



Spaghetti Cacio e Pepe

Cheese and pepper. One of the simplest pasta sauces, this Roman classic can also be one of the trickiest to get just right. The idea is to emulsify the cheese with the starchy pasta cooking water to create a creamy sauce. A few things ensure success: quality ingredients, ratios, temperature and vigorous beating. Use authentic Pecorino Romano (sheep's milk cheese from the region around Rome), good durum wheat pasta, good salt and freshly ground pepper. Cook the pasta in less water than usual (so the water is very starchy) with a little less salt, as the pecorino is very salty. Beat room-temperature cheese and cooking water into a paste in a large warmed bowl before adding the cooked pasta - don't put it back into the hot cooking pan or the cheese may clump. Beat vigorously, until your arm hurts and then some more - the more you beat the creamier the sauce! The good news is, it tastes great even if it doesn't look perfect, so give it a go! As the cheese and water blend together to make a great sauce, so Italian varietals pinot grigio and arneis blend together with riesling and chardonnay in Dal Zotto's *Insieme* (Italian for together) to make a delicious wine that's perfect with this dish.

Serves 6 as an entrée

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons (20g) salt flakes
- 500g dried spaghetti
- 150g freshly grated Pecorino Romano, plus extra for serving
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste

METHOD

1. Add salt flakes to 3 litres of water and bring to the boil.
2. Add spaghetti and stir well to ensure it doesn't stick together.
3. After about 4 minutes, when the spaghetti is half cooked, scoop out a cup of the cooking water.
4. Place pecorino and pepper into a large warmed mixing bowl and beat in half a cup or so of the cooking water to form a creamy paste.
5. When spaghetti is almost al dente, strain it, reserving more cooking water.
6. Add spaghetti to the mixing bowl and beat vigorously with a wooden spoon, adding more cooking water a little at a time, as needed, to coat the pasta in the creamy sauce.
7. Serve in warm bowls, topped with extra cheese and pepper.