

Pasta for Breath Only a Mother Could Love

Spaghettoni aglio e olio (or spaghettoni with oil and garlic), as this dish is more commonly known, is the perfect dish to serve when friends stop by unannounced. It's an instant party. Even when it seemed as if there was nothing in the house to cook, my mom could make unexpected dinner guests feel that they were part of the family. And there was always enough for seconds.

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

Salt

1 pound spaghettoni

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

6 to 8 cloves garlic, smashed

2 tablespoons minced Italian parsley

Pinch of red pepper flakes

Freshly ground black pepper

MOM'S TIP

Time your cooking so that the garlic is done just as the pasta is al dente.

1. Bring a 6-quart pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of salt and the pasta, and stir well. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is *al dente*, about 8 minutes.

2. While the pasta cooks, heat the oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook until golden brown, taking care not to let the garlic get too dark, about 2 minutes. When the garlic is light brown, add the parsley and red pepper flakes.

3. Drain the pasta and add it to the skillet. Toss, season with salt and pepper, and serve right away in warm bowls.

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