

# HALLOUMI, LIME & ROCKET SPAGHETTI

Serves 4

I know it's shockingly predictable for a non-meat-eater to return so often to halloumi, but it really is such a useful cheese. It's sort of like the vegetarian peacetime equivalent of pemmican: it keeps for ages and is both tasty and easy to use. This recipe was first made for me in Canberra by my friend Zoe, who used to host viewing sessions of *The West Wing* for a small group of political staffers (and Jeremy and me). The staffers all loved *The West Wing*, but did tend to roll their eyes a bit about how unrealistic it was. A decade later, when Aaron Sorkin made *The Newsroom*, I finally understood their frustration.

In any event, this has – ever since – been my go-to weeknight pasta when I'm pushed for time, and a popular last-minute dish for drop-ins. It's got heat, salt, acid and pepper and a good helping of greens to make you feel a bit less gluggy. Lord, it's delicious. I feel like a bowl of it right now.

250 g halloumi, cut into 1.5 cm dice  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons small salted capers, rinsed then drained well  
1 garlic clove, finely chopped  
1 medium or 2 small red chillies,  
    thinly sliced  
1 juicy lime  
100 g wild rocket leaves  
500 g dried spaghetti

First step: tip the halloumi, olive oil, capers, garlic and the chilli into a bowl and stir about. Using one of those zesters that takes off the zest in long thin strips, add the zest of the lime. (If you don't have such a contraption, use a potato peeler to take the zest off and then cut it into thin strips, or alternatively you could do whatever you please and ignore my excessively controlling views on the subject.)

Squeeze the lime and reserve the juice. Arrange your rocket in a large serving bowl.

Cook the pasta according to its packet instructions. Now you're ready for the final assault.

While the pasta is cooking, heat a heavy frying pan over medium heat and tip in the contents of your bowl: the halloumi will become golden, so turn the bits over regularly and keep a sharp eye on it. It's done when all your halloumi is nicely browned. This should take about 5 minutes, so when it's done you'll be ready to drain your pasta. Dump the spaghetti into the pan and swirl it about to mop up every little bit of sauce. Working quickly, dress the rocket with the lime juice, then add the pasta to the bowl and give the whole lot a toss.

Serve straightaway!

**Special Guest by Annabel Crabb and Wendy Sharpe (Murdoch Books, £20). Photography by Rob Palmer.**