



eat. drink. live.



I don't honestly know what I would do without pasta in my life! Even when you think you have absolutely nothing to cook for dinner, and you are dead tired after a long hard day, as long as you have a glass of red wine and some pasta in the cupboard, you can always find a few basic ingredients to whip up a meal. Although you can buy quality dried pasta, fresh pasta is fun to make and a treat to eat! If you don't have time however, feel free to use a good quality dried pasta made from durum-wheat. For all of the recipes below, refer to the back to basics tips and cooking instructions on page 6.

Buon Appetito!

FLAVOUR FILES



parmigiano reggiano

A hard, sharp, dry Italian cheese named after the producing areas of Parma and Reggio Emilia. It is light yellow in colour and has a wonderful rich nutty flavour. Parmigiano is the Italian adjective for Parma; the French version, parmesan, is used in English.

Traditionally cows are only fed grass or hay, producing grass fed milk. The only additive allowed in the cheese making is salt which the cheese absorbs while being submerged for 20 days in brine tanks saturated with Mediterranean sea salt. It is then matured for a minimum of 2 years.

Each Parmigiano dairy is a paying member of a consortium who in turn gives them their own identifying number. In order to sell their cheese as Parmigiano Reggiano every single wheel has to be tested after 12 months by one of the dozen or so Consorzio inspectors, who by tapping the cheese with a hammer can tell if the internal structure of the cheese is correct or not. The cheese is then pierced with a screw-needle to extract a minute sample of the contents. In this way they can judge both the aroma and the degree of maturation! If the Consorzio approves, the wheel receives the infamous stamp of approval!

If it doesn't say Parmigiano Reggiano, it is most likely Grana Padano, a similar, but inferior "parmesan" produced mainly in the area of Lombardy. Also stay away from the pre-grated commercial parmesan which is usually rancid by the time you use it. Buy a chunk of the best parmesan you can from your local Italian Deli and use freshly grated over pasta or salads or simply eat with ripe figs or pears after dinner. Parmesan also freezes well. Interestingly, the left over whey after making parmesan is traditionally fed to the pigs from which Parma Ham (Prosciutto) is produced. For this reason you'll often find the barns in close proximity to the parmesan dairies.

RECIPES

vegetable lasagne

Use any of your favourite vegetables. If you use mushrooms, make sure you have cooked off most of the moisture. To make meaty lasagne, simply substitute the tomato sauce and vegetables below with Bolognese sauce. Make an extra dish to freeze for unexpected guests.

- 500 g fresh lasagne sheets
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small butternut, cut into smallish chunks
- 3 courgettes, sliced at an angle
- 1 large aubergine, sliced into rings
- 1 red & 1 yellow pepper, grilled, skin removed (see mailer # 13)
- Good handful of fresh basil leaves
- 500 ml freshly made Napolitano sauce
- 120 g butter
- 120 g flour
- 3 cups of low-fat milk
- 1 tsp **NoMU Italian or Veggie Rub**
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 egg, lightly whisked (optional)
- NoMU Just Salt & Just pepper**
- 1 cup freshly grated parmigiano reggiano

For the lasagne sheets, simply roll out the lasagna until 1½ mm in thickness. Lay out on a floured working surface and cut the sheets according to the size of your casserole dish. Cover with a damp cloth until ready to use.

Preheat the oven to 180°C

Drizzle some olive oil over the butternut and roast in the oven till cooked and slightly caramelised. Heat up a griddle pan till quite hot, brush the aubergines with some olive oil and griddle until golden on both sides. Repeat the same process for the courgettes.

To make the white sauce, heat the milk in a saucepan or a microwave as this will help prevent a lumpy sauce! Melt the butter in a saucepan, whisk in the flour and cook for a few minutes. Slowly add the hot milk, continually whisking as you pour in the milk. Continue to stir until you have a smooth, thick white sauce. Add the mustard and Italian Rub and season well with salt & pepper. To enrich the sauce further, whisking quickly to prevent curdling, add the egg.

To assemble the lasagne, layer the ingredients in a casserole dish in the following order; white sauce, lasagne, tomato sauce, basil, vegetables, white sauce etc. Repeat until you have run out of space, but the top layer must be lasagne, topped with some white sauce and lots of parmesan.

Bake the lasagne in the oven for 40 minutes until crispy and browned on top.

Serves 8 really hungry people!





tagliatelle pescatore with tomato & saffron

This has always been one of my favourite sauces. Use the freshest seafood available and you can't go wrong.

400 g Tagliatelle
12 fresh mussels,
cleaned with beards removed
500 g clams, cleaned
Extra Virgin Olive oil
1 tbsp **NoMU Provencal**
2 garlic cloves, finely crushed
1 onion, finely diced, divided in half
1 tbsp butter
1 cup white wine
12 Queen size prawns,
cleaned and deveined
200 g fresh calamari tubes,
cut into rings
4 plum tomatoes peeled
and diced with seeds removed
A pinch of saffron
200 ml cream
NoMU Just Salt & Just Pepper

Over high heat, in a heavy-based pot, add the olive oil and sauté half the onion, the garlic and the Provencal Rub. Add the white wine, followed by the mussels and clams and quickly place the lid on top of the pan. Shake the pan around every now and again, until the steam has opened and cooked all the mussels and clams. Discard any shells that do not open. Remove the pan from the heat and strain, reserving the liquid.

For the sauce simply add olive oil and butter to a large pan and sauté the other half of the onion, until translucent. Turn up the heat and add the calamari and prawns. After 2 minutes add the diced tomatoes and $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of the cooking liquid from the mussels, followed by the cream. Infuse the saffron in 30ml hot water and add to the sauce. Simmer to reduce slightly.

Add the mussels and clams and season with salt & pepper to taste. Toss the strained tagliatelle through the sauce, making sure the pasta is well coated. To serve this delicious pasta, simply sprinkle over some fresh parsley and either pour into a beautiful serving platter or dish individually with a wedge of lemon.

Serves 4

WINE SUGGESTIONS:

Pinot Grigio would be the obvious Italian choice here - but I'm going to opt instead for a *Gruner Veltliner* from Austria. When well handled, by a producer like Freie Weingärtner Wachau, or Fred Loimer, Prager or FX Pichler, it has a fascinatingly complex flavour that seems to combine fennel, asparagus and tropical fruit in ways that should satisfy lovers of New World and Old World whites (Gruner Veltliners have repeatedly beaten top Chardonnays in blind tastings). I'd go for a 2004, though these wines age brilliantly.

ravioli of butternut and ricotta with roasted walnuts and a burnt thyme butter

We even surprised ourselves at how delicious these are! As the butter sauce is fairly rich, these are perfect to serve as an elegant starter as opposed to a main course. Prepare to impress!

500 g fresh pasta dough
1 kg butternut, cut into rough chunks
1 tsp **NoMU Masala Rub**
250 g ricotta cheese
NoMU Just Pepper
NoMU Just Salt
200 g walnuts, roughly chopped
1 garlic clove, finely crushed
A good handful of fresh thyme leaves
100 g salted butter

Preheat the oven to 180°C

Roast the walnuts in the oven till lightly golden in colour, taking care not to burn them as they will taste bitter.

Rub the butternut with some NoMU Masala and 1 tbsp olive oil before roasting in the oven until they are lightly caramelised and soft. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before chopping into small chunks. Place in a mixing bowl and carefully fold in the ricotta cheese and season with salt & pepper. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate until ready to use.

For the pasta, roll out the dough in your pasta maker until $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm in thickness. Try to make quite wide sheets as this will give you more room to create the ravioli. Lay out the sheets on a floured working surface and place a tablespoon of filling along the sheet, leaving a good space of 10 cm between each filling. Dip your pastry brush in some water and brush the pasta sheet around the filling. Gently lay another pasta sheet perfectly on top of your first sheet and carefully remove all the air between the sheets and around the filling. Seal each ravioli tightly and individually, being careful not to tear the pasta. After you have done the entire length of the pasta sheet, cut out your desired shapes, with a ravioli or cookie cutter and lightly pinch the edges together.

In a saucepan, gently melt the butter with the garlic and thyme and allow to simmer until the butter begins to turn golden brown. Add the walnuts and season with salt and a twist of pepper. Once you've cooked your ravioli, drain very carefully and toss through the pan with all the butter sauce. Serve in heated bowls and top with thyme butter and walnuts.

Serves 4. (These quantities make 12 large raviolis, 3 per person. However you can make 24 smaller raviolis, 6 per person)

WINE SUGGESTIONS:

Riesling is my favourite white grape and the one I'll choose here would be a 2005 *Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett* from JJ Prum, one of the very finest producers in the Mosel valley. Wonderfully packed with fresh mineral, floral and grapey-quince-appley fruit, it has the zingy acidity to cut through the ricotta and the slight sweetness to match the butternut.





fettuccini with garlic, chilli, extra virgin olive oil and fried breadcrumbs

500 g fettuccini
 100 ml extra virgin olive oil
 (the best you can find)
 3 garlic cloves, finely crushed
 2 mild large chillies,
 finely sliced into rings
 4 slices stale white bread,
 made into breadcrumbs
 1 tsp **NoMU African Heat**
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
 Good bunch of Italian
 flat leaf parsley, finely chopped

To fry the breadcrumbs, simply heat up $\frac{1}{3}$ of the olive oil in a pan, add the breadcrumbs, garlic and African Heat and continually toss in the pan until the breadcrumbs become nice and crispy. Remove from the pan and place on an absorbent towel.

Heat the rest of the oil in a large frying pan over a low heat. Add the garlic and chilli and cook till softened. Do not burn the garlic as this will make everything taste bitter. Add your cooked, drained pasta to the pan with the olive oil, garlic & chilli. Just before serving toss through the chopped parsley. Serve with the crispy breadcrumbs on top!

Serves 4

WINE SUGGESTIONS:

I'm not going to choose too big a wine here, but it needs a fair bit of acidity to handle the olive oil. This could easily have been a white, but instead I'll go for a great *Chianti*, in the shape of the 2004 *Selvapiana Chianti Rufina*, whose herby-berry character will match this dish as though it were a sauce specially conceived to go with it.

meatballs

1 litre of Napolitano sauce recipe
 1 kg minced extra lean beef
 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 5 slices of stale white bread made into
 breadcrumbs
 1 onion, finely diced
 3 garlic cloves, finely crushed
 2 tbsp **NoMU Beef Rub**
 2 tbsp mustard
 1 tbsp sugar
 30 ml tomato paste
 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
 Handful of fresh sweet basil leaves

In a frying pan gently sauté off the onion with the Beef Rub and garlic until they are translucent.

Place the minced beef in a mixing bowl and using a fork mix in the breadcrumbs, mustard, sugar, tomato paste and salt & pepper to taste. Fold in the cooled onion and garlic and add 2 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil and a dash of balsamic vinegar.

Using your hands shape the beef mixture into meatballs. Place the prepared meatballs in the fridge covered with cling film for 3 hours or overnight. This mixture will make 24 small or 12 large meatballs.

Preheat the oven to 180°C

Heat up a heavy based frying pan with oil and brown the meatballs all over. Place the browned meatballs in a deep buttered casserole dish and cover with the fresh tomato sauce. Rip up some fresh basil leaves and tuck them in between the meatballs. Cook in the oven for 40 minutes until the meatballs are cooked all the way through. Serve with some fresh pasta or freshly baked ciabatta!
 Serves 6-8



WINE SUGGESTIONS:

This is a rustic dish that needs an appropriately rustic wine. Sticking to an Italian theme, I'd head south for a rich young berryish *Primitivo* from Puglia such as the *Primitivo di Manduria* by Felle. If finding a Primitivo proves difficult, try a *Californian Zinfandel* – these two grapes are genetically effectively the same.



pappardelle with slow cooked duck, porcini mushrooms and sage

400 g pappardelle
 2 leg and thigh portions
 of free range duck
 2 tsp **NoMU Poultry Rub**
 3 garlic cloves crushed
 2 onions quartered
 1 large bunch of fresh sage
 125 ml dry Marsala wine
 1 punnet (250 g) fresh porcinis
 2 tbsp butter
 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
NoMU One for All Grinder
 1 bunch of Italian flat leaf parsley
 roughly chopped
 1 tsp truffle oil (optional) or
 1 truffle, thinly sliced
 (white if you are very lucky,
 otherwise black)
NoMU Just Salt & Just Pepper

Preheat the oven to 160°C

Rub the duck portions with some NoMU Poultry Rub, a touch of olive oil and season with salt & pepper to taste. Sear the duck in a very hot pan till the skin is deliciously crispy! Place in a small baking tray with the quartered onions, fresh sage, garlic and Marsala wine; cover with foil and cook in the oven for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Check the duck half way through the cooking time, and add some more water or wine if necessary. When the duck is tender, remove from the oven and allow to rest before shredding the duck into smallish pieces. Set aside with the caramelized onions and sage.

Heat up some olive oil and butter in a large frying pan with a few grinds of NoMU One for All and wait until the butter starts to bubble, before searing the porcinis in the pan until beautifully golden. Add a pinch of salt to bring out the flavour of the mushrooms. Add the shredded duck, onions, sage and any juice left from the baking tray and toss gently with the cooked pappardelle so that the pasta is well coated with all the flavour. Check seasoning and serve immediately with a drizzle of truffle oil and shavings of parmesan on the side.

Serves 4

WINE SUGGESTIONS:

The sage might have pointed me towards a *Chianti*, but the duck and the mushrooms say *Barolo* or *Barbaresco* – examples of the tricky Nebbiolo at its best. The one I'll go for is a modern effort from Elio Altare, one of the region's best producers. Altare makes wines from different parts of Barolo; my choice would be the *la Morra* 2001, a far better vintage by the way than the overblown 2000 which was so heavily hyped by US critics.

gemelli carbonara

Gemelli means “twins” in Italian, 2 identical strands of pasta that hold the flavour of most pasta sauces really well. The key ingredient in this pasta is the Parmigiano Reggiano so try not to hold back!

500 g Gemelli pasta
(alternatively use Penne)
300 g pancetta, sliced
into 2 cm lardons
1 onion, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, finely crushed
1 tbsp olive oil
1tbsp butter
1 tbsp **NoMU Pork Rub**
125 ml white wine
3 eggs
125 ml pouring cream
100 g parmigiano reggiano, grated
NoMU Just Pepper

In a heavy based saucepan, heat the olive oil and butter and gently fry the onions and pancetta until the onion is translucent and the pancetta nicely browned. Add the garlic and Pork Rub and cook for another minute or 2. Add the white wine and allow to bubble away until all the alcohol has evaporated.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the cream, parmesan cheese, eggs and pepper to taste. There is a lot of saltiness from the pancetta and parmesan, so do not add salt.

When the pasta is ready, strain and reserve $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pasta water. Add the pasta and water to the pan with the pancetta and garlic and slowly add the cream and egg mixture, stirring constantly. Remove the pan from the heat as the residual heat will continue to cook the egg while you continually toss the pasta through the cream sauce. Season with freshly ground pepper and serve immediately!

Serves 4



WINE SUGGESTIONS:

The combination of the creaminess and the pepper and spicy pancetta calls for a creamy white with some personality. My choice here would be a young *Umbrian Grechetto* from a good producer called Faleco. Made from one of the oldest grape varieties in the world, this has a delicious herby character.



spaghetti bolognese

The perfect meal to eat with one hand while curled up on the sofa in front of a movie with a roaring fire and a glass of wine. Kids will also never say no to Spag Bol! Once again, make extra sauce to freeze.

500 g spaghetti
1 kg lean beef mince
2 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 cup red wine
1 carrot, finely diced
1 celery stick, finely diced
1 tbsp oregano
1 tbsp **NoMU Beef Rub**
1 heaped tsp sugar
800 ml Tomato Passata
NoMU Just Salt & Just Pepper
Freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
Freshly chopped Italian parsley

In a large saucepan heat up the olive oil and gently fry the garlic and onion until translucent. Add the Beef Rub, followed by the mince and fry until lightly browned. Add the carrot and celery and fry for another 2 minutes. Add the red wine and cook until all the alcohol has evaporated. Add the oregano, sugar, tomato, salt and pepper, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer with a lid on for 45 minutes.

Drain the pasta when it is ready and drizzle over some extra virgin olive oil. To serve place the pasta in a heated serving bowl and top with the bolognese.

Sprinkle over the freshly grated parmesan cheese and Italian parsley and serve immediately!

Serves 8

homemade farfalle with franschhoek trout, peas, dill and asparagus tips

500 g Farfalle
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp butter
2 shallots, finely diced
1 garlic clove, finely crushed
Zest of one lemon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white wine
200 g smoked Franschhoek trout,
sliced into ribbons
200 g peas fresh or frozen
200 g small lean Asparagus tips
50 g fresh dill, finely chopped
250 ml fresh pouring cream
Good grindings of **NoMU Hooked**
NoMU Just Pepper

For the Farfalle, roll out a pasta sheet until $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm in thickness. Working on a floured surface, use a sharp knife or a jagged cutter to cut out (5cm x 3cm) rectangles from the pasta sheet. Using your index finger and thumb, carefully but firmly pinch together the middle of the rectangles to form your bow-ties or butterflies. Once you have made your Farfalle place them on floured baking tray and cover with a damp cloth until ready to use.

Briefly blanch your peas and asparagus tips in a pot of boiling salted water and refresh in iced water for 2 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Heat up a large frying pan with the butter & olive oil and gently fry the shallots and garlic with a few grindings of NoMU Hooked until the onions are soft and translucent. Add the white wine and reduce. Add the cream and simmer to reduce and thicken slightly. Add the trout, lemon zest, peas, asparagus tips and chopped dill and heat through. Season with freshly ground salt & pepper.

Add the cooked Farfalle and toss the pasta through the sauce. Serve with a twist of lemon and a sprig of dill.

Serves 4



WINE SUGGESTIONS:

Asparagus can be a tough vegetable to match, but it goes well with Sauvignon Blanc which, interestingly, is also one of the best partners for dill. Given the use of Franschhoek trout, I'd opt for 2006 or as soon as possible, a gooseberryish 2007, *Porcupine Ridge* from Boekenhoutkloof. Like all Sauvignon Blancs and Rieslings – to my mind – it also benefits from being sealed with a screwcap rather than a cork.

basic tomato & basil pasta sauce

The most essential and versatile of all Italian pasta sauces. Make big pots and store them in sterilized jars or bottles.

- 12 fully ripe large plum tomatoes
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely crushed
- 60 ml white wine
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- A large handful of fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**

Boil the kettle and pour the water into a bowl. Fill a second bowl with ice and water. Using a small paring knife, slice a quick criss-cross onto the base of each tomato and place into the boiling water for 2 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and plunge into the ice cold water for a minute or two. Using the paring knife and starting with the criss-cross, gently remove the skin off the tomato. Slice them in half and remove most of the seeds and white "pith" before roughly chopping.

Heat up a frying pan with some olive oil and sauté off the onions and garlic until translucent. Add the white wine and cook off all the alcohol. Add the chopped tomatoes, season with salt & pepper, reduce the heat and allow to simmer for 30 minutes. Add the balsamic vinegar and sugar and cook for another 10 minutes. Finally add the freshly chopped basil, check the seasoning and add a few last glugs of olive oil. Makes 500 ml.

- Tip:**
- For an Arrabiata sauce, simply add 2 finely sliced red chilies with the garlic and onions.
 - For a Puttanesca sauce, simply add 2 finely chopped anchovies and 12 pitted black olives with the tomatoes.



quince tarte tatin

I know this does not fit into our pasta theme for month, but after shooting last month's mailer we had left over quinces so decided to make quince tarte tatin for a dinner party. They were just too delicious not to share the recipe with you!

- 6 halves slow roasted quinces
- 500g ready made puff pastry
- 5 pumps NoMU Vanilla Paste, stirred into...
- 200ml double cream

Follow the same method for slow roasting the quinces in last month's mailer, the only difference is to peel the quinces before roasting them.

Very lightly flour and roll out a sheet of puff pastry. Using a large cookie cutter or small saucer, cut circles about 10cm in diameter out of ready made puff pastry. Lightly butter a large 6-muffin tray. Pour 2 tbsp of quince syrup into the bottom of all the muffin moulds. Place the quince cut-side down onto the syrup. Cover the quince halves with the puff pastry circles, carefully tucking the pastry all the way down the sides of the quinces. If your quinces are cool enough to handle, you may find it easier to use your hands shape the puff pastry around the quince, but leaving the cut side exposed before inverting the quince into the muffin mould and onto the syrup. Make sure the puff pastry is nice and snug around each quince! Repeat as necessary. Place in a preheated oven of 200°C for 20 minutes. When the puff pastry has risen and is golden brown, remove the muffin tray from the oven and allow to stand for 2 minutes. Then using a spoon simply lift the tarte tatin's out of their moulds and onto individual dessert bowls. Spoon extra syrup around the tarte tatin and serves with vanilla cream. Serves 6.



cenci (tatters)

Really fun to make with children as they can cut any shapes they like. Just be careful with the oil when deep frying.

- 300 g flour
- 90 g caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp **NoMU Vanilla Extract**
- 100 g unsalted butter
- Zest of 1 lemon, finely grated
- Sunflower oil for deep frying
- 1 tbsp **NoMU Sweet Rub**
- 1 tbsp icing sugar

Put the butter in a saucepan and melt over a low heat. Set aside to cool. Sieve the flour into a mixing bowl and add the sugar. Make a well in the centre and add the eggs, vanilla extract, lemon zest and cooled melted butter. Mix and knead well until you have a smooth dough. Wrap in cling film and rest in the fridge for an hour or two.

Flour a work surface and roll out the dough either with your pasta machine or by hand to a 2mm thickness. With a sharp knife or ravioli cutter, cut various strips or shapes.

Heat the oil in large saucepan. Test to see when the oil is ready by adding a small bit of left over dough. If it sizzles the oil is ready. Add the strips of pasta a few at a time. If you want to create a twist, simply use a metal spoon to double them immediately after dropping them into the hot oil. Fry until they are golden brown and drain on absorbent kitchen paper. While still warm sprinkle with a mixture of icing sugar and NoMU Sweet Rub.

zabaglione

- 6 eggs yolks
- 100 ml caster sugar
- 5 pumps **NoMU vanilla paste**
- 100 ml sweet Marsala wine

Whisk the eggs, vanilla and sugar in a mixing bowl with an electric mixer or by hand if you wish! When the mixture has gone fluffy and pale, place the mixing bowl over a pot of simmering water. Make sure the water does not touch the base of the mixing bowl or else you may scramble the eggs! Add the Marsala wine and whisk constantly. To test if it is ready, using the whisk, scoop up the zabaglione and create a figure of 8. If the shape holds, it is ready. Divide the Zabaglione into 4 glasses or into a large serving bowl. It can keep in the fridge for an hour before serving.

Serves 4

WINE SUGGESTIONS:

The old rule of drinking the wine that was used to prepare the dish seems to be a pretty good one here. The Marsala I'd opt for would be from de Bartoli or Florio, both of whom produce examples with real raisiny richness. Avoid most commercial Marsalas, however, many of which are barely worth cooking with.



make your own pasta

500 "00" Flour
 5 organic eggs
 (for a more yellow pasta add 2 more eggs)
 A pinch of salt

serves 4-6

Simply sieve the flour onto a cool work surface or into a mixing bowl, add a pinch of salt and make a well in the centre. Crack the eggs into the middle, break them up with a fork or your fingertips and begin to incorporate the flour. Once it comes together to form a ball, knead the dough till smooth, elastic and glossy (This should take about 10 minutes). If you feel that the dough is too sticky simply add some more flour and if you feel it is too dry add another egg. Wrap the dough up in cling film and place it in the fridge to rest.

Remove the dough from the fridge and divide into 4 balls. Flatten each slightly with the ball of your hand before feeding it with your pasta machine. On the thickest setting start to roll out the pasta dough. After each roll fold the pasta in two and put it through the machine again before going onto your next setting. If you find the pasta is starting to stick to your machine then lightly dust with some more flour. Repeat this process, going further down the machine settings until the pasta is about 1.5mm thick. If you find that the dough becomes too long to work with, simply cut it in half or ask a friend or family member to help!

At this stage the sheets are ready to make lasagne, ravioli or tortellini. Alternatively, you may choose one of the pasta machine attachments to make spaghetti, linguini, fettuccini or tagliatelle. For pappardelle, simply fold a well-floured sheet of pasta repeatedly in half until you have a folded "square". Place the square so that the folded sides are at the top and the bottom. Using a floured knife, swiftly slice 2-3cm strips from top to bottom. Separate the strips immediately. Fresh pasta can be kept in the fridge for 2 days. You can also freeze balls of pasta dough that are wrapped in cling film for 1 month.

cooking pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Rather have too much rather than too little water as the pasta must be able to move around freely. I add a splash of olive oil to the water, but the jury's still out on that one! Once you've added your pasta bring back to the boil as soon as possible and stir to ensure that the pasta is all submerged and does not stick together or to the bottom of the pot. Do not cover the pot with a lid! Fresh pasta has a much shorter cooking time than dried pasta. Pasta should be cooked al dente, which means it should be soft on the outside but still have a tiny bite on the inside, so keep checking! Drain in a colander and serve. Pasta should always be served hot so remember to heat up your bowls or serving platter before hand.

a shape for every sauce

long flat pasta shapes

Pappardelle, Tagliatelle, Fettuccine or Linguine are perfectly suited to carry more robust, hearty sauces like a rich tomato based sauce with pancetta, a creamy mushroom or seafood sauce or rich meaty sauces.

elegant long round thin pasta

Spaghettini or Angel Hair are better suited to lighter sauces that match the pasta's delicacy, for example a simple tomato and basil sauce, a creamy herb and seafood sauce or a light oil-based sauce.

round long thicker shapes

Spaghetti, Spaghettini or Bucatini can handle just about any sauce, especially meaty sauces like Bolognese, stronger tomato sauces like Arrabiata or Putanesca or richer sauces like Carbonara.

tubular shapes

Penne, Rigatoni or Macaroni with their large, often ridged, surface areas, hold the maximum amount of sauce, inside and out, for every bite! Ideally suited to full flavoured, chunkier meat and vegetable sauces as well as rich oven-baked cheesy sauces.

elegant shapes

Farfalle, Pipette, Gnocchi, Rotini or Fusilli can carry light, silky sauces with seafood or vegetable sauces and are visually perfect for salads!



This month's wine suggestions were provided by Robert Joseph, one of the most influential and highly regarded wine connoisseurs in the world. He is editor of Wine Business International and has written over 27 books on wine, including the annual Robert Joseph Good Wine Guide, which was named 'Best Wine Guide in the World' in the 2002 Cointreau Gourmand Book Awards.

