

FRESH PASTA

TECNICA
Iconica

From orecchiette of Apulia to *ravioli del Plin* from Piedmont, let's get our hands moving to make several of Italy's emblematic fresh pastas.

LAURA ZAVAN

1. MAKING PASTA ALL'UOVO (EGG PASTA)

SERVES 4

2¼ cups (280 g) type 1 flour or high-protein all-purpose (T65) flour
⅔ cup (120 g) fine durum wheat semolina flour
4 medium (175 g) eggs

PREPARATION

Combine the type 1 and semolina flours and pour them onto a work surface (preferably one made of untreated wood). Make a well in the center and add the eggs. Using a fork, gently beat the eggs (as you would when making an omelet) and gradually incorporate the flour. When the eggs are almost absorbed by the flour, start working the dough by hand. Knead for about 10 minutes. Add a little flour if the dough tends to stick to your fingers, or wet your hands if the dough is too firm. When the dough is smooth, form a ball, wrap it in a damp cloth or plastic wrap to prevent it from drying out, and let rest for 30 minutes to 1 hour at room temperature.

To roll out the dough

BY HAND

Flour the work surface. Roll out the dough using a rolling pin, always starting from the center and moving out. The thickness will not be perfectly even, but the pasta will hold the sauce better.

USING A PASTA ROLLING MACHINE

Work about 2 ounces (60 g) of dough at a time, keeping the remaining dough under a kitchen towel to prevent it from drying out. Flatten the dough into a disk using the palm of your hand. Lightly flour the top, then feed it through the pasta roller, opening the rollers as wide as possible. Fold the dough into thirds, then feed it again through the machine. Repeat this step until you get a rectangle fairly regular in size. Fold the dough in half and feed it through the pasta roller several more times, gradually tightening the rollers until the desired thickness is obtained: very thin for ravioli (second to last notch), about 1 mm thicker for long pasta. Cut it according to use.



2. CLASSIC PASTA FORMATS



TAGLIOLINI, TAGLIATELLE, PAPPARDELLE, MALTAGLIATI . . .

Set the pasta sheets out for 10 minutes to dry on a cloth sprinkled with flour (or semolina) to prevent them from sticking when rolling them out.

CUTTING BY HAND: Roll up the dough and, using a sharp knife, cut sections that are:

- Slightly less than ¼ inch (0.5 cm) wide for *tagliolini*.
- ½ inch (1 cm) wide for *tagliatelle*.
- ⅔ to ¾ inch (1.5 to 2 cm) wide for *pappardelle*.

Roll out the pasta and place them on a tea towel, forming small piles. Store them away from moisture and cook within 2 days.

Maltagliati (literally “badly cut”) are irregular-shaped noodles cut with a knife or pasta cutter (these are often leftover pieces of rolled pasta dough that you use to avoid throwing anything away!).

LASAGNA NOODLES

With 2½ ounces (60 g) freshly rolled pasta dough you can form lasagna sheets measuring 4 to 4¾ inches (10 to 12 cm) wide and 15¾ inches (40 cm) long, to be cut according to the size of the dish. Precook the noodles for 2 to 3 minutes in salted boiling water, boiling no more than three or four noodles at a time. To stop the cooking, transfer them to a bowl of cold water, drain, then spread them out on a clean kitchen towel.

Tradition

Homemade pasta made with egg and soft-wheat flour is typical in northern Italy. The humid climate is not favorable to the cultivation of durum (hard) wheat. But soft wheat is lower in protein (gluten), thus the addition of egg.

LAURA'S ADVICE

To obtain a homogeneous dough, have your ingredients at room temperature. The amount of flour needed may vary depending on its quality and the humidity in the room. When using large eggs, plan on incorporating 5 to 10 percent more flour.