



Fettuccine Alfredo

Fettuccine Alfredo is the simplest of pasta dishes, and the one that proves the supreme importance of pasta cooking water as the secret ingredient in any pasta sauce. This classic Italian pasta is named for Alfredo di Lelio, a Roman restaurateur who popularised it at Ristorante Alfredo in the 1920s, where it was theatrically prepared tableside.

Serves 4 as a starter



INGREDIENTS

- 250g dried fettuccine (9oz)
- 25g cooking salt (1oz)
- 65g butter (2½oz)
- 65g Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano, finely grated (2½oz)

METHOD

1. Place 2.5 litres (5 pints) of water in a large saucepan, add salt and bring to the boil.
2. Add pasta and cook until just al dente, using packet instructions as a guideline.
3. Meanwhile, melt butter in a large frying pan over low heat then set aside.
4. When pasta is almost cooked, add ¼ cup of the pasta cooking water to the butter and simmer over a high heat, shaking the pan frequently until it's emulsified and slightly thickened. Reduce heat to low and let it simmer.
5. Use tongs to transfer the cooked pasta into the frying pan then turn off the saucepan's heat.
6. Increase heat under frying pan to medium and toss the pasta for 30 seconds or so until the butter mixture has been absorbed.
7. Add a quarter of the cheese and another ¼ cup of pasta cooking water and continuing tossing and stirring vigorously with the tongs until well combined.
8. Add half the remaining cheese and another ¼ cup of pasta cooking water and toss and stir until incorporated.
9. Add most of the remaining cheese, reserving a little for garnish, and another ¼ cup or so of pasta cooking water and keep mixing to create a smooth, thick sauce coating the pasta.
10. Transfer into warmed shallow bowls, sprinkle with remaining cheese and serve fettuccine Alfredo immediately.