

Midnight

Effortless pasta · 20 minutes · 5 ingredients · No fuss



Spaghetti

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About the recipes

Although this book is called *Midnight Spaghetti*, it could just as easily be called *Midnight Fettucine* or *Midnight Bucatini*. That is to say, feel free to swap out spaghetti for whatever other long pasta variety you happen to have in your pantry. Spaghettini, linguine, tagliatelle, mafaldine – go for it.

All the recipes call for ‘dried spaghetti’, but not all pastas are created equal. If you can, seek out ‘bronze-cut’ or ‘bronze-extruded’ varieties. These are made using a more artisanal method of cutting pasta which produces a rough, porous surface – allowing your sauces to better cling to and coat the pasta strands for the most mouth-pleasing results.

The recipes use 15 ml (1/2 fl oz) tablespoon measures.

Cooking pasta

Bring 1.5–2 litres (6–8 cups) water to the boil in a large saucepan over high heat, with the lid on. (You need less water than you think – concentrating the starch that gets released from the pasta into the cooking water helps later on in the cooking process, bringing the sauce together to silky perfection.)

Add about 2 teaspoons of salt and your spaghetti to the saucepan. Using a wooden spoon or long-handled tongs, mix the spaghetti as it softens and collapses into the pan. Cover with the lid again for about 1 minute, to bring the water back to the boil quickly, then follow the recipe instructions as directed.

No oil in pasta water, please!

Don’t waste good olive oil by adding it to your pan of boiling water to cook your pasta. The oil won’t stop the spaghetti sticking together – instead, use the correct amount of water and a wooden spoon or long-handled tongs to stir the pasta as it collapses into the pan. Oil in the water can coat the pasta, creating a barrier that hinders your lovingly created sauce from clinging to the spaghetti perfectly. Save your olive oil for cooking the sauce or drizzling on at the end.

Grating cheese

When adding hard cheese, like parmesan or pecorino romano, directly to your frying pan to create a creamy sauce, use the finest grater you have – a microplane is ideal. Very finely grated cheese will melt quickly into the sauce without clumping.







Classics





Bold

Anchovy & cherry tomato spaghetti

Sweet cherry tomatoes, briny olives and dreamy anchovies that melt into oil like butter – this is peak umami. This spaghetti is salty, juicy and just messy enough to feel like you made something special without actually trying that hard. The trick is splurging on good anchovies; they're the unsung heroes here.

Serves 2

200 g (7 oz) dried spaghetti
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
47 g (1½ oz) tin good-quality anchovy fillets in olive oil, drained and chopped
250 g (9 oz) cherry tomatoes, cut in half
80 g (½ cup) pitted green olives, roughly chopped
handful roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves, to serve (optional)

1. Cook the spaghetti in a large saucepan of boiling salted water for about 3 minutes less than specified on the packet, until slightly underdone and less than al dente. Scoop out and reserve 250 ml (1 cup) of the pasta water and drain the pasta.
2. About 5 minutes before the spaghetti is ready, combine the olive oil, garlic, anchovy and tomatoes in a deep 28 cm (11 in) unheated frying pan, stirring to coat the garlic, anchovy and tomatoes with the oil. Cook over medium heat for 4–5 minutes, swirling the pan regularly, until the garlic is fragrant, the anchovy melts into the oil and the tomatoes just start to collapse.
3. Add the spaghetti, olives and 125 ml (½ cup) of the reserved pasta water. Toss well to coat the pasta, shaking the pan and stirring with a wooden spoon to emulsify the pan juices and pasta water.
4. Cover the pan and set aside for 1–2 minutes to allow the spaghetti to finish cooking and to absorb a little of the tomatoey anchovy sauce. Taste and season with freshly ground black pepper and salt, if necessary.
5. Divide between warmed serving bowls or plates and serve, scattered with parsley, if you like.



Cosy

Spaghetti with Italian sausage meatballs

Shortcut meatballs! Just squeeze sausage meat from its casing, roll into bite-sized chunks, then sizzle until browned. Kale and tomato pasta sauce join the party, silky spaghetti gets tossed right in, and suddenly you've got a pasta dish that feels like you've put in the effort, without actually requiring any. Parmesan on top, always. This is weeknight comfort disguised as late-night indulgence.

Serves 2

200 g (7 oz) dried spaghetti
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
250 g (9 oz) Italian-style pork and fennel sausages
4 large cavolo nero or curly kale leaves, stalks stripped, leaves roughly torn
400 g (14 oz) jar good-quality tomato pasta sauce
freshly grated parmesan, to serve

1. Cook the spaghetti in a large saucepan of boiling salted water for about 3 minutes less than specified on the packet, until slightly underdone and less than al dente. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a deep 28 cm (11 in) frying pan over medium-high heat. Squeeze the sausage meat out of the skins in small ball shapes and add to the pan. Shake the pan to coat the meatballs with the oil. Cook for 3–5 minutes, shaking the pan regularly, until the meatballs are well browned, but not cooked through.
3. Add the kale and stir for a minute or two until the kale starts to wilt. Pour in the tomato sauce, bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 3 minutes, until the kale is tender. Taste and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
4. Add the spaghetti and toss well to coat the pasta, shaking the pan and stirring with a wooden spoon for a further 1–2 minutes, to finish cooking the spaghetti.
5. Divide between warmed serving bowls, top with a generous sprinkling of parmesan and serve.

