

CUCINA ITALIANA COOKING SCHOOL



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HOW TO COOK PERFECT PASTA:

- * Always choose a good quality dried pasta or if working with fresh egg pasta make it “fresh”.
- * Do never precook it or reheat it.

THE SAUCEPAN:

- * Has to be big enough to contain abundant water.
- * You will need a lid to cover the saucepan briefly after you have immersed the pasta in order to bring the water quickly to boiling point again.
- * After the water has come back to the boil remove the lid for the remaining cooking time.

THE WATER AND THE SALT

- * The water should be boiling when you add the salt. Taste for salt, then add the pasta.
- * You really do need plenty of water eg. 1 litre of water per 100g of pasta and plenty of salt. (closer to the taste of the sea.) While the pasta is absorbing water is losing starch. So you don't want to re-absorb the starch because the water is over saturated with it. So make sure there is plenty of water.

THE AL DENTE TEST:

- * Italians are careful about the way pasta is cooked.
- * When pasta is cooked al dente it still has some bite to it, which is just how it should be.
- * But al dente means different things to different people so you will find it best to taste a piece of pasta regularly as you are cooking it to get it just as you like it. But remember: al dente means literally ‘to the tooth’, which suggests not stiff, not soft, but pliable and cooked through with a bite!

DRAINING:

- * You need a large colander for dried pasta and a mandolino for fresh pasta.
- * Never drain the pasta under cold or hot water, you will take away the starch coating.
- * Make sure you always save a little of the cooking water, it is often the best way to moisten the pasta or the sauce if either of them becomes too dense.
- * Once the pasta is drained put it back into the saucepan or a bowl and add the sauce.

DRESSING PASTA:

- * If you are cooking tagliatelle you should always add a touch of butter to it and use a mandolino if you have one.
- * To moist other type of pasta add a little of the cooking water if needed.
- * Then add some of the sauce and toss the pasta to coat each piece.
- * Pour into the plates and add more sauce over the top.
- * Sprinkle with freshly grated Parmesan or Pecorino (if not using seafood or fish sauce)

SAUCE:

- * Combine the right sauce with the right type of pasta.
- * The pasta should never swim in a sauce. The quantities of sauce to pasta should be such that only an irrelevant amount of sauce remains on the plate after you have eaten the pasta.
- * Always dress the pasta immediately after it has been cooked, by tossing it with the sauce just before serving and adding a little extra sauce over the top.

