

HOW TO COOK PASTA

Depending on the creativity of the cook and the ingredients used, pasta can be served in an infinite variety of ways. When cooking it however, some basic rules must always be followed:

1. Pasta should always be cooked in a large saucepan with abundant water (one litre for every 100g of pasta).
2. Salt the water when it comes to the boil (10g salt for every litre of water), wait for it to come to the boil again and drop in the pasta.
3. Stir with a wooden spoon immediately after adding the pasta to the water, to stop it sticking to the bottom of the pan.
4. If using fresh pasta, it is a good idea to add a teaspoon of extra-virgin olive oil to prevent it sticking.
5. Cook over a medium heat with the lid set half on to prevent the water boiling over.
6. Drain the pasta when it is "al dente" (firm to the bite). Ravioli should be removed with a skimmer as each one rises to the surface. Never leave the pasta sitting in the warm water as it will continue to cook. Drain thoroughly transferring straight to the pasta plates; save a little of the cooking water if it has to be tossed in a pan or mixed with the sauce in a serving bowl. The cooking water is most useful for diluting a sauce which is too thick or when combining the pasta with a sauce by tossing or stirring them together over heat, as it prevents the fats frying for too long.
7. If cooking dried spaghetti or tagliolini made with egg, never snap or break them; drop them into the saucepan (which should be high-sided) and push down into the water as they gradually soften.
8. The type of pasta used usually depends on the sauce to be served: fresh pasta, especially if thin-cut, is best suited to delicate sauces such as those based on butter, cream, vegetables, herbs or fish; dry pasta is better for stronger and thicker sauces. Let your own tastes and instincts guide you however, though remember that the classic hare sauce with pappardelle (broad noodles) is the exception that proves the rule. [Source For Italian Cooking go here.](#)