



Our experts are here to share tips on cooking pasta, plus show you what pasta to use when – yes, there is a pasta shape for every sauce or filling.

One does not simply boil the pasta...

Let's start with the basics – time it right! Here's our must-follow rules:

1. Make it hot: Only place the pasta in the water once it's boiling rigorously. Pasta should be cooked to *al dente* – soft and cooked but still with a bit of 'bite'.
2. Timing is everything: Boil for about 8 minutes if serving with a sauce. For a pasta bake, par-cook pasta for 5-6 minutes, as it continues cooking in the oven.
3. Do be salty! Add enough salt to your pasta water (it should taste a little like the sea, so don't be shy!), as this will give it flavour.
4. Oil in pasta water is a waste. Don't add oil to pasta water, it prevents the sauce from sticking to the pasta itself.
5. Keep it rolling. Simply ensure the water is at a rolling boil when you add the pasta and stir every minute to prevent sticking.
6. Be safe, not sorry. Never drain all the water from cooked pasta – reserve a little in case the pasta sauce is too thick

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Size (and shape) does matter...

There's more to life than just macaroni. Daunted by all the options? We pair pasta shapes and marry them with the perfect sauce for you. You're welcome!

FUSILLI: Shaped like short spirals or screws, fusilli is ideal for baked pasta dishes with rich, creamy sauces that really stick to them. Also popular in pasta salads.

PENNE: Short, straight tubes that work well with heavier or chunky sauces, as the sauce fills the tubes.

MACARONI: Narrow tubes with a similar function to penne. It also works well in soups and baked pasta dishes with creamy sauces (think of classic mac 'n cheese).

SPAGHETTI: Long, thin 'strings' that are best for herbed butters or light sauces like pesto or napoletana (tomato) sauce – heavier sauces don't really stick to this pasta.

TAGLIATELLE: Long flat ribbons that are ideal for creamy, heavier sauces, as the pasta holds its shape well and there's plenty of surface area for the sauce to stick to.

CANNELLONI: Very large, tube-shaped pasta that is filled with meat or vegetables, smothered in sauce and cheese, and baked until golden.

Now, go on and make that pasta that will have your family saying *Mamma Mia!*