

Pasta Amatriciana

By Kay Chun

YIELD 4 servings

TIME 25 minutes

Pasta amatriciana is a traditional Italian dish that features a sauce of guanciale (salt-cured pork jowl), tomato, pecorino romano and chiles. Some variations include onion and white wine. The final product tastes much more complex than the ingredient list would suggest: This simple pantry meal delivers deep flavors, as the bright, tangy tomato base balances the rich pork, and a mix of dried peppers adds layers of subtle heat. Guanciale can be found in Italian specialty shops or online, but pancetta is a good alternative. Bucatini is a thicker pasta with a hollow center that captures the thick sauce, but spaghetti delivers equally tasty results.

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

just use
bacon

4 ounces guanciale or pancetta, chopped into ¼-inch cubes (¾ cup)

just use
crushed
tomatoes

1 (28-ounce) can whole tomatoes, crushed with your hands in a bowl

⅛ teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste

⅛ teaspoon red-pepper flakes

Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)

use whatever
pasta you want

**1 pound dried bucatini
¾ cup grated Pecorino Romano, plus more for garnish**

PREPARATION

Step 1

In a large (12-inch) skillet, heat olive oil over medium. Add guanciale and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 5 minutes. To the skillet, add tomatoes, black pepper and red-pepper flakes, and season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally and smashing tomatoes with the back of a wooden spoon, until tomatoes have broken down and sauce is thickened, about 15 minutes.

Step 2

Meanwhile, in a large pot of salted water, cook pasta according to package directions until just shy of al dente. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta cooking water and drain.

Step 3

Add pasta, tomato sauce and ½ cup of pasta cooking water back to the large pasta pot and stir vigorously over medium-high heat until pasta is evenly coated in the sauce, about 1 minute. (Add more pasta water if sauce is dry.) Remove from heat, stir in the cheese and season to taste with salt.

Step 4

Divide pasta among bowls and garnish with more cheese and black pepper.