

Carbonara

These days, so many carbonara recipes cheat with cream which is a shame. The traditional method uses raw egg which is mixed vigorously with hot pasta and Parmigiana Reggiano cheese which transforms into a silky, creamy, luxurious sauce unlike anything you've ever had before. Arguably the best pasta dish in the whole world!

This is a pasta that must be eaten straight away to truly experience its magnificence. Serve in warm bowls!

Ingredients

- 175g/6 oz guanciale (pancetta or block bacon), weight after skin removed (Note 1)
- 2 large eggs (Note 2)
- 2 egg yolks (Note 2)
- 100g/3.5 oz Parmigiano Reggiano, finely shredded (or Pecorino Romano, sub parmesan, Note 3)
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 400g/14 oz spaghetti
- 1 tbs cooking/kosher salt (for cooking pasta)
- 1/2 cup pasta cooking water
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced (optional, Note 4)

Garnish (optional):

- Parsley, finely chopped
- Parmigiano Reggiano

Instructions

1. **Guanciale** - Cut into 0.5cm / 1/5" thick slices then into batons.
2. **Carbonara sauce** - Place eggs and yolks in a large bowl. Whisk to combine. Then stir in the parmesan and pepper.
3. **Cook pasta** - Bring 4 litres (4 quarts) of water to the boil with the salt. Add pasta and cook per the packet directions.
4. **Reserve pasta water** - Just before draining, scoop out 1 cup of pasta cooking water, then drain the pasta.
5. **Cook guanciale** - While the pasta is cooking, place guanciale in a nonstick pan over medium high heat. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes until golden. No oil needed - as the guanciale heats up, the fat will melt so it fries in its own fat. If using garlic, add it in the last minute.
6. **Pasta in pan** - Tip the hot pasta into the pan and toss to coat in guanciale fat.
7. **Mix pasta in sauce** - Transfer the pasta and any residual fat in the pan into the bowl with the egg. Add 1/2 cup (125 ml) pasta cooking water. Stir

vigorously using the handle of a wooden spoon for 1 minute and watch as the sauce transforms from watery to creamy and clings to the pasta strands!

8. **Serve** - Transfer into warm bowls. Serve immediately, garnished with a little extra Parmigiano Reggiano if desired, and a pinch of black pepper and finely chopped parsley.

Notes

Economical note: Use bacon instead of guanciale and parmesan instead of Parmigiano Reggiano for a very respectable version of carbonara that will still make Italians proud. Just don't add cream! 😊

1. Guanciale is the cured pork traditionally used in carbonara. Sold in block form that you cut yourself, it can be found in Italian/specialty delis, Harris Farms (Syd, Brisbane) and some butchers. It's very fatty and has a stronger flavour than pancetta and bacon. Substitute with block bacon or pancetta (so you can cut batons), or thick pre-sliced bacon. Must use streaky as sauce needs fat to thicken (read in post for why).

2. Eggs - Use large eggs (cartons labelled as such) which are 55-60g / 2oz each. See here for easy ways to use/store leftover egg whites!

3. Parmigiano Reggiano is a premium aged type of parmesan. Pecorino is also commonly used. Sub parmesan. Do not use store bough pre-grated as it will not melt properly. Must finely shred it yourself!

100g/3.5oz is one tightly packed cup ie shred, put in a cup and pack it down tightly.

4. Garlic not traditional but it adds extra flavour and I can't resist. Sorry Italy! :)

5. Leftovers will keep for 3 days but pasta really is always best eaten freshly made, in particular for carbonara!

Source: <https://www.recipetineats.com/carbonara/>