

# Cacio e Pepe



## A Classic Roman Masterpiece

*Three humble ingredients transformed into one of Italy's most celebrated dishes.*

### Origin

Cacio e Pepe (literally "cheese and pepper") is one of Rome's most iconic primi piatti. Its origins trace back to the shepherds of Lazio who carried dried pasta, aged Pecorino, and black pepper on long journeys. Today it stands as one of the four pillars of Roman pasta, alongside Carbonara, Amatriciana, and Gricia.

### Ingredients

- 400 g tonnarelli or spaghetti
- 200 g Pecorino Romano DOP, very finely grated
- 2 tsp whole black peppercorns, freshly cracked
- Coarse sea salt for pasta water

### Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a rolling boil. Cook the pasta until just shy of al dente.

2. Toast cracked black pepper in a large dry skillet over medium heat for 1-2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add 2 ladles (about 250 ml) of starchy pasta cooking water to the pepper skillet and simmer.
4. Place grated Pecorino in a bowl. Gradually whisk in 3-4 tablespoons of warm pasta water to form a smooth cream.
5. Transfer pasta into the pepper skillet using tongs. Toss vigorously over low heat, adding splashes of pasta water.
6. Remove from heat. Add the Pecorino cream and toss rapidly until a glossy sauce coats every strand.
7. Serve immediately with extra pepper and Pecorino.

## Tips from the Italian Kitchen

- **Starchy water is everything:** Cook pasta in less water than usual to concentrate the starch.
- **Never add cream:** Authentic Cacio e Pepe relies solely on the emulsion of cheese, pepper, and starchy water.
- **Temperature control:** Add cheese mixture off heat to prevent clumping.
- **Use real Pecorino Romano DOP:** Do not substitute with Parmesan.

**Serves:** 4 | **Prep Time:** 5 min | **Cook Time:** 15 min

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