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Penne with Slow-Roasted Cherry Tomatoes and Goat Cheese

This dish is best eaten right away. You can make all the parts except for the pasta way ahead of time and just throw it together at the last minute. (The slow-roasted tomatoes are also great in other roles - as part of an antipasto in the summertime, as an omelet filling, or as a topping on grilled bread.)

2 pounds red and yellow cherry tomatoes
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons kosher salt
6 ounces fresh goat cheese
1 pound penne
1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves, torn into pieces
Additional kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 250°F and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Halve each tomato and place cut side up in one flat layer on the baking sheets. Drizzle the tomatoes with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and sprinkle on the salt. Roast until the tomatoes are dried around the edges but still moist, about 2 hours. Crumble the goat cheese into large chunks and refrigerate until ready to serve the pasta.

Cook the pasta in salted boiling water according to the package directions. Remove 1 cup of the cooking liquid and reserve. Drain the pasta well and return to the pot. Add the tomatoes, goat cheese, basil, reserved cooking liquid, and remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Toss well and season with salt and pepper. Serve warm.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.