

Basic Pasta Dough

Season: All

Serves: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 4 at home

Fresh from the garden: eggs

Recipe source: Stephanie Alexander *Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids* (Penguin Lantern 2006)

Equipment:

metric measuring scales and spoons
mixing bowls – 1 large, 1 small
plastic wrap
clean tea towels
cook's knife
pasta machine
pastry brush
large saucepan
slotted spoon
colander
serving dish

Ingredients:

400 g plain (all purpose) flour
2 tsp salt
4 eggs (70 g eggs)
cornflour, for dusting



What to do:

To make and rest the dough:

1. Combine the flour and the salt in a large bowl and then create a well in the middle of the flour.
2. Crack the eggs into a small bowl and then pour them into the well in the centre of the flour.
3. Use your hands to incorporate the eggs into the flour until the dough clings together and feels quite springy.
4. Tip the dough onto a clean, dry workbench. Knead the dough for a few minutes. Wrap it in plastic wrap and let it rest for up to an hour at room temperature.

To roll the dough:

1. Clear a large space on the workbench alongside the pasta machine. Make sure all surfaces are clean and dry. You can cover them with clean tea towels.
2. Unwrap the dough and cut it into 6 pieces. Keep one piece out and fold the others back in the plastic wrap to stay moist.
3. Shape the dough into a round ball and press it down on the board to flatten it to make a rectangle about 8 cm wide.
4. Set the rollers on the pasta machine to the widest setting and pass the folded dough through. The dough will probably look a bit ragged at this stage, but you should have a longer rectangle.

5. With the long side of the rectangle nearest you, fold the left and right sides in rough thirds, to form a shorter, fatter rectangle. Again, place it with the folds running vertically up the piece of dough and roll it through the rollers. Do this 3–4 times, folding the long sides into the centre each time. (This process is called 'laminating'.)
6. Continue changing the settings and passing the lengths of dough through until the dough has passed through the second thinnest setting.
7. If the dough starts to stick, sprinkle a pinch of flour onto your hands and smooth it onto the strips of dough. Be very sparing with the flour.
8. If the dough gets too long to handle comfortably, cut it into 2–3 pieces using the cook's knife, and then continue to roll each piece separately.
9. Let your pasta dry on the tea towels while you work on each of the remaining pieces of dough. If you need to pile up layers, make sure you place a clean tea towel between any layers of pasta sheets, or they might turn into a sticky mass!
10. Depending on your recipe, you might pass all the pasta sheets through the cutters.
11. Clean the pasta machine by brushing it with a dry, wide pastry brush. Tip it upside down to get any dried bits of pasta out. **Never** wash your pasta machine with water as the rollers will rust.
12. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil over a high heat and add a generous pinch of salt, your pasta water should be like salty sea water.
13. Drop in your pasta. It should only take 5 minutes to cook.
14. As soon as the pasta is ready, drain it, give it a big shake then tip it into your serving dish. Your pasta is now ready for its sauce.

