

Basic pasta dough

Season: All
Type: Basics
Difficulty: Easy

Serves:
20 tastes in
the classroom
or 4 serves at
home

Recipe Source: *Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids*, Stephanie Alexander, (Penguin Lantern 2006)

Equipment:

pasta machine
food processor
kitchen scales
metric measuring spoons
small bowl
plastic wrap
large knife
clean tea towels
pastry brush

Ingredients:

400 g plain (all purpose) flour
2 teaspoons salt
4 eggs



What to do:

- Ask an adult to help fix the pasta machine to a suitable bench. Screw the clamp very tightly.
- Set up the food processor.
- Weigh the flour, then combine it with the salt in the bowl of the food processor. Turn the motor on, crack the eggs into a small bowl then add them to the food processor.
- Process for a few minutes until the dough clings together and feels quite springy.
- Tip the dough onto a clean, dry workbench. Knead the dough for a few minutes. Wrap it in plastic wrap and let it rest for 1 hour at room temperature.

To roll the dough:

- Clear a large space on the workbench alongside the pasta machine. Make sure all surfaces are clean and dry. You can cover them with clean tea towels.
- Unwrap the cold dough and cut it into 6 pieces. Keep one piece out and fold the others back in the plastic wrap to stay moist.
- Shape the dough into a round ball and press it down on the board to flatten it. Fold in both sides, in rough thirds, to make a rectangle about 8 cm wide with folded sides.
- Set the rollers on the pasta machine to the widest setting and pass the folded dough through. Keep it aligned so that the folds run vertically up the rectangle as you pass it through.

- The dough will probably look a bit ragged at this stage, but you should have a longer rectangle. With the long side of the rectangle nearest you, fold left and right sides in again, in thirds, to form a shorter, fatter rectangle. Again, place it with the folds running vertically up the piece of dough and roll it through the rollers. Do this 3–4 times, folding long sides into the centre each time.
- Change the machine roller setting to the next-thickest setting and pass the dough through another 3–4 times. You do not need to fold it.
- If the dough starts to stick, sprinkle a pinch of flour onto your hands and smooth it onto the strips of dough. Be very sparing with flour.
- Continue changing the settings and passing the lengths of dough through until the dough has passed through the second thinnest setting. Don't fold it again after the first (thickest) step. You probably won't use the very thinnest setting, as the dough gets too fine and is hard to manage without ripping.
- If the dough gets too long to handle comfortably, cut it into 2–3 pieces using the large knife, and then continue to roll each piece separately.
- Let your long, thin strands of pasta dry on the tea towels while you work on each of the remaining five pieces of dough. If you need to pile up layers, make sure you place a clean tea towel between any layers of pasta sheets, or they might turn into a sticky mass!
- Depending on your recipe, you might pass all the pasta sheets through the cutters.
- Clean the pasta machine by brushing it with a dry, wide pastry brush. Tip it upside down to get out any dried bits of pasta. *Never wash your pasta machine with water as the rollers will rust.*

