

COOK'S

ILLUSTRATED

SPAGHETTI ALLA CARBONARA

Serves 4 to 6. Published September 1, 2001.

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

We wanted a spaghetti alla carbonara recipe that would produce al dente spaghetti with a velveteen sauce punctuated by bits of bacon and a trace of garlic. We determined that three whole eggs gave our carbonara recipe superior texture and richness...[\(more\)](#)

Add regular table salt to the pasta cooking water, but use sea salt flakes, if you can find them, to season the dish. We like the full flavor they bring to the carbonara. Note that while either table salt or sea salt can be used when seasoning in step 3, they are not used in equal amounts.

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 pound bacon (6 to 8 slices), slices halved length-wise, then cut crosswise into 1/4-inch pieces
1/2 cup dry white wine
3 large eggs
2 ounces Parmesan cheese, finely grated (3/4 cup)
3/4 ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, finely grated (about 1/4 cup)
3 small cloves garlic, pressed through garlic press or minced to paste
1 pound spaghetti

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position, set large heatproof serving bowl on rack, and heat oven to 200 degrees. Bring 4 quarts water to rolling boil in large Dutch oven or stockpot.
2. While water is heating, heat oil in large skillet over medium heat until shimmering, but not smoking. Add bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned and crisp, about 8 minutes. Add wine and simmer until alcohol aroma has cooked off and wine is slightly reduced, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from heat and cover to keep warm. Beat eggs, cheeses, and garlic together with fork in small bowl; set aside.
3. When water comes to boil, add pasta and 1 tablespoon table salt; stir to separate pasta. Cook until al dente; reserve 1/3 cup pasta cooking water and drain pasta for about 5 seconds, leaving pasta slightly wet. Transfer drained pasta to warm serving bowl; if pasta is dry, add some reserved cooking water (see below) and toss to moisten. Immediately pour egg mixture over hot pasta, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon sea salt flakes or 3/4 teaspoon table salt; toss well to combine. Pour bacon mixture over pasta, season generously with black pepper, and toss well to combine. Serve immediately.

TECHNIQUE

Save the Pasta Water



If the sauce is to spread evenly, the pasta must be moist. Add up to 1-3 cup reserved pasta cooking water if the pasta is dry or sticky.



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