

One-Pan Tomato Basil Pasta with Garlic and Parmesan (20-Minute Dinner)

One-Pan Pasta That Makes Its Own Sauce (No Boiling Required)



TIME
20 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz spaghetti or linguine (or any long pasta)
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 small onion or 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- 3-4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil (plus extra to finish)
- 3 1/2 to 4 cups water or low-sodium broth
- 1 tsp kosher salt (use less if broth is salty)
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan (optional but excellent)
- 1 big handful fresh basil, torn (or substitute parsley)
- 2 cups baby spinach or arugula
- Cooked chicken, shrimp, or white beans
- Lemon zest for finishing

DIRECTIONS

1. Build the pan. In a large deep skillet or wide sauté pan, add the dry pasta, tomatoes, onion/shallot, garlic, olive oil, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes (if using). Spread it out so the pasta is mostly flat.
2. Add liquid and bring to a boil. Pour in 3 1/2 cups water or broth. Turn the heat to high and bring it to a boil. Use tongs to nudge the pasta so it softens and slips under the liquid as it starts cooking.
3. Simmer and stir (this is the key). Reduce heat to a strong simmer and cook for 9-12 minutes, stirring and tossing frequently with tongs. The stirring prevents sticking and helps the liquid emulsify into a sauce.
4. Adjust the liquid. If the pan looks dry and the pasta isn't tender yet, add water 1/4 cup at a time.
5. If it looks too soupy when the pasta is done, simmer 1-2 minutes longer while tossing.
6. Finish like you mean it. Turn off the heat. Add basil and toss. Add Parmesan if using, plus a drizzle of olive oil and extra black pepper. Taste and salt as needed.

SWAPS & NOTES

Penne, rotini, or shells cook fine-just stir more often.

Water vs broth: Water makes the tomato flavor pop; broth adds savoriness.

Tomato options: Cherry tomatoes are ideal for sweetness.

If using canned diced tomatoes, start with about 1 1/2 cups and reduce added salt.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use a wide pan: More surface area = more even cooking and better reduction.

Stir early and often: Especially in the first 5 minutes when pasta wants to cling.

Don't panic about the liquid: It always looks like "too much" before it becomes sauce.

Finish with freshness: Basil, lemon zest, and olive oil at the end make it taste alive.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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