PASTA WITH SAUSAGE AND BROCCOLI RABE SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 POUNDS BROCCOLI RABE
- 2 TABLESPOONS EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- ¾ POUND SWEET ITALIAN SAUSAGES, CASINGS REMOVED
- 4 MEDIUM GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
- ¼ TEASPOON CRUSHED RED PEPPER
- 1 POUND OF ORECCHIETTE, GNOCCHETTI, AND CAVATELLI PASTA COMBINED

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook and drain one pound of pasta, leaving it very moist. Set aside.

2. Wash the broccoli rabe thoroughly and remove any yellow leaves. Trim the stems. Using a small sharp knife, peel any thick, tough stems. Rinse and drain. Coarsely chop into 1-inch pieces. Bring 4 ½ quarts of water to a rolling boil, salt the water and add the broccoli rabe. Cover partially, return to a boil and cook for 1 minute. Drain, reserving ½ cup of the cooking water.

3. In a large, deep, nonreactive skillet, warm the olive oil. Add the sausage meat and cook over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 10 minutes. Stir in the garlic and crushed red pepper and cook until the garlic is softened, about 3 minutes. Add the broccoli rabe and the reserved cooking water. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the broccoli rabe is tender, 8 to 10 minutes.

4. Toss pasta with the sauce.