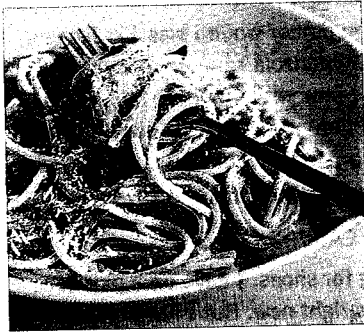


The midnight meal her husband craves



"I knew my boyfriend was the man to marry when I asked him what he would like for his birthday dinner," Rachael Ray writes in her cookbook *Cooking 'Round the Clock*. "I offered up lobster, steak, fine foods of all nationalities, to which he replied: 'Can I just have some of your carbonara?' Whoa! I was right about him...."

"Carbonara is bacon-and-egg pasta, a true classic from Italian cuisine. This is the food of the people! I never order it out because everyone messes with it: They add cream, mushrooms, ham—all kinds of stuff that simply doesn't belong. Yes, I acknowledge that this dish is

heavy and bad for you, especially when eaten in copious amounts. But eating this out of the pan or one large bowl with two forks is extra-sexy. Usually, this recipe makes six servings, but late at night, when no one can see us, my husband, John, and I eat as much as we want!"

Carbonara

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

- 1 pound pasta, such as spaghetti or rigatoni
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil (enough to coat bottom of pan)
- ¼ pound pancetta (Italian bacon), chopped
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 5 to 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 large egg yolks
- Freshly grated Romano cheese
- Handful of finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, for garnish

1. Put a large saucepot of water on to boil. Add a liberal amount of

salt and the pasta. Cook to al dente, about 8 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the olive oil and pancetta. Brown pancetta 2 minutes. Add red pepper flakes and garlic and cook 2 to 3 minutes more. Add wine and stir up all the pan drippings.

3. In a separate bowl, beat yolks, then add 1 large ladleful (about ½ cup) of the pasta cooking water. This tempers the eggs and keeps them from scrambling when added to the pasta.

4. Drain pasta well and add it directly to the skillet with pancetta and oil. Pour the egg mixture over the pasta. Toss rapidly to coat the pasta without cooking the egg. Remove pan from heat and add a big handful of cheese, lots of pepper, and a little salt. Continue to toss and turn the pasta until it soaks up egg mixture and thickens, 1 to 2 minutes. Garnish with parsley and extra grated Romano.