

Gina's CACIO E PEPE

Cacio e Pepe is a classic pasta dish made originally by Roman shepherds during the Roman Empire. Made simply of PASTA, PECORINO ROMANO, SALT and coarsely ground PEPPER, it has made its way more recently into popular culture. The important thing with making perfect Cacio e Pepe is the technique: no butter, no oil. The salty pasta water and cheese combining is what defines its signature starchy, creamy texture.

SERVES 2-3

- 6oz pasta Tonnarelli, Bucatini, Strozzapreti or Spaghetti
- 2oz Pecorino Romano
- Salt and coarse pepper

Fill a large pot 2/3 full of water with generous salt added and boil. When water is at full boil, add pasta.

As pasta is nearing al dente – I always cook pasta under the recommended allowance, 2 minutes usually – take 1/4 cup of the pasta cooking water and place into a shallow saucepan on high heat.

Drain pasta. Pour cooked (just below al dente) pasta into pasta water and then add small amounts, continuously, of grated pecorino stirring constantly.

As the pasta, pasta water and cheese heat and cook together, the pasta starch should melt along with the cheese creating a creaminess. Continue until velvety, and add lots of fresh cracked pepper and salt.