

You'll need: a pot, a wooden spoon, a timer, a knife, a ladle, a small bowl or a heatproof measuring cup, oven mitts, a colander, a one-pound box of spaghetti, two to three medium garlic cloves, salt and pepper, olive oil, red chile flakes (optional), Parmesan cheese (optional)

Step  
1



Put a big **pot of water** on the **stove** and add **generous amounts of salt**. The water should taste like the ocean. Let it come to a rapid **boil over** high heat.

Step  
2



**Add the spaghetti** and immediately **stir** to submerge all of the pasta. Don't add oil to the water. **Set the timer** for the number of minutes indicated on the pasta packaging. Keep the water boiling rapidly, and stir the pasta occasionally.

Step  
3



Peel the **garlic**, then **smash the cloves** with the side of your knife and **mince** them.

Step  
4



When the pasta is near its cooking time, **ladle** out about a cup of the **pasta water into a small bowl or a heatproof measuring cup**.

Step  
5



**Take the pot off the stove** using oven mitts so you don't burn your hands, and **strain the pasta** in a colander. Don't rinse the pasta.



\*From the store to the kitchen to the table: We outline the steps that get you from something raw to something cooked using simple ingredients, free of measurements and complicated techniques. A method that you can have in your back pocket and whip out whenever you like. We call it recipe-free cooking.



Step  
6



Put the empty **pot back on the stove** over medium-low heat. Add a decent amount of **olive oil** (count to three while pouring). Add the **garlic**, a shake of red chile flakes (optional), and salt and pepper. Cook for a minute or so, stirring and making sure the garlic doesn't burn.

Step  
7



Put the **pasta back in the pot**, add half of your **reserved pasta water**, and stir to coat. Add the rest of the pasta water, and stir again. You want the pasta to have a little bit of a sauce rather than being fried spaghetti. Add more **salt and pepper** to taste. **Turn off the heat**. Grate **Parmesan cheese** on your pasta, if you like, and serve.

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