

ELIZABETH MINCHILLI

# THE ITALIAN TABLE

Creating  
festive meals  
for family and  
friends

RIZZOLI  
NEW YORK

## *Pasta con Pomodorini Schiacciati e Rughetta*

PASTA WITH SMASHED CHERRY TOMATOES AND ARUGULA

This is one of those effortless recipes that relies on extraordinary ingredients. The cherry tomatoes used here are *datterini*, a particularly intense variety grown on the estate. If you're unsure if your cherry tomatoes are up to the job, just taste one. If it's watery and bland, this recipe won't do anything to improve it. Better to move on to another recipe or else search out better tomatoes.

The arugula used here is the perennial variety, which grows wild in Puglia. Tough and spicy, it adds both flavor and texture to the dish. Prewashed, bagged hothouse arugula may not have the same effect but will be close. **SERVES 6**

**Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**1 pound of cavatelli or orecchiette**

**½ cup of extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling**

**1 pound of cherry tomatoes**

**¼ cup of fresh basil leaves**

**1 bunch of arugula or other spicy green, rinsed and dried**

**4 ounces of ricotta salata, grated (1 cup)**

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add the pasta and cook according to the package directions until al dente.

In the meantime, pour the olive oil into a large frying pan (big enough to hold the drained pasta later). Add the cherry tomatoes, basil, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook over high heat for about 10 minutes, until the tomatoes have started to break down.

Drain the pasta and add it to the tomatoes. Using the back of your spoon, smash the tomatoes to let their juices run out. Toss well to coat the pasta completely.

Divide the pasta into six individual bowls. Scatter the arugula leaves and ricotta salata over the top. Drizzle with more olive oil and serve immediately.

