

Pizzoccheri (Italian Buckwheat Pasta)

Time: About an hour

These dark, freckled, flat noodles offer substantial depth of flavor and some heft on the fork. Classically paired with cabbage, garlic, and cheese in the autumnal casserole Pizzoccheri al Forno, simpler preparations might call for straight Parmigiano-Reggiano, brown butter, and prosciutto or for toasted walnuts, sautéed shallots, and wilted kale.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a food processor, a rolling pin, a bench knife or chef's knife, a pasta machine or chef's knife, a drying rack (real or improvised—a wooden rack for drying clothes works extremely well and a suspended broom handle will do in a pinch), a stockpot, a pair of tongs, and a colander.

Ingredients

1 cup (5.2 ounces) Anson Mills Rustic Aromatic Buckwheat Flour, room temperature

1 cup (5 ounces) strong white flour, such as King Arthur Organic Baker's Classic Bread Flour or King Arthur European-Style Artisan Bread Flour, room temperature

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

4 tablespoons hot water

2 large eggs, room temperature

1 tablespoon table salt for pasta cooking water

Directions

1. Place the flours and sea salt in the bowl of a food processor and pulse to combine. Measure the hot water into a glass measuring cup, crack the eggs into the cup, and beat the eggs with a fork. With the food processor running, pour the liquid mixture through the tube. Turn off the machine, then give the dough about ten 3-second pulses. The dough should come together and clear the bowl.

2. Turn the dough out onto a work surface and knead it lightly for a couple of minutes. If the dough feels dry, dampen your hands. If it feels tacky, flour your hands, but use as little flour as possible. The dough should be smooth and supple. When it is, flatten the dough into a disk and turn it into a zipper-lock bag. Let it rest for 20 minutes.

3. Set up the pasta machine. Cut the dough into quarters with a bench knife or chef's knife. Keep three pieces in the zipper-lock bag. Lightly flour the fourth piece and roll it into a band about 4 inches wide and 8 inches long. Run the dough through the widest

Cooking Remarks

We ask that both flours and the eggs be at room temperature before the dough is processed. The buckwheat flour needs hot water to come together properly, and hot water can't get very far with chilled ingredients.

Pasta recipes can be trying, but this one isn't bad. For one thing, the dough goes a couple of rounds in the food processor, a couple more in a simple hand-cranked pasta machine, and then straight through the cutter. It hangs out to dry a bit and is cooked off.

These are rustic noodles and aren't meant to be paper-thin. If you wish, you can roll them out and cut them by hand. Details below. Whether you do this or use a pasta machine, take some care when handling the cooked pasta: Buckwheat is not a strong flour and the noodles may break.

Anson Mills

1922-C Gervais Street • Columbia, South Carolina 29201 • tel. (803) 467-4122 • sales@ansonmills.com

setting of the pasta machine twice. The band of dough will be 12 to 15 inches long and 4 to 5 inches wide. Hang the dough across a wooden drying rack or a suspended broom handle anchored on both ends. A towel rack works nicely as well. Repeat this process with the remaining three pieces of dough. Dry the sheets of dough on the rack for about 30 minutes, turning them occasionally. *To make the pasta by hand:* Proceed exactly as above, but roll out each dough quarter into a 9- to 10-inch square, flouring as little as possible but as much as necessary to keep the dough from sticking to the counter. Dry the four squares of dough as described above.

4. Set the pasta machine to cut fettuccine. Feed the bands of dough one by one through the machine. Hang the pasta to dry for about 20 minutes—the noodles should be supple and no longer feel fragile. Take the noodles off the rack and lay them, looped gently in half, across a lightly floured baking sheet. *For handmade pasta:* Flour the surface of one square lightly and roll up the dough loosely, as you would a carpet. Cut 1/4-inch-wide coils of dough from the cylinder, taking care not to compress the dough too much. Unroll the coils and hang the pasta to dry. Repeat with the remaining three squares and proceed as directed for the pasta machine, above.

5. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the table salt. Lower the pasta into the water gently, taking care not to break it. After about 10 seconds, stir gently with tongs. As soon as the water returns to a boil, lower the heat to medium-high and cover the pot partially. Cook the pasta until tender, but still firm, about 4 minutes. Drain into a colander and serve hot. (See serving suggestions in above note.)

Serves 4 to 6