

Bucatini alle Vongole e Bottarga

YIELD: 2 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- **500g bucatini**
- **1 dozen middleneck clams**
- **1 - 1 ½ cup white wine (trebbiano, pinot grigio, etc.)**
- **1 tbsp minced garlic**
- **pinch crushed red pepper flakes**
- **1 tbsp butter**
- **1 tbsp fresh chopped parsley**
- **1 tbsp lemon juice**
- **2 tbsp grated bottarga**
- **3 tbsp evoo**
- **sea salt**

RECIPE

1--- Use a potato or vegetable brush to scrub the sand and grit off of the clam shells under cold, running water, and discard any clams that are open and don't close when handled (these are dead and will make you very sick; there's typically one per dozen). Place the clean clams in a colander and leave under cold, running water until you're ready to steam them. Bring a large pot of water to boil.

2--- Place a high-walled saute or frying pan over medium heat, and add the olive oil. When the oil is fragrant (but not smoking!), add the minced garlic. Toss the garlic in the oil for about 2 minutes, then add the chili flakes. Give a final toss, then pour in the white wine.

3--- Increase the heat under the pan to high, and carefully (i.e., without splashing molten wine/oil on yourself) add the clams and cover the pan. Depending on the size of the clams you're using, it may take between 4-8 minutes for them to steam open.

4--- When the clams have opened, transfer them to a bowl to cool, careful to reserve any remaining liquor inside the shell (NOTE: you can skip this step if you're using Adriatic vongole, or a smaller variety of clam; you can just leave those in the shell), discard any clams that haven't opened long after the rest have. Turn the heat under the pan to medium, and add about a tablespoon of grated bottarga to the liquid. Let the liquid reduce by about a third.



5--- If you're using mussels or larger clams, extract from the shell and give a rough chop on a grooved cutting board to collect any additional liquor. Save a couple of clams in the shell for plating aesthetics.

6--- Add salt to the boiling water in the pot, and cook the bucatini. When the pasta is a few minutes from al dente, return the chopped clams and any reserved liquor to the pan along with lemon, butter, and parsley. Stir to incorporate.

7--- Using a spider strainer or tongs, pull the pasta out of the pot and place directly in the clam sauce. Finish cooking the pasta in the sauce by tossing vigorously over medium high heat. Add some of the starchy pasta water to the sauce if it's too thick.

8--- Serve into bowls, and garnish with a healthy amount of grated bottarga and any reserved prop clams in their shells. If you have it, keep some crusty bread handy to scoop up the leftover sauce.

