

Angel Hair Pasta with Spinach and Clams

Featuring Clams

Spaghetti alle vongole (spaghetti with clams) is said to have originated in Naples, on the west coast of Italy. My maternal grandparents were born just north of Naples, near the seaside village of Gaeta. Some versions of this dish can include tomatoes, but I grew up with this version. This pasta recipe is economical and easy to prepare, making it a great last minute dinner recipe, since it comes together in less than 30 minutes using staple pantry items.

Ingredients:

Water for cooking pasta, as needed (reserve 1/2 cup pasta water)
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 pound dried angel hair pasta (or thin spaghetti)
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 (6.5-ounce) cans minced clams, with liquid
1/4 cup dry white wine (optional)
1/8 teaspoon red chili pepper flakes (optional)
1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest
2 cups raw spinach leaves, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley (or 1 tablespoon dried)
Sliced tomatoes (optional)

Instructions:

- 1 Fill a 6-quart stock pot with water. Add salt to the water, cover with a lid, and bring to a boil. Add pasta to the boiling water, stirring to ensure it doesn't clump. Allow the pasta to cook, according to package directions, until it's just firm to the bite (*al dente*). Remove from heat. Reserve 1/2 cup pasta water, drain pasta, and set aside.
- 2 Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and saute' until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
- 3 Reduce the heat to low and add the minced canned clams with liquid, wine (optional), red chili pepper flakes, and lemon zest. Stir to combine, and cook over low heat until the moisture evaporates (about 5 minutes).
- 4 Add the spinach to the pan and cook for about 2 minutes, until spinach is wilted. Reduce heat to simmer. Add drained pasta and up to 1/2 cup of pasta water (you may need less), a few tablespoons at a time, to thicken the sauce and ensure the pasta doesn't clump.
- 5 Stir to combine and transfer to a serving dish or individual pasta bowls. Top with cheese, black pepper, parsley, and tomatoes.

Makes 4 servings

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cooking Time: 14 min.

Total Time: 24 min.

Recipe Author

Rosanne Rust, MS, RDN

is a registered dietitian, author, and content creator based in Venice, Florida. She enjoys sharing the science behind food, health, and agriculture, and simple recipes that curb food waste. You can find her on social media @chewthefacts or visit her website at www.rustnutrition.com.

Notes:

- 1 Substitute any type of greens (collards, kale, arugula) for the spinach.

Nutritional information (per serving):

372 calories, 13 g total fat, 3 g saturated fat, 633 mg sodium, 46 g carbohydrate, 23 mg cholesterol, 3 g total sugars, 2 g fiber, 17 g protein