



Chef Arielle - Pasta Carbonara

Pasta carbonara is an indulgent yet surprisingly simple recipe. Featuring bacon (or pancetta) with plenty of Parmesan, this recipe takes only 30 minutes to prepare from start to finish!



The Trick to Good Carbonara

The trick to making a successful carbonara?

Stirring the egg mixture quickly into the pasta which should be hot enough to "cook" the egg to make a sauce but not so hot as to make it curdle.

Getting carbonara just right can take some practice, so don't despair if your carbonara sauce is a little lumpy the first time you make it.

Some people add cream to their carbonara. It's not traditional, but you can certainly do this, and make an even creamier sauce for the

Tips for Making the Best Carbonara

The beauty of this dish is in its simplicity, yet it can take a little practice to get it just right.

- Prepare ahead: Since this dish comes together so quickly, and timing is crucial, be sure to have all of your ingredients and equipment ready to go from the start.
- Temper the eggs: Working quickly after draining the pasta is paramount to having success. To streamline things, have the beaten eggs at the ready in a bowl, and quickly whisk in a few tablespoons of reserved hot pasta cooking water to temper them. This makes them less likely to curdle once you toss them with the cooked pasta. Then toss the pasta with the tempered eggs in the still-warm cooking pot, which will help the mixture stay warm enough to melt the cheese.
- Use high-quality cheese: Set down the processed cheese shaker! For this dish, it's key to use real, high-quality Parmesan cheese. Trust us, this recipe is worth it. If you're going to indulge, why not do it right?

Swaps and Substitutions

If you need to swap out the pasta for another type, feel free! Just follow the instructions on the package of the pasta you're using since they all differ. You can also add more herbs for flavor if you'd like. Want to use a different cheese? Use pecorino or another hard cheese if you want!

Pancetta vs. Bacon

Traditionally, carbonara is made with guanciale, a robustly flavored cured meat from central Italy which is made from pork jowl. While it's possible to find guanciale at some specialty markets in the U.S., pancetta or bacon are much easier to come by. Pancetta and bacon are both made from pork belly, but pancetta is salt-cured and dried while bacon is smoked. They can usually be used interchangeably but, naturally, pancetta will have a salty flavor while bacon will taste smoky.



Pasta Carbonara

PREP TIME: 10 mins

COOK TIME: 20 mins

TOTAL TIME: 30 mins

SERVINGS: 4 to 6 servings

This recipe uses raw eggs, which are essentially cooked by tossing with hot pasta. They are not cooked to the point of scrambled though, just enough to thicken the eggs into a sauce.

The garlic is optional. It is not usually included in pasta carbonara, but it tastes great so we've included it. By the way, "guanciale", or pork jowl, is traditionally used in this dish, so if you can get it, by all means use it.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil or unsalted butter
- 1/2 pound pancetta or thick cut bacon, diced
- 1-2 garlic cloves, minced, about 1 teaspoon (optional)
- 3-4 whole eggs
- 1 cup grated Parmesan or pecorino cheese
- 1 pound spaghetti (or bucatini or fettuccine)
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Method

1. Heat pasta water:

Put a large pot of salted water on to boil (1 tablespoon salt for every 2 quarts of water.)

2. Sauté pancetta/bacon and garlic:

While the water is coming to a boil, heat the olive oil or butter in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the bacon or pancetta and cook slowly until crispy.

Add the garlic (if using) and cook another minute, then turn off the heat and put the pancetta and garlic into a large bowl.

3. Beat eggs and half of the cheese:

In a small bowl, beat the eggs and mix in about half of the cheese.

4. Cook pasta:

Once the water has reached a rolling boil, add the dry pasta, and cook, uncovered, at a rolling boil.

5. Toss pasta with pancetta/bacon:

When the pasta is al dente (still a little firm, not mushy), use tongs to move it to the bowl with the bacon and garlic. Let it be dripping wet. Reserve some of the pasta water.

Move the pasta from the pot to the bowl quickly, as you want the pasta to be hot. It's the heat of the pasta that will heat the eggs sufficiently to create a creamy sauce.

Toss everything to combine, allowing the pasta to cool just enough so that it doesn't make the eggs curdle when you mix them in. (That's the tricky part.)

6. Add the beaten egg mixture:

Add the beaten eggs with cheese and toss quickly to combine once more. Add salt to taste. Add some pasta water back to the pasta to keep it from drying out.

Serve at once with the rest of the parmesan and freshly ground black pepper. If you want, sprinkle with a little fresh chopped parsley.