

# Home Made Pasta

Contributed by Twoscoops

This is one of the nicest ways to spend a couple of hours in the kitchen. Home made pasta is far superior to any shop-bought pasta, and you will notice the difference the first time you taste it. Contrary to popular belief, pasta is not difficult to make; you could actually do it with a wooden spoon, mixing bowl and a rolling pin. Indeed, many still make pasta this way, but here we are going to dust-off that Imperia pasta machine that you were given two birthdays ago and put it to good use. I'm not going to promise that you will never eat shop-bought pasta again, but if this inspires you to have a go at making your own I am confident that it will become a regular occurrence in your kitchen.

## Pasta dough ingredients

Pasta dough, in its purest form, is simply eggs and flour mixed together. There is no need for salt, oil or anything else, although you can add flavourings such as spinach (for pasta verde), truffles, black pepper or even saffron. This dough was made from Dove's Farm Organic Pasta Flour (@78p/kilo) and free range eggs (from my own hens, but normally around £1.00 for six). I used 500g of flour, and based upon a recipe of one egg for each 100g of flour the cost was 39p, for pasta which fed three to bursting. In a food processor or mixing bowl, thoroughly mix the eggs & flour together to form a stiff dough. Cover with lightly greased clingfilm and refrigerate for half an hour, to rest. Equipment for making pasta

Meanwhile, prepare your equipment. In the picture you can see a small mitten (to avoid the clamp damaging your work surface &ndash; you could use a coaster), extra flour (for dusting), two pasta shape-cutters ( each with two pasta shapes; angel-hair spaghetti, spaghetti, fettucine and tagliatelle), G-clamp, handle, wooden spoon (for lifting the pasta), sharp knife and flour dredger. Setting up a pasta machine

Using the mitten or coaster to protect the underside, attach the pasta machine to the worktop by placing the top of the G-clamp in the slot in the machine and the bottom to the underside of the worktop. Tighten using the handle, but note that it need not be completely fast, a little movement is fine. Put the handle into the machine using the slot at the top. At this point remove the dough from the fridge, cut in half and put one piece back in the fridge until you need it. Work the dough so it softens a little, and using the worktop flatten it out slightly with the palm of your hand, until it is approx. half an inch thick. Generously flour the dough, the worktop and the machine rollers, in order to avoid the dough sticking. Using a pasta machine

You are now ready to feed it through the machine. You will see that there is a wheel at the front of the machine, which has seven notches in it. These notches relate to the gap between the rollers, and hence the thickness of the pasta sheets. Ensure that this wheel is at the farthest notch, and the rollers are at their widest. Now take the dough in your left hand, and slightly push it between the rollers. With your right hand turn the handle slowly, and allow the pasta to catch in the rollers. When the dough is half-way through use your left hand to lift the flattened dough out, whilst continuing to use the handle. This 'mangle' effect will flatten the dough, and at this early stage will be hard work, but you will then need to fold the dough in half and repeat the procedure. You now need to move the rollers one notch at a time, feeding the dough through. After every two notches dust the dough with flour again, to stop it sticking and/or splitting. Don't worry if it does split or stick &ndash; it is very forgiving stuff, and you can start again. If the sheets become too long to manage, simply cut them in half with a sharp knife, placing the sheets on some flour until you need them. When you reach the final notch on the wheel, dust with flour one more time, as this is when the pasta sheets are at their most delicate. Congratulations, you now have some silky sheets of lasagne, and can use them as they are or to make cannelloni or even ravioli. But today we are going to make fettucine. Making fettucine

Remove the handle from the machine and affix the fettucine roller to the top. This cutter has its own handle slot, and the first thing to do with it is to dust the rollers to avoid sticking. Again, feed the sheets with your left hand, and keep the handle turning slowly and steadily. When the sheet catches in the rollers continue to turn, but switch hands and take the handle of the wooden spoon and place it behind the emerging noodles. When the pasta sheet is about half way through begin to lift the noodles away from the rollers, and they should be sitting together on the wooden spoon handle. Repeat with the rest of the dough, until it is all used up. You can now place the noodles in a bowl, dust with flour to stop them sticking and use them within a few hours. Drying pasta

Alternatively you can hang them to dry-out, as I do on the back of a chair, but be aware that they become brittle as they dry so it may be worth holding a dish to catch them while you are trying to remove them. Cooking home made pasta

It may take slightly more than an hour to make your first batch of noodles, but you will soon get the hang of it, and feel really proud of your achievement. Any dough which becomes misshaped can easily be formed back into a ball and put through the rollers again. The second time you make pasta you will feel like an expert, and I would love to hear any further tips that you may have on the subject. To cook the noodles, bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the pasta and taste it after a couple of minutes. It will be ready when the noodles have softened but are still a little firm to the bite. Toss with good olive oil, a few twists of black pepper and a sprinkling of grated parmesan cheese.

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