

The nutrient of the month

Fat, a smart fuel

Healthy fats give us energy and help absorb important vitamins. Think avocados, olive oil, seeds and oily fish. They keep your brain sharp and protect your body!

The fun fact of the month

The Sunshine Vitamin: Why Vitamin D Matters

Vitamin D is essential for more than strong bones.

It plays a key role in immune health, inflammation control, and even mental wellbeing. Your skin produces vitamin D when exposed to UVB rays from sunlight, but in the UK, especially in winter, many people don't get enough. Low levels have been linked to fatigue, frequent illness, and even low mood. While some vitamin D can be obtained from foods like oily fish, eggs and fortified cereals, supplementation is often recommended from October to March (check with your doctor).

Getting outdoors, even on grey days, helps, sunlight is still a vital part of your health.

DID YOU KNOW?

The recipe of the month

Fresh Pasta

INGREDIENTS:

200g Tipo 00 flour
2 large free-range eggs



NOTES:

Whether you're rolling by hand or by machine you'll need to know when to stop. If you're making pasta like tagliatelle, lasagne or stracci you'll need to roll the pasta down to between the thickness of a mat and a playing card; if you're making a stuffed pasta like ravioli or tortellini, you'll need to roll it down slightly thinner or to the point where you can clearly see your hand or lines of newsprint through it.

METHOD, part 1:

1. Place the flour on a board or in a bowl. Make a well in the centre and crack the eggs into it. Beat the eggs with a fork until smooth.
2. Using the tips of your fingers, mix the eggs with the flour, incorporating a little at a time, until everything is combined.
3. Knead the pieces of dough together – with a bit of work and some love and attention they'll all bind together to give you one big, smooth lump of dough!
4. Once you've made your dough you need to knead and work it with your hands to develop the gluten in the flour, otherwise your pasta will be flabby and soft when you cook it, instead of springy and al dente. There's no secret to kneading. You just have to bash the dough about a bit with your hands, squashing it into the table, reshaping it, pulling it, stretching it, squashing it again. It's quite hard work. You'll know when to stop – it's when your pasta starts to feel smooth and silky instead of rough and floury.
5. Wrap the dough in cling film and put it in the fridge to rest for at least 30 minutes – make sure the clingfilm covers it well or it will dry out and go crusty round the edges.

The recipe of the month

METHOD – part 2:

1. If using a machine to roll your pasta, make sure it's clamped firmly to a clean work surface before you start (use the longest available work surface you have).
2. Dust your work surface with some Tipo 00 flour, take a lump of pasta dough the size of a large orange and press it out flat with your fingertips. Set the pasta machine at its widest setting – and roll the lump of pasta dough through it. Lightly dust the pasta with flour if it sticks at all.
3. Click the machine down a setting and roll the pasta dough through again. Fold the pasta in half, click the pasta machine backup to the widest setting and roll the dough through again. Repeat this process five or six times.
4. Now it's time to roll the dough out properly, working it through all the settings on the machine, from the widest down to around the narrowest. Lightly dust both sides of the pasta with a little flour every time you run it through.
5. When you've got down to the narrowest setting, to give yourself a tidy sheet of pasta, fold the pasta in half lengthways, then in half again, then in half again once more until you've got a square-ish piece of dough. Turn it 90 degrees and feed it through the machine at the widest setting. As you roll it down through the settings for the last time, you should end up with a lovely rectangular silky sheet of dough with straight sides. If your dough is a little cracked at the edges, fold it in half just once, click the machine back two settings and feed it through again. That should sort things out.
6. Once you've rolled your pasta the way you want it, you need to shape or cut it straight away. Pasta dries much quicker than you think, so whatever recipe you're doing, don't leave it more than a minute or two before cutting or shaping it. You can lay over a damp clean tea towel which will stop it from drying.