

Pasta Carbonara

This recipe serves four, heartily, but it easily halves to serve two, heartily.

4 eggs

8 oz. bacon

1 pound pasta

1-plus cup Parmigiano Reggiano

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Olive or Grapeseed Oil

Maldon sea salt (optional)

To begin, set the table. Put four dinner plates into an oven set on warm. Crack open four farm-fresh eggs, separating the whites into a single bowl, carefully sliding the yolks into another small bowl while doing your utmost to keep them from breaking.

Bring a nice big pot of tap water to a rolling boil. Add a teaspoon or two of salt, or not, if you're not into salt. It does flavor the pasta in a nice way. Put 8 ounces bacon chopped into quarter-sized bits into a large sauté pan with a little olive or grapeseed oil. I like to use a cast-iron pan. You don't need much oil; it just gets things going in the pan.

While the bacon is getting nice and crispy, add 1 pound pasta to the water. Spaghetti seems to be the best type, but anything you have in the cupboard works. Cook the pasta until just al dente. It's going to cook again a little more in the bacon pan, so it's best to err on the slightly underdone side.

Just before you drain the pasta, scoop out about 1 cup of the pasta cooking water and set aside near the bacon, which is well browned and crispy by now. Do not drain the fat from the bacon, unless you must. Okay, well then just drain some of it.

Drain the pasta and add it immediately to the bacon, along with 1/2 cup of the pasta water. (Now you see why you need a big pan!) Toss over medium heat for 1 minute, adding more water to keep things moist, if needed. The water has starch in it from the pasta and serves to make everything saucy. After one minute, toss in 1 cup of freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, the egg whites, and lots of freshly grated black pepper. Turn down the heat and briefly toss and toss! The egg whites will cook, integrating themselves into the milieu.

Divide the pasta onto the four warmed plates. Make a small nest in the center of the pasta on each plate, and slide a yolk into the nest. At this point everyone should be seated.

Serve immediately. Each person at table stirs the yolk into the hot pasta, and perhaps adds more grated cheese and black pepper, and a pinch of Maldon sea salt to taste. A crisp white wine such as a Gruner Vertliner or red such as Pinot Noir goes well, along with a simple romaine salad.

Yes, it's rich! Not a meal you'd eat often, but oh...when you do...life is extra-delicious...eat well!

P.S.: If you have kids, you may want to stir in the yolks just before serving, to eliminate the "ew" factor. I get my eggs from local farms and never worry about salmonella. This is the classic style of Carbonara. Do your own research and come to your own conclusions about eating eggs in this manner.