



*Sometimes it is fun to cook for one. I don't want to do it everyday, but now and then, it offers an opportunity to play with the flavors that I like, without the responsibility to satisfy others. Yes, it's a guilty pleasure! When I'm home alone, it's guaranteed that I will cook with olives. It might be breakfast, lunch, dinner - or all three meals! I love olives! Here's a recipe for pasta and olives!*

### Home Alone Pasta 3

Home Alone Pasta is dinner for one. I make pasta when Joe is traveling because it is simple to size the portion just for me, and I get to use ingredients that I love – like olives! The star of this meal, though, is the pasta – an unusual selection called "cencioni," which translates to little rag or dishcloth. It's dense with a satisfying chew. You don't need a lot of cencioni. It eats bigger than it looks. Serves 1 olive-loving person. Scale up for the family.

#### Ingredients

2 to 3 oz thick pasta like Cencioni

1 small zucchini cut into bite sized pieces

Assorted greens (leftovers are perfect, about a handful)

1 clove garlic, sliced

2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Chicken stock – a splash (less than ¼ cup)

2 small skinless chicken cutlets – cooked, or 1 cup of leftover chicken chunks

Large green olives stuffed with Thai chiles (to taste – I use 8)

Parmigiano Reggiano

Pre-cook your chicken. Either bake, sauté on the stovetop, or use ready-made rotisserie chicken, white meat preferred. Cut it into slices or chunks.

Prepare the pasta according to package directions. For this recipe, I like a thick chewy Cencioni which takes 12 to 16 minutes to cook. I think the thicker pasta gives the dish an almost dumpling-like texture.

While the pasta is cooking, sauté the zucchini pieces in the olive oil over medium heat (2 to 3 minutes). Allow the zucchini to retain some crunch. Still on the heat, add the garlic, olives, chicken, and a splash of chicken stock. The stock will help keep the chicken moist, but just a splash is all you need. Remember that everything is cooked, so all you're doing is warming the pieces.

Right before the pasta is done, add the greens to the pan. I had leftover arugula and romaine lettuce. I used a handful, combined. Kale would be fine, as would spinach, chard, or any green you have. This is a great use for leftovers!

When the pasta reaches your desired texture, add it to the pan with the zucchini, chicken and other ingredients. Mix it all around. If you want / need more of a sauce, add a little bit of the hot pasta water or another splash of chicken stock. Plate and top with Parmigiano Reggiano.

Notes: If you can't find green olives stuffed with Thai chiles, or if you don't want the heat, use olives stuffed with pimentos. If you can't find the olives and DO want the heat, use olives stuffed with pimentos and given the dish a couple shakes of crushed red peppers when you add the garlic.

*April 6, 2016*