

Rigatoni with Spicy Tomato Sauce and Ricotta

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Opting to follow the crowds instead of the guidebooks, my husband, Doug, and I ended up in a packed working-class lunch spot in Naples one day. After a glance around, we decided to have what everyone else was having: rigatoni in tomato sauce topped with a dollop of snow-white ricotta. From [Four Seasons Pasta](#) by Janet Fletcher (Chronicle Books).

- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tablespoons minced Italian parsley
- Pinch of hot pepper flakes
- 2 pounds ripe plum tomatoes, halved and grated
- Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup whole-milk ricotta, at room temperature
- 1 pound rigatoni or penne rigate



Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over moderate heat. Add the garlic, 3 tablespoons of the parsley, and the hot pepper flakes and cook briefly to release the fragrance of the seasonings. Add the tomatoes, season to taste with salt, and bring to a simmer. Adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook until the sauce is thick and flavorful, about 20 minutes. If it threatens to cook dry before the tomatoes have softened, add a little water and continue simmering.

In a bowl, whisk the ricotta until smooth. Season to taste with salt and black pepper.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook until about 1 minute shy of al dente. Remove 1 cup of pasta water, then drain the pasta and return it to the warm pot over moderately low heat. Add the tomato sauce and cook for about 1 minute to allow the pasta to absorb some of the flavor of the sauce. Moisten with a little of the reserved pasta water as needed.

Divide the pasta among warm bowls. Top each portion with a dollop of ricotta and a sprinkle of the remaining 1 tablespoon parsley. Serve immediately.

Serves 4 to 6