

Treasure Barrel

Spaghetti Carbonara: Classic Comfort Pasta Dish

10 min Prep time	**20 min** Cook time	**30 min** Total time
4 Servings	**Medium** Difficulty	**Italian** Cuisine

Ingredients

For the Pasta

- [ ] 1 lb (450g) spaghetti
- [ ] Salt for boiling water
- [ ] 8 oz (225g) beef bacon, diced
- [ ] 4 large egg yolks, at room temperature
- [ ] 1 large whole egg, at room temperature

For the Sauce & Garnish

- [ ] 1 1/2 cups freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese, plus more for serving
- [ ] 1 tsp freshly cracked black pepper, plus more for serving
- [ ] 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Instructions

1. First, let's get everything ready for our delicious journey. Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil and salt it generously; it should taste like the sea. In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, the whole egg, the grated Pecorino Romano, and the black pepper until it forms a thick, paste-like sauce. Setting this aside now is key because things will move very quickly later. I find this prep stage so calming, just focusing on each ingredient before the symphony begins.

2. While the water is coming to a boil, place the diced beef bacon in a large, cold skillet. Turn the heat to medium and let the bacon cook slowly, stirring occasionally. We're rendering the fat, so be patient. You're looking for deeply browned, crispy little morsels, which should take about 8-10 minutes. Once your water is boiling, add the spaghetti and cook according to package directions until al dente. This step is much quicker than prepping something complex like a Matilda's chocolate cake, which is why I love it for a weeknight.

3. This is the most important step, so take a deep breath! Just before the pasta is done, scoop out about 2 cups of the starchy cooking water and set it aside. Drain the pasta and immediately add it to the skillet with the crispy beef bacon and its rendered fat. Now, turn off the heat completely. Pour the egg and cheese mixture over the hot pasta and immediately begin tossing everything together vigorously with tongs. This is not the time to be shy! The constant motion is what creates the creamy sauce and prevents the eggs from scrambling.

4 As you toss, add a splash of the reserved pasta water (start with about 1/4 cup) to the pan. The starchy water will help emulsify the sauce, making it glossy and creamy. Continue to toss and add more water, a tablespoon at a time, until the sauce reaches your desired consistency, beautifully coating every strand of spaghetti. Serve immediately in warm bowls, garnished with another generous sprinkle of Pecorino Romano, a few more cracks of black pepper, and fresh parsley if you're using it. It’s a meal that feels complete on its own, though for dessert, sometimes an easy banana bread is the perfect simple finish.

Nutrition per serving

680 kcal	30 g	60 g	35 g
Calories	Protein	Carbs	Fat

Tips & notes

- That starchy pasta water is not just dishwater; it’s a crucial ingredient. The starches that cook out of the pasta help to bind the fat from the bacon and eggs with the cheese, creating a stable, creamy emulsion. It’s the secret to a sauce that clings perfectly to the pasta. It works as a binding agent, not unlike the eggs in the best banana bread. So, never, ever forget to save a cup or two before you drain!
- Please use freshly cracked black pepper for this recipe. The pre-ground stuff just doesn't have the same pungent, floral aroma and bite. Carbonara is said to be named for the 'carbonai,' or charcoal burners, and the black pepper is meant to look like flecks of coal. A coarse grind adds both flavor and a lovely textural contrast to the creamy sauce. Be generous with it!
- This dish waits for no one! Carbonara is at its absolute best the moment it’s made. The sauce is delicate and can become thick or separate as it cools. I always warm my pasta bowls beforehand by filling them with a bit of the hot pasta water while the spaghetti cooks. It keeps the dish warmer for longer, ensuring every bite is as perfect as the first.