

The Encyclopedia of Cooking Skills and Techniques by Norma MacMillan (2011) Hardcover

92 PASTA & GRAINS

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MAKING PASTA DOUGH

Pasta dough is very simple to make and, like most things, the more you do it the better the results will be. As in making yeast and bread doughs, the quantity of liquid needed can vary, according to how absorbent the flour is. The recipe here is for a basic egg pasta, with several variations.

MAKES ABOUT 1 LB (450 g)

12 oz (350 g) plain flour, preferably type 00 pasta flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 size 2 eggs, beaten to mix



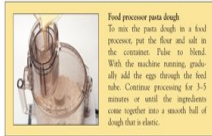
1. Put the flour and salt on a work surface and make a well in the centre. Add the eggs to the well.
2. With fingertips, gradually incorporate the flour into the eggs. When all the flour is mixed in, you should be able to gather up a pliable dough; if not, moisten, add more flour.

Pasta Finishing

- For Green Pasta: Blanch 12 oz (340 g) spinach, Swiss chard or other green leaves, then drain well and squeeze dry. Finely chop the greens very finely. Add with the eggs.
- For Fresh Herb Pasta: Finely chop 1 oz (30 g) fresh herb leaves, such as basil, flat leaf parsley and coriander. Add with the eggs.
- For Lemon Pasta: Add 1½ tablespoons ground lemon zest with the eggs.
- For Herb and Garlic Pasta: Add ½ oz (15 g) fresh chopped small parley and oregano or marjoram and 1-2 finely chopped garlic cloves with the beaten eggs.
- For Spiced Pasta: Add 1½ teaspoons ground saffron to the flour and salt or steep ½ teaspoon saffron threads in 1 tablespoon very hot water and add with the eggs through a small sieve.
- For Whisked Pasta: Sift about 2½ oz (75 g) whisked flour for the same quantity of plain flour.



3. Flour the work surface. Knead the dough by pushing it away with the heel of your hand and then lifting it back. Continue kneading for 6-10 minutes or until it is smooth and elastic. (Or use a pasta machine for kneading—see page 94.)
4. Shape the dough into a ball and put in a bowl. Cover with cling film. Leave to rest for at least 15 minutes before rolling and cutting.



Food processor pasta dough

To use the pasta dough in a food processor, put the flour and salt in the container. Pulse to blend. With the machine running, gradually add the eggs through the feed tube. Continue processing for 3-5 minutes or until the ingredients come together into a smooth ball of dough that is elastic.

ROLLING AND CUTTING PASTA DOUGH BY HAND

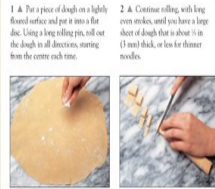
You can roll pasta dough by hand, but it is a hard task. If you intend to make pasta frequently, it may be worth buying a machine.

Divide the dough into 3 or 4 pieces. Roll out one piece at a time. Keep the remaining dough tightly wrapped in cling film to prevent it from drying out while you work.



Pasta with Ham and Pine

Cook 2 finely chopped garlic cloves in 1 oz (30 g) of butter in a saucepan for 3 minutes or until softened. Add 1 oz (30 g) drained frozen peas, 5 or 125 g cooked ham cut into matchstick strips, ½ pint (300 ml) whipping cream and seasoning and bring to the boil. Toss with 12 oz (340 g) fresh farfalle, cooked and drained, and 2 oz (50 g) freshly grated Parmesan cheese. Serve at once, with additional Parmesan cheese if wished. Serves 4.



1. Roll a piece of dough on a lightly floured surface and put it into a flat disc. Using a long rolling pin, roll out the dough in all directions, starting from the centre each time.
2. Continue rolling, with long even strokes, until you have a large sheet of dough that is about 1/16 inch (1 mm) thick, or less for thinner noodles.



3. For rolled pasta shapes, use the dough immediately, while it is still malleable. If cutting noodles, sprinkle the rolled-out dough with flour and leave to dry for 10-15 minutes.
4. To cut, roll up the sheet of dough like a fat Swiss roll. With a knife, cut across into noodles of the required width. Use 1/16 inch for farfalle, or 1/8 inch for tagliatelle.



Keeping fresh pasta

If fresh noodles are not to be cooked the day they are made, allow them to dry completely. Toss very loosely and store at room temperature for up to 4 days.

5. Unroll the noodles with your fingers and scatter them on a dusted non-stick board. Leave to dry for about 5 minutes before cooking. Or wrap in cling film and refrigerate for later cooking.
6. To dry, lay them on the floured towel, or hang them over a broom handle, and dry for 2-3 hours. Sprinkle them with semolina to prevent them sticking together and pack loosely in a plastic bag or in a box with each layer separated.

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