

Classic Fettuccine Alfredo: Creamy, Rich, and Perfectly Simple

Here's what you'll need for this timeless Fettuccine Alfredo:



TIME
2-4 min

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INGREDIENTS

1 pound fettuccine pasta
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1 1/2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving (do not use pre-grated)
1/2 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper, plus more for serving
Salt for pasta water
Reserved pasta cooking water (about 1 to 1.5 cups)

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Cook the : Pasta:** Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a rolling boil. Add the fettuccine and cook according to package directions until al dente (firm to the bite). This is essential for a good texture.
- 2. Reserve : Pasta Water:** Before draining the pasta, scoop out at least 1 to 1.5 cups of the starchy pasta cooking water and set it aside. This water is critical for making your sauce. Drain the rest of the pasta and immediately transfer it back to the empty pot or a large, warm serving bowl.
- 3. Melt : Butter:** Add the cubed unsalted butter directly to the hot pasta. Toss gently with tongs until the butter is completely melted and coats the pasta. The residual heat from the pasta will melt the butter perfectly.
- 4. Add : Cheese & Pepper:** Immediately add the freshly grated Parmesan cheese and the freshly cracked black pepper to the pasta.
- 5. Create the : Sauce:** Begin tossing the pasta vigorously with tongs, gradually adding the reserved hot pasta cooking water, a tablespoon or two at a time. Keep tossing and stirring. The hot starchy water, combined with the melted butter and cheese, will emulsify and create a creamy, glossy sauce that beautifully clings to the fettuccine. This step usually takes 2-4 minutes of constant tossing.
- 6. Adjust : Consistency:** Continue adding small amounts of pasta water until the sauce reaches your desired consistency - it should be thick enough to coat the pasta but still fluid and silky. You might not use all the reserved water.

7. **Serve:** Taste and adjust seasoning if needed (the Parmesan and butter are already salty). Serve immediately, garnished with extra freshly cracked black pepper and more grated Parmesan cheese.

SWAPS & NOTES

Pasta: While fettuccine is traditional, any long, flat pasta like linguine or tagliatelle will work beautifully.

You could even use a short pasta like penne in a pinch, though the classic is best.

Butter: Unsalted butter is preferred so you can control the saltiness.

If you only have salted, reduce any added salt slightly.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Freshly Grated Cheese is Non-Negotiable: This is the most important tip for classic Alfredo.

Seriously, buy a block and grate it yourself.

Hot Pasta Water: Use very hot, starchy pasta water.

The starch helps emulsify the sauce, and the heat helps melt the cheese properly.

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