprinkle the herbs over the pasta and toss again, adding ¼ cup of pasta water or more (up to 1 cup), as needed to loosen up the sauce. Season with salt and black pepper.

4. Plate in bowls and garnish with additional herbs, if desired.

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