**Rigatoni Woodsman-Style**

Lidia’s Italian American Kitchen (2001)—Lidia Matticchio Bastianich

FAMILY FAVORITE—Great winter pasta dish—you can’t go wrong with Lidia.

This recipe came from one of my favorite cookbooks from one of my favorite chefs, Lidia Bastianich. Nobody does Italian better. This is a very hearty dish, perfect for a winter meal. It is a classic Italian comfort food dish.

INGREDIENTS:

Salt

1 pound Rigatoni pasta

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 large onion, diced (about 1¼ cups)

½ pound sweet Italian sausages, preferably without fennel seeds—I like Hillshire Farms

1 pound assorted mushrooms, trimmed, cleaned and sliced thin (about 5 cups)—I like sliced baby bellas

1 cup peeled, seeded and diced fresh tomatoes, or a 1 cup seeded and diced drained canned Italian plum tomatoes—I use a 15 oz can of diced tomatoes

1½ pounds fresh peas, shelled (1 cup) or 1 cup frozen peas, defrosted and drained

Freshly ground black pepper

1½ cups chicken, or vegetable stock—I prefer chicken stock

½ cup heavy cream

1 cup fresh ricotta cheese, or packaged whole-milk ricotta cheese

1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

PREPARATION:

Bring 6 quarts salted water to a boil in a 8-quart pot over high heat.

Heat oil in a wide, heavy skillet over medium heat, toss in onion and cook, stirring, until wilted, about 4 minutes. Crumble the sausage into the skillet and stir, breaking-up the sausage into small pieces as you do, until the sausage is lightly browned, about 5 minutes.

Stir about half the mushrooms into the sausage mixture. Add remaining mushrooms as those in the pan wilt, making room for more (if all of them will fit into the skillet you can add all at once). Cook, stirring occasionally, until all the mushrooms are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. If the mushrooms give off liquid, allow more time for the juices to boil off before the mushrooms start to brown.

Pour tomatoes into the skillet, stir in peas, and bring to a boil. Lower heat so the sauce is at a lively simmer, season salt and pepper, and cook a minute or two. Stir in stock and bring to a boil. Cook until the sauce is lightly reduced and is perking like a volcano, about 5 minutes. Pour in the cream and bring to a boil. Spoon the ricotta into the sauce and stir gently to mix.

Cook pasta to al dente’, drain and add it directly to the sauce. If the skillet is not big enough, mix the pasta and sauce in the 8-quart pot. Bring the sauce and pasta to a boil, stirring gently to coat pasta with the sauce. Remove from the heat, put into serving dish/bowl and top/toss with Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Spoon into warm bowls and serve immediately (with extra Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and pepper as desired).

Pair with garlic bread, green salad and your favorite Italian red wine.

Servings: 6