

# Simple Pasta

- 1 pound pasta (for 3-4 people)
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil (or less, just enough to coat pasta)
- 2 – 3 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- ½ - 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or to taste)
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano (NOT that green cardboard cheese, please)
- 1 pound Italian sausage, cut in bite size pieces (optional)



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## METHOD

1. Bring a very large pot of water to a boil; add enough salt so that the water tastes like sea water
2. When the water is at a rolling boil, add pasta and stir briefly to assure that it doesn't stick
3. Cook according to package directions (usually 8 – 10 minutes for dried pasta); check every few minutes by tasting a strand; it should be firm and give slight resistance, but not white or chalky in the middle
4. As soon as the pasta is in the water, heat a large sauté pan (it must be big enough to hold the cooked pasta) over medium heat and sauté the sausage until it is completely cooked through and no longer pink; add the oil; when the oil is quite warm and starts to shimmer slightly, add garlic and pepper flakes and lower the heat to medium-low so that you do not burn the garlic; when the pasta is done, strain it and add to the sausage, oil/garlic mixture and toss to coat; taste and adjust seasoning
5. Serve in a warm bowl garnished with the cheese

This dish is great because you can flavor it with so many things: leftover grilled meats or seafood, vegetables, canned artichokes or capers, anchovies, roasted peppers, or tomatoes and herbs. The key is using the very best olive oil you can afford, good Parmesan cheese, and fresh garlic.