

Pasta All'Amatriciana

From America's Test Kitchen episode: *Great Italian Pasta Sauces*.

Serves 4 to 6

Look for salt pork that is roughly 70 percent fat and 30 percent lean meat; leaner salt pork may not render enough fat. If it is difficult to slice, put the salt pork in the freezer for 15 minutes to firm up. Use high-quality imported Pecorino Romano—not the bland domestic cheese labeled “Romano.”

INGREDIENTS

- 8** ounces salt pork, rind removed, rinsed thoroughly, and patted dry
- 1/2** cup water
- 1/2** teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2** tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/4** cup red wine
- 1** (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 2** ounces Pecorino Romano, finely grated (1 cup)
- 1** pound spaghetti
- 1** tablespoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Slice pork into ¼-inch-thick strips, then cut each strip crosswise into ¼-inch pieces. Bring pork and water to simmer in 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat; cook until water evaporates and pork begins to sizzle, 5 to 8 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to cook, stirring frequently, until fat renders and pork turns golden, 5 to 8 minutes longer. Using slotted spoon, transfer pork to bowl. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat from skillet. Reserve remaining fat.
- 2.** Return skillet to medium heat and add pepper flakes and tomato paste; cook, stirring constantly, for 20 seconds. Stir in wine and cook for 30 seconds. Stir in

tomatoes and their juice and rendered pork and bring to simmer. Cook, stirring frequently, until thickened, 12 to 16 minutes. While sauce simmers, smear 2 tablespoons reserved fat and ½ cup Pecorino Romano together in bowl to form paste.

3. Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to boil in large Dutch oven. Add spaghetti and salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve 1 cup cooking water, then drain spaghetti and return it to pot.

4. Add sauce, 1/3 cup cooking water, and Pecorino Romano-fat mixture to pasta and toss well to coat, adjusting consistency with remaining cooking water as needed. Serve, passing remaining 1/2 cup Pecorino Romano separately.

TECHNIQUE

PORK VERSUS PORK

Guanciale, which is made by salting and drying hog jowls, is the traditional choice for this dish due to its intense pure-pork flavor. Looking for something equally porky but more readily available, we turn to salt pork, which is also salt-cured but is made from the belly.

GUANCIALE: Salted jowl.



SALT PORK: Salted belly.





America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of *Cook's Country* and *Cook's Illustrated* magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to *America's Test Kitchen* (www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.