

## Penne with Sausage, Chickpeas, and Broccoli Rabe

Serves 4

**✓ WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:** Whole-wheat pasta meets its match in this recipe, which features equally assertive broccoli rabe. Blanching the broccoli rabe tamed its bitterness, and using the same water for cooking the pasta kept things streamlined and our pile of dirty pots to a minimum. Italian sausage gave the dish meaty substance, and mild, creamy chickpeas reinforced the nutty flavor of the whole-wheat penne. Slices of red bell pepper added a pop of color and sweetness.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ¼-inch-wide strips
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 8 ounces hot or sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed
- ¾ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- Salt and pepper
- 1 pound broccoli rabe, trimmed (see page 23) and cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 12 ounces (4 cups) whole-wheat penne
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus extra for serving

1. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion and bell pepper and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add sausage and cook, breaking up meat with wooden spoon, until no longer pink, about 4 minutes. Stir in chickpeas and broth. Bring to simmer and cook until chickpeas are heated through, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

2. Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add broccoli rabe and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until broccoli rabe is crisp-tender, 1 to 3 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer broccoli rabe to paper towel-lined plate.

3. Return pot of water to boil. Add pasta and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve ½ cup cooking water, then drain pasta and return it to pot. Add sausage-broth mixture, broccoli rabe, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and Parmesan and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste and add reserved cooking water as needed to adjust consistency. Serve with extra Parmesan.

### SMART SHOPPING CANNED CHICKPEAS

Think all brands of canned chickpeas taste the same? So did we until we tried six brands of them in a side-by-side taste test. Once we peeled back the can lids and drained and rinsed the beans, we found that many of them were incredibly bland or, worse yet, had bitter and metallic flavors. Tasters preferred those that were well seasoned and had a creamy yet "al dente" texture. **Pastene Chickpeas** came out on top for their clean flavor and firm yet tender texture.

