



EATALY

ALL ABOUT
PASTA

A Complete Guide with Recipes



RIZZOLI
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How to Make Egg Pasta

EGG PASTA IS THE MOST COMMON FORM OF FRESH PASTA IN ITALY and is eaten throughout central and northern Italy. Egg pasta is not difficult to make, and it uses only two ingredients, which you likely already have on hand: unbleached all-purpose flour and eggs.

You will need 1 large egg and about 1 cup flour per portion. Start with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour for each egg and then add as you go along. You will need a large wooden work surface (in Italy, most home kitchens are equipped with a board that has a lip that hangs over the side of the counter to hold it in place), a bench scraper, and a straight dowel rolling pin if you are rolling out the dough by hand (preferable, but it takes practice) or a crank pasta machine. Egg pasta is also used to make stuffed pasta and *pasta al forno*, or baked pasta.

1. Form the flour into a well on the work surface or in a bowl. (In a bowl is easier and recommended the first few times you try this.) Crack the eggs into the well, and with the index and middle finger of one hand or with a small fork, whisk the eggs. Gradually draw in flour from the sides of the well until the egg has been absorbed by the flour. With a bench scraper, set the dough off to the side.
2. Clean off your hands, adding any dough scraps to the dough, and wash your hands. Clean the work surface, first by scraping it with the bench scraper, and then by wiping it with a damp cloth or sponge. (If you began by kneading the dough in a bowl, you don't need to perform this step.) Lightly flour the work surface.
3. Transfer the dough to the lightly floured part of the work surface. Knead the dough. The weather, the age of your flour, the size of your eggs, and numerous other factors can influence the dough's texture. If the dough is dry and crumbly, sprinkle it with lukewarm water until it becomes pliable. If it is so wet that it is unwieldy, add flour, about a tablespoon at a time, until you can handle it. Continue kneading the dough until smooth, about 10 minutes. When you cut through the dough with a knife, you should see a consistent color and texture, not whorls of flour and/or egg.
4. Clean off the work surface with a bench scraper. Set the dough to the side on the work surface, cover with an overturned bowl (if you used a bowl above, just rinse it out and use it here), and allow to rest for 30 minutes. This is probably the most important step in making egg pasta dough—don't try to skip it.
5. Cut off a piece of pasta dough the size of an egg. Leave the remaining dough covered under the overturned bowl.

(continued)



When you cut into the dough, it's good to see layers, but you do not want to see bits of flour or egg.



To roll by hand, start at the center of the dough and roll toward the outer edges.

6. *To roll pasta dough by hand:* Shape the dough into a rough circle. Lightly flour the clean work surface. Begin rolling the dough as you would a pastry crust, starting in the center and rolling away from you to the outer edge. Turn the ball of dough a quarter-turn and repeat all the way around, then continue rolling, turning the dough about one-eighth of the way around, until the sheet of dough is $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thin or less. Scatter a small amount of flour on the dough any time it threatens to stick to the surface or the rolling pin. Finish thinning the sheet of dough by wrapping three-quarters of the sheet around the rolling pin toward you, then rapidly unrolling it while running your hands across the sheet of dough, from the center of the rolling pin to the ends. Press out and away from you with the rolling pin. Continue to do this, turning the dough between rolls, until the sheet is extremely thin (see Note).

To roll pasta dough using a crank machine: Pass the piece of dough between the smooth rollers on the widest setting. Fold the piece of dough in half and pass it through again, fold it, and pass it through a third time. It should be smooth. Proceed to thin the pasta dough through the smooth rollers by decreasing the setting between rolls. In other words, if 10 is the widest setting on your machine, now decrease the setting to 9 and pass the piece of dough through. This time, do not fold it, but decrease the setting step-by-step until you have thinned the dough to the desired thickness, usually the thinnest setting, but see below for some exceptions. Set the thinned pasta dough aside for about 10 minutes while you repeat with the remaining dough. Arrange the sheet of dough on a table or counter so that about one-third is hanging over the edge while you repeat with the remaining dough.

7. *To cut hand-rolled pasta dough into shapes:* Clean and very lightly flour the work surface. Spread out a clean flat-weave dish towel on the counter and set aside. Gently roll the first sheet of dough around the rolling pin and slip it off the rolling pin and onto the work surface. (It should be a flat roll.) Cut the roll of dough into strips the desired width, then gently lift them in the air and let them drop onto the dish towel to separate them. Repeat with remaining sheets of dough. (Flour the cut strips lightly if they threaten to stick, though by now they should be fairly dry.)

To cut machine-rolled pasta dough into shapes: The surface of the sheets of dough should feel very dry and matte. Flour them lightly and pass the dough through the notched rollers for strips, or cut it by hand into the desired shape.

NOTE: Tradition dictates that the sheet of dough should be transparent enough that if you lay it over a newspaper, you can read the newsprint through it. Since that's not a very sanitary practice, to determine whether or not the sheet of dough is thin enough, slide your hand underneath and check whether you can see it.



To use a hand-cranked machine, pass the dough through several times to ensure smoothness.



When the dough is finished, it should be so thin as to be translucent.

WHAT SHAPE ARE YOU FEELING?

Choose the shape that best matches your taste and your sauce . . .



SIMPLICITY

SPAGHETTI

Spaghetti look like pieces of string, or spago. Since early forks weren't sharp and had only three tines, they weren't good for eating pasta. So spaghetti started out as finger food. Spaghetti was particularly popular because it was easy to pick up by hand.



EXPLOSION

VESUVIO

This is a twisted form of pasta that looks like Mount Vesuvius. Excellent with vegetable-based sauces.



DEPTH

RIGATONI

Rigatoni were originally produced only for central Italy and especially Roma. Classic rigatoni romani are paired with pajata, or calf intestines.



INFINITY

CASARECCE

A piece of this curled pasta looks like a rolled-up parchment scroll. Casarecce resemble handmade pasta and match beautifully with a classic Neapolitan meat sauce.



CONTINUITY

CALAMARATA

The name of this pasta derives from its resemblance to the sliced bodies of squid. It matches well with seafood in dishes such as calamarata, or calamari pasta tossed with actual calamari.



CURIOSITY

ZITI

In the old days, unmarried women—zite—stayed home on Sundays to cook pasta rather than attending mass. This pasta was named for them.



ENERGY

PACCHERI

Pacchero is Neapolitan dialect for "slap." The sound of this pasta being mixed with sauce is said to sound like someone being hit.



IMPERFECTION

ORECCHIETTE

This pasta has noble Medieval origins. It was introduced in Puglia by the Angevin dynasty, which ruled southern Italy in the thirteenth century.



INVENTION

ELICHE

These spirals, or helices, are larger than classic fusilli. They are perfect for capturing sauce.

FILI D'ORO

When you knead eggs and flour into a dough, roll the dough out into a thin sheet, and then cut the sheet into strips of varying widths, you are doing more than just preparing pasta—you are participating in an age-old ritual that is still practiced daily in much of central and northern Italy.

Making your own egg pasta is fun, and it's not terribly difficult, but don't try to skip the step of allowing the pasta dough to rest before you roll it out by hand. After you've formed the dough, shape it into a ball and either wrap it or simply cover it with an overturned bowl (the goal is not to let it dry out as it rests) and set it aside on the work surface. You should also take this opportunity to scrape any bits of dried pasta dough off the surface so it's perfectly clean when you roll out the dough. Resting allows the dough to develop the proper elasticity—without a little “time out” it will crumble when you attempt to flatten it. Of course, if all this sounds daunting, you can always purchase fresh pasta at Eataly. We make it all day long.

GARGANELLI

Garganelli resemble penne and other tubular dried pasta, but they are made with egg pasta dough. To make garganelli, roll out the dough and cut it into squares (about 1½ inches per side). Wrap a square around a thin dowel (with the dowel crossing the square at two opposite corners) and then roll it on a wooden board with ridges like the teeth of a comb (see page 100) so that you simultaneously seal the square into a tube and create ridges on the outside of the pasta for capturing sauce.





TAGLIATELLE

Tagliatelle are ribbons of egg pasta cut about 1/4 inch wide.

► *The official width defined for tagliatelle is said to measure such that 12,270 pieces of the pasta stacked together would reach the height of the Torre degli Asinelli, one of Bologna's two famous towers.*



BIGOLI

Bigoli are long handmade pasta similar to spaghetti. While most fresh egg pasta is rolled out and cut, bigoli are extruded through a tool known as a torchio, or press. (Because of this, the dough for bigoli should be slightly drier than a dough that you plan to roll out.) This sturdy pasta is often made with whole wheat flour which gives them a rustic appeal.



CHITARRINE

Chitarrine, or spaghetti alla chitarra, are made using a tool that is strung like a guitar (see page 100). When viewed from the short end, they appear square in shape, and they generally incorporate semolina flour for extra chewiness.



TAGLIOLINI

Tagliolini are thin pasta strips, no more than 1/10 inch wide. They resemble fresh spaghetti and are also known as taglierini. (Taglio means "to cut" in Italian.)

ATTREZZI PER FARE LA PASTA

Pasta making is not a high-tech art. Even hand-crank pasta machines are rarely used in Italy, as the metal rollers produce a slicker surface than you get if you roll out the dough with a wooden rolling pin on a wooden surface. That said, there are a few *attrezzi* that can make your life in the pasta kitchen easier, and a few you cannot do without. As with everything, having the right tool for the job is key.

CHITARRA

If you want to make true spaghetti alla chitarra or chitarrine, you'll need this special tool. A sfoglia, or "sheet," of pasta is placed on top, and then you roll over it with a rolling pin as the evenly sized pasta strips collect in the box below.

MATTARELLO

The rolling pin for making pasta is a dowel-style wooden rolling pin (not the type with the handles that roll independently of the body). It is useful to have a board with a lip on it that hooks over the side of the counter to use as a work surface as well.

SPINETTE E SPIEDINI

Some types of pasta are formed by being wrapped around thin wooden dowels (spinette) and metal skewers (spiedini) to form tubes or spirals. Keep a few different sizes on hand so you have options. A knitting needle will do in a pinch—typical Italian ingenuity. Never press the pasta too firmly against the dowel or skewer when shaping or it will stick. Use a light hand so the finished pasta will slide off easily.

ROTELLE

You can cut individual pieces of pasta such as ravioli with a knife, but you'll get prettier results with a wheel cutter (two types are shown opposite). You can use a straight-edge wheel cutter for larger pieces, or choose a fluted or serrated cutter for smaller shapes. The cutter helps to seal the two edges a little as it separates the pieces from each other.

TAGLIERINO RIGA

Sometimes called a pettina, or "comb," this board is used to create ridges on gnocchi, garganelli, and a few other types of pasta.

TAGLIA RAVIOLI

You can make plain ravioli by dotting a strip of egg pasta with filling, placing another layer of pasta on top, and sealing the two sheets together, then cutting the ravioli with a knife. But using a ravioli stamp, which is similar to a cookie cutter, you'll obtain prettier results.



chitarra



taglia ravioli



rotelle

spiedini



taglierino riga



spinette

mattarello

How to Make Ravioli

RAVIOLI ARE PROBABLY THE BEST-KNOWN STUFFED PASTA. Indeed, the word “ravioli” is often used as a synonym for stuffed pasta in general. Classic ravioli are square, but there are also round ravioli, sometimes marked as *ravioli tondi*. Examples of round ravioli include the anolini of Parma and Piacenza, which are almost always filled with meat.

Whatever their shape, ravioli can be filled with vegetables, meat, cheese, fish, or almost anything else you can imagine, though they were likely originally filled with rapa, or turnip greens. At least that’s one of several theories about the etymology of the word. Other possibilities include the idea that the stuffed pieces of pasta themselves—with their bulging centers—resembled small turnips, and that the word derives from the Genova dialect word *rabiole*, or “worthless stuff,” presumably because any leftover bits and pieces could be used up in the filling.

When you consider how far back ravioli date, it’s no wonder that it’s hard to pin down their origins. There are references to packets of dough with filling as far back as the Middle Ages in Italy, and Giovanni Boccaccio wrote about ravioli in his fourteenth-century masterpiece, *The Decameron*. Even then, Italians knew a good thing when they heard about it. In the scene, one character describes a town where all the residents do is make “macaroni and ravioli” and cook them in capon broth. “Oh,” responds a listener, “that must be a wonderful place.”

Ravioli filling needs to hit a Goldilocks-style balance: neither too runny nor too dry. It should be perfectly smooth, never chunky, and creamy. A filling that is too liquid will be difficult to handle and leak out of the little packets; a filling that is not soft enough will be unpleasantly pasty once the pasta is cooked. Drained ricotta is an excellent base for a filling and can be supplemented with all kinds of minced or pureed vegetables. Any meat you use in a filling should be ground finely and cooked in advance.



Use two spoons to dollop out the filling in the center of the dough strip.



Place a top layer on top of the filling and press the edges down gently.



Use a stamp, rotelle cutter, or a sharp knife to cut out the ravioli.



Pull away the scraps of dough and reroll to make more ravioli.

How to Shape Tortellini and Cappelletti

TORTELLINI AND CAPPELLETTI ARE VERY SIMILAR. The only real difference in shape is that tortellini begin with a circular piece of pasta that is stuffed and folded into a half-moon, and cappelletti begin with a square that is folded into a triangle. (As for filling, tortellini always contain at least some pork, while cappelletti fillings can vary. A debate rages about size—some people will tell you that tortellini are always slightly larger than cappelletti, while others insist the inverse is true.) Both are then wrapped around a finger for a final shaping.

Such stuffed pieces of dough first appeared at banquets in Italy in the Middle Ages, when well-to-do families in Bologna feasted on tortellorum on special occasions. Obviously, the manual labor involved in creating small pieces of pasta was intense, so serving tortellini and cappelletti was a sign of wealth and power.

Making tortellini and cappelletti is still a labor of love today, but in areas where these pastas are signature dishes, no holiday would be complete without them. In Italy, children are often recruited to do the folding and shaping—their narrow fingers are perfect for wrapping and sealing smaller rings. You can prepare the filling for tortellini and cappelletti up to several days in advance. Filled and shaped tortellini and cappelletti also freeze beautifully. Simply arrange them in a single layer on a tray and freeze, then transfer to freezer bags. You can drop them into boiling water or broth directly from the freezer without defrosting them—they may take a minute or two longer to cook.

Roll out your egg pasta dough and cut it into squares or circles. Place filling in the center of several of the pieces. Moisten the edge of the pasta with a finger (it's helpful to keep a small bowl of water on the work surface next to you) and fold the square into a triangle (or fold a circle into a semi-circle).

Press with your finger along the edge to seal. This is important, as you don't want filling to leak out while the pasta is cooking.

Pick up a sealed triangle and wrap it around a finger so the two points overlap slightly. (Or do the same with a semi-circle.) Press to seal.

Flip down the top point (or round edge on tortellini) so that the piece resembles a tri-corner hat. Set aside on a lightly floured surface to dry while you finish the rest.

➤ Roll out one egg-size piece of pasta dough at a time and leave the rest covered or wrapped to prevent them from drying out.



Fold the square into a triangle, pinching the edges.



Wrap the shape around your forefinger.



Pinch the circle to close it and pull the top point out.