

BROCCOLI RAAB AND PASTA

From David Moody

My wife cannot get enough of this pasta. Raab is somewhat of an acquire taste. Although known for its bitterness, early-season broccoli raab is slightly sweeter, and doesn't require the sweet sausage that is more typical. This dish is simple and satisfying, and takes only about 20 minutes from start to finish (including the time to boil the water).

1 pound broccoli raab
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large or two medium garlic cloves
Red pepper flakes (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 pound pasta (I think orechiette is best, but it is impossible to find).

1. Start by putting on 5 quarts of water to boil.
2. While you wait for the water to boil prepare the garlic and the raab. For the garlic, mash it with the broad side of a kitchen knife, peel papery skin and set the cloves aside. For the raab, rinse well, trim the ends, and cut into 2 inch lengths.
3. When water boils, add two tablespoons of salt to the water and return to boil. Then add the pasta and cook until al dente.
4. While the pasta boils, heat olive oil in sauté pan over medium heat until the oil begins to ripple. Add the mashed garlic clove and sauté for a few minutes until the garlic begins to brown. Remove the garlic from the pan, add the raab (together with any water that has stuck to the leaves and florets) and stir to coat with the oil. Cover the pan, and reduce heat to low.
5. Continue to check the raab every few minutes until it has turned bright green. Remove from heat and season with red pepper, if desired, as well as salt and pepper.
6. If you are lucky, just about the time the raab is finished, the pasta will be cooked. Drain the pasta, toss it with the raab, and serve with plenty of grated parmesan cheese.

Serves 4.