

Basic Semolina Pasta: Capunti

Season: All

Makes: 30 tastes in the classroom
or 6 at home

Capunti, pasta shaped to look like empty pea pods, comes from Puglia in Italy.

Note: This simple hand-rolled pasta dough made with semolina flour is egg-free. The pasta dough is well-suited to shorter twisted, shell or convex shapes such as gnocchi Sardi, trofie or orecchiette.

Equipment:

metric measuring scales,
jug and spoons
1 large mixing bowl
plastic wrap
clean tea towel
chopping board
cook's knife
large saucepan
slotted spoon
colander
serving dish

Ingredients:

400 g semolina flour
1 tsp salt
200 ml water

What to do:

To make and rest the dough:

1. Combine the flour and salt in the large bowl and create a well in the middle of the flour.
2. Pour the water into the well in the centre of the flour.
3. Use your hands to incorporate the water into the flour until the dough clings together and feels springy. If the dough is sticking to your hands, add more semolina flour. If the dough is too dry, add a little more water.
4. Tip the dough onto a clean, dry workbench. Knead the dough for 8–15 minutes until it is smooth and shiny.
5. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 20 minutes at room temperature.

To shape the capunti:

1. Unwrap the dough and cut it into six pieces. Keep one piece out and fold the others back in the plastic wrap to stay moist.

2. Place the dough on a clean, dry surface to start shaping the capunti. Don't dust the surface with flour, as it is the moistness in the dough that helps shape the pasta.
3. Roll the dough into a long, thin log about 1 cm wide, and cut the log into pieces 2 cm long.
4. Hold a piece of dough in the palms of your hands. Rub your palms together to make a pod shape with pointed ends out of the dough. Shape all the pieces in this way.
5. Lay a pea pod of dough on the bench. Place the tips of your three middle fingers lengthways along the top of the piece of dough, and press down firmly. Pull your fingers back along the bench towards yourself until they release and the dough curls in on itself. The dough should resemble an empty pea pod.
6. Repeat with the rest of the dough, setting the pieces aside without touching so they don't stick together.

To cook the pasta:

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil over a high heat and add a generous pinch of salt. Your pasta water should be like salty sea water.
2. Slip the pasta quickly into the water (avoid dropping them in from a height as this might cause the boiling water to splash). The pasta is cooked when they float to the top. This should only take 1–2 minutes.
3. As soon as the pasta is ready, drain it, give it a big shake then tip it into your serving dish. Your pasta is now ready for its sauce.

