



**Podcast Script**  
**Season 1 / Episode 11 -**  
**[Fresh Pasta / Cooking Pasta / Managing]**  
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**Opening**

Hello chefs, today we're talkin fresh pasta, cooking pasta and managing your kitchen to success. I am Mark Grigsby, your chef and guide through this experience.. And this.. Is The IncrEDIBLE Discourse.

**Introduction**

Welcome to episode 11 guys!! Quick update on what we're doing behind the scenes before we get started today..

So a few weeks ago we started a new section on the website called "resources". And let me tell you.. I absolutely love this section. We post a downloadable guide with a little more in depth knowledge on a specific topic. The topics are ones that we have spoken about in our episodes that you can download and print and use for your resource when you create the dishes that we have before here. Many of them are tips, tricks, reminders, dos and don'ts and procedures on techniques. I thought this would be a big help for chefs home and pro to have on hand. Another source of information for the ever growing chefs of the world. So make sure that you check out that section on your next visit to [theincrediblediscourse.com](http://theincrediblediscourse.com). I'll be posting a resource on today's episode about making fresh pasta and cooking pasta as well. If there is a topic or subject you would like to see for a downloadable resource, please let me know and we'll get it up there.

Also, as most of you know, we have a [provecho.bio](http://provecho.bio) account where we post all of our recipes that we create and work on the show. It's a pretty good platform that was created just for food creators so that they can post their pictures and recipes in a more formatted and organized fashion. I dropped the price of the subscription to \$1. It won't allow me to go any lower than that as they take a portion of the revenue to keep up with the site's maintenance. All of the proceeds that I receive ultimately go right back into the show... so if you wanna support the show and get some kick ass recipes in the process, go to the website and under the recipes tab is a direct link to our provecho.

One more thing before we get started on our episode today.. We are officially an affiliate for amazon! I know I have been teasing this for a little while now, but now.. The day is finally here. I have to disclose that we are an affiliate as part of the program and just like the provecho.. All

proceeds go directly back into The IncrEDIBLE Discourse. It helps bring you these fantastic episodes that help focus your brain on making some delectable dishes and making you a better chef. A little bit goes a long way and is always very appreciated. Click the links in the description that take you to amazon, and when you buy something, we'll get a little something from it. Let us know on the website or on X how you like our recommendations and we'll give you a nice shout out and return the love.

Now.. can we finally get on with the damn show?!

Someone tell the host to get on with this shit already.

Today's episode will be long, just warning you upfront. But there is so much information packed in here I just couldn't help myself. I hope you enjoy hearing my damn voice, cause you're getting a truckload today.

Anyway.. So we're exploring fresh pasta today right? I love fresh pasta. Knowing how to do this will truly change your life. It's really simple to make, doesn't take long to cook and you can make the dough in advance to kinda spread out the process. We're going to be making a complete dish to compliment this pasta recipe.. Cause what's fresh pasta without a sauce or condimento as they would say in Italy.

Wild Mushroom Ragu with Fresh Pappardelle. Yes, it's a vegetarian dish, but today I wanted to create something with you that really lets the pasta be the star of the dish. Now that's not to say that we're not showcasing a really nice sauce today. All around, this dish is stellar. And as we get to know each other, you will find that mushrooms are a weakness of mine. I absolutely love them. Every variety. And we will talk a little about the few different varieties and why we chose them for this dish.

As always, before we get into the kitchen and get our hands dirty we always do a little history lesson. We usually pack our bags and hop across the pond, but today we're jumping into the time machine and heading waaaaay back.. Like 3500 years back.

Fresh pasta originated in ancient civilizations in the Mediterranean in places like Italy, Greece and China. Early evidence of pasta making comes from Italy and China.. And although that's probably a no brainer it's much deeper and farther back than one may consider. The Etruscan civilization kneaded flour and water to make dough, then rolled it out into sheets and then dried them in the sun. This was happening between the 8th and 3rd century BCE. But believe it or not it goes back even farther than that.. Some form of pasta that was made with either wheat or rice flour and water in China goes as far back as 1700 BCE in the Shang dynasty.. That's over 3500 years ago from today. One of the oldest records of noodles came about in 2005 when archaeologists discovered a 4000 year old bowl of millet noodles in Lajia, China.. And that discovery was 20 years ago. This millet noodle bowl suggests that early civilizations were already experimenting with boiling long, thin strands of dough.

The idea of forming dough into various shapes and cooking it in boiling water can be traced to ancient Mesopotamia and the middle east. Early Arabic writings reference a dish called 'itritta', a type of dried noodle that predates Italian pasta.

Greek mythology suggests that the Greek god Vulcan invented a device that made strings of pasta out of dough that was made by hand. The word for this was 'lagenon', and comes from ancient Greece and Magna Graecia. They are believed to have made an early form of pasta by kneading flour and water and possibly eggs. By the time of the Roman empire, a dish called laganum, which happens to be where the word lasagna comes from, was documented by historians like Cicero and Apicius. These sheets of pasta were often layered with sauces, except these pastas were baked rather than boiled.. See a similarity here?

By the 9th century pasta making techniques had developed significantly, especially in Italy because durum wheat was widely cultivated. At this time two different pastas started to take off: fresh pasta and dry pasta. Durum in latin means 'hard', and the species is the hardest of all wheats. This refers to the resistance of the grain to milling; in particular of the starchy endosperm, causing the dough made from its flour to be weak or "soft". This makes durum favorable for semolina and pasta and less practical for flour, which requires more work than common bread wheats. Anyway, also during this period there was a great arab influence in sicily and pasta techniques were refined. The arabs introduced durum wheat semolina and advanced drying techniques which led to the development of dry pasta.. But fresh pasta remained a staple in northern Italy.

Now let's fast forward a little bit to the 14th century during the Italian renaissance. Fresh pasta became super refined. They had access to high quality eggs plus chef's were perfecting pasta recipes and creating different styles. From this came tagliatelle, fettuccine and ravioli to name a few. Also during this time the first pasta machines were invented, making the kneading and rolling process a hell of a lot easier. Around 1570 a famous chef from the Papal court named Bartolomeo Scappi began documenting fresh pasta dishes in his cookbook Opera dell'arte del cucinare.. This was an important staple in the importance of pasta in Italy.

It's important to note that pasta has evolved regionally. Different shapes for different purposes and recipes emerging based on local ingredients and traditions. For instance, between the 17th and 19th century Emilia- Romagna & Bologna created tagliatelle, tortellini and lasagna... Tuscany created pici and pappardelle.. Lombardy & Veneto created stuffed pastas like tortelli and casoncelli.. And Piedmont created tajarin, an ultra thin, golden-hued pasta due to its high egg content. This period also saw a rise of fresh pasta being served with rich, slow-cooked ragu type sauces.

So after hearing all of this information, which isn't even the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the history of pasta, you begin to understand that pasta.. In some shape or form.. Has been impacting lives for thousands of years. For me personally, coming from an Okinawan descent on my moms side.. Noodles are a staple and love for our family so the Asian ties to pasta making are very interesting. On my professional side, I have been making fresh pasta for years in some

shape or form.. And to think that these recipes and shapes were invented in a time where there were no machines.. No refrigerators.. No gas or electric stoves or real cooking equipment as we know today is wild. It's crazy to think of the eras of refinement 3 simple ingredients went through over time.

Today, through the power of industrialization, dry pasta has become more widespread because of its longer shelf life and easier storage. Fresh pasta continues to be handmade in high end restaurants and by artisans and home cooks. Modern technology has allowed for more refined flour and efficient pasta machines, making fresh pasta easier to produce on a larger scale while still preserving traditional techniques.

Now let's talk a little about the shapes of pasta... As I said before, different shapes for different purposes. I want to highlight a few different pastas and their applications.

Let's start with flat ribbon pasta, as it is very common and available in fresh and dry varieties. Tagliatelle & fettuccine are best with creamy or slow-cooked meat sauces like ragu alla bolognese or alfredo. Mmmmm... who doesn't love a long cooked bolognese sauce or a creamy alfredo with shrimp or chicken...

This is because the flat, wide shape grabs these rich sauces and coats each strand evenly. These two shapes have enough structure and strength to handle heavy meat sauces without falling apart. Pappardelle is even thicker than tagliatelle and fettuccine and is best for hearty, chunky meat sauces. The thickness of this pasta is ideal for catching large, tender pieces of braised meat and has enough surface area for the sauce to cling to.

Stuffed pastas are made for encapsulating fillings.. Like everyone's favorite ravioli or tortellini. Tortellini is a small, compact shaped, stuffed pasta. It was designed to hold a concentrated bite of flavor. This pairs well with broths or even butter and sage because it's light. Making a light sauce ensures that the filling won't be overpowered. Ravioli is best with butter based sauces or maybe a light tomato sauce. Too thick or heavy of a sauce would overwhelm the ravioli's delicate structure and texture. A lighter sauce, like browned butter or a simple tomato sauce ensures that the focus remains on the filling. Or what about agnolotti? Agnolotti usually has a denser filling inside, making it ideal for either a rich meat sauce or a simple butter sauce. The rich meat sauces compliment its structure while the simple butter sauces allow the filling to shine. So you see here, that the applications for these stuffed pastas are all different.. They all came from different parts of Italy as well. Remember that many of these shapes were developed based on the ingredients they had to work with around them in a time where there weren't cars, planes and trains to transport supplies like there are today.

Let's go thinnest of the thin... Capellini, or angel hair, is extremely delicate so it pairs best with light, oil based sauces that can coat the strands without clumping. Tomato based sauces like marinara work well because they're thin enough to be absorbed without drowning the pasta.

From the thinnest to short & thick.. We have gnocchi. Gnocchi is made from potatoes, ricotta or semolina.. This has a soft, pillowy texture that soaks up sauces like pesto or butter & sage

beautifully. Meat sauces also work well here because gnocchi absorbs rich, slow-cooked flavors rather than just being coated on the surface.

How about hand rolled? Pici is a hand rolled, thick spaghetti that has a chewy and rustic texture. This is really good for thicker, bolder sauces and flavors. Cacio e pepe, which is one of my favorites, is a really good sauce for this because the thick strands hold onto the creamy, peppery sauce without becoming too heavy. Wild boar ragu works well here too because of the pasta's dense and slightly irregular texture.

And since we're talking about pastas, their shapes, functions and their histories.. It's important to talk about a few of them that you may never hear about, let alone taste or experience. These pasta shapes come from extremely small towns in Italy that date back hundreds of years back.

Rascatieddi is a type of pasta that originated in the Lucan village of Teana, Italy and is made with a mixture of wheat and fava bean flours. The name comes from the Italian word for "scrapping". This pasta is said to have originated around 1600 and prepared by women returning to the village after working in the fields. It is traditionally dressed in a tomato based sauce. This pasta comes from a village that has less than a thousand residents and most of them are all older as their children have all moved away. These people keep the tradition alive of making this shape and dough through the elders who have been taught by all of the generations before them.

Busiate pasta comes from the trapani province originally but is a typical pasta in sicily. They take their name from "busa", the Sicilian word for the stem of the local grass that is used in preparing them which gives them they're helical shape. This pasta is made with semolina and water only, allowing it to stand up to heavier sauces. It's a spiralled spaghetti-like pasta shape, hollow on the inside allowing the sauce of choice to get trapped. A burst of sauce and flavor erupts when eaten. In this region pestos made with tomatoes, nuts and herbs are widely used and sometimes paired with seafood.

Testaroli is the oldest known pasta to man, over 2000 years old and is considered a precursor to modern pasta. The name testaroli comes from the ancient cooking pots used to make this pasta called "testi" and were made of cast iron. Rather than a dough as all pastas are made, this one is made with a batter made from flour, water and salt. This batter is cooked like a crepe. While it is cooking, bubbles start to form in the batter as the heat rises up. Testaroli makers claim that you know if the batter was optimal when these bubbles form. When cooled these bubbles ultimately turn into little pin holes that you can see through. The pasta is cut into diamond shape and commonly served with pesto, olive oil and cheese. The little holes serve a huge purpose. It traps the sauce or condiments so that when eaten the pasta holds the flavor.

I apologize for today's history lesson being so long, but there is so much more to pasta than the common person knows. This information creates such a deeper appreciation for it, especially when making it. Not to mention the endless possibilities and combinations you can create from

it. I hope you took something away from this information and it inspires you to create some great dishes.

## **BREAK THE TAPE HERE**

### **TOPIC 1 - *Fresh Pappardelle with Wild Mushroom Ragu***

**Yield: 4-6 portions**

So let's go through the basic components of pasta: the flour and the eggs. There are many different recipes out there for fresh pasta and unlike other recipes where the recipes are variations based on availability and preference, the ingredients for pasta kinda serve a purpose. Let's start with the flour part. Why is flour essential to pasta making? Flour provides the structure of pasta due to the formation of gluten. I guess before we can talk about the formation and why it is important, we should identify what gluten is. Gluten is a protein found in wheat or other grains that gives dough elasticity, structure and chewiness. Without it, bread wouldn't rise, pasta wouldn't hold its shape and pizza dough wouldn't stretch. And gluten isn't a substance that is readily available in flour, it's developed. It's formed when two proteins, glutenin and gliadin combine with water. The glutenin provides strength and elasticity while the gliadin adds extensibility and flexibility. When flour is mixed with water and kneaded, these proteins link together to create a gluten network. This network traps air, giving pasta its bite and bread its rise. More gluten, like more semolina based pasta dough makes firmer, chewier pasta while less gluten doughs, like 00 flour egg pasta makes for more softer and delicate pasta. So, let's go back to the role of flour and its importance. Different flours essentially mean different textures. 00 flour is an extra fine, softer flour leading to ultra fine, soft silky pasta.. Like tagliatelle and ravioli. Semolina flour is a more coarse flour that is high in protein which gives you a firmer bite.. Perfect for cavatelli and orecchiette.. And then there is all purpose flour, which is your everyday flour used for almost everything, but not anything in specific.. If that makes sense. This flour provides a balance between structure and tenderness. And there are plenty of recipes out there that have a mix of 2 or even all 3 of these flours. It really depends on what your endgame is.. It's not a preference in ingredients.. It's the application in which you're going to use the pasta for. Low protein flour makes softer, more delicate pasta. High protein flour creates chewier, more elastic pasta and a blend of flours can fine tune and balance tenderness and bite.

Now onto the next key component of fresh pasta... the egg. Eggs bring moisture, fat and protein.. All of which affect texture. Now, different components of the eggs impact pasta in different ways.. Just like the different flours. Egg whites add strength and elasticity which helps hold the pasta together. Egg yolks make a really rich and tender pasta dough. More yolks means a softer more delicate pasta; egg whites make a firmer pasta, great for stuffed pastas that require a little more structure. Remember, if your pasta is too dry.. It lacks enough eggs or moisture.. If your pasta is too sticky, it has too much fat or egg yolks or there is too much humidity in the air.

Another key component of pasta isn't an ingredient, but a technique... kneading. Let's go over some key parts of this process. First.. Let's remind everyone what kneading is: kneading is the

process of working dough by hand or machine to help develop gluten, creating elasticity and structure. It develops gluten, incorporates air and improves texture. Over kneading makes the dough too tight and tough making it difficult to roll out, whereas not enough kneading makes the dough weak and breaks apart easily. After kneading, pasta should rest for about 30 minutes to an hour to allow the gluten to relax.. This makes it easier to roll without shrinking back. Should your pasta feel too tight when rolling, allow it to rest longer.

The last major component is hydration. Flour hydrates over time, absorbing moisture from eggs and water. Hydration affects rolling, cooking and ultimately sauce absorption. Well hydrated dough cooks evenly, retains texture and absorbs the sauce better rather than repelling it. If your dough is too dry, knead in a teaspoon of water at a time. If it's too wet, dust sparingly with flour but be careful.. Too much flour will make it tough.

Now let's go over the equipment you're going to need to make this outstanding pasta dish. As usual you can find all of these things on Amazon.. And if you use our link.. You would be supporting the show in a big way.. Which we surely appreciate. Hopefully soon, we will also give affiliate options for Target as well.. This way you have options.. Anyway.. Let's get into it.

Now there are 2 ways you can make this recipe.. By hand or by stand mixer with pasta attachment. I'm going to list all the ingredients to make this both ways as well as give you the method to make it both ways. I think it's important that you know how to make it both ways, it just makes you that much more versatile in your repertoire of techniques.

So for those without the stand mixer and pasta attachment you will need:

- A fork. Yes.. a simple dinner fork. This will help you incorporate all of the ingredients together.
- A bench scraper. Very useful tool. It helps to keep all that loose flour and everything in place.
- A scale. This can be digital or analog, though I find that digital scales are a lot easier to find and cheaper than they ever were nowadays.
- Plastic wrap.. This is so that you can keep your dough from drying out.
- Pasta machine or crank. Now look.. We're making pappardelle here, so this isn't 100% necessary. Will it help you do it faster and you'll be a lot less tired? Yes. Does it cost hundreds of dollars? No. The one in the link is right around \$45-60. That may seem like a lot, but the reality is you're going to use this more than once when you figure out how easy and delicious this recipe is. It's so worth it, I promise.
- Pasta cutter. Sure you can get one of these and no they are not expensive. Again, I'll have a link for one that works really well for this, but you could use a chef's knife for this particular recipe. The pasta cutter helps you keep very uniform and even strands of pasta.
- You're going to need 2 large pots for this. One for the pasta water, and the other for the mushroom ragu that we're going to make. I'd say 6 quart pots should work well with this. A deep, 3-5 quart skillet or a large dutch oven works well here too.

- The trusty ol tongs, a ladle, measuring equipment, a wooden spoon or spatula, a microplane and a colander to strain your pasta finishes out the list.

Now this may seem like a lot, but these things are things that, if you are a home cook who cooks a lot, you should have. It helps you be more versatile in the dishes you can create. If you are a professional cook, most of these things you already have. Outside of these things, I will also link a kitchen aid stand mixer with the pasta attachment in the notes. I recommend this 100%. There is nothing better than a kitchen aid. It literally does everything your food processor and blender doesn't. In all of my kitchens, home or pro, I always have those 3 pieces.. Food processor, kitchen aid, and blender. They're must haves.

Alright.. Now let's talk ingredients.

For the pasta you are going to need:

- 300g or 2 cups of 00 flour plus more for dusting
  - Now you could use a mix here of 200g of 00 flour and 100g of semolina flour, but for this recipe we're going to stick to the basics and just use one flour. I like the 00 here because it makes the pasta super tender without sacrificing strength.
- 3 large eggs at room temperature
- 1tsp of olive oil
- ½tsp of salt

For the ragu you're going to need quite a few things..

- 3 tbs of olive oil
- 2 tbs unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 large carrot, diced really small
- 1 celery stalk, also diced really small
- 1½ lbs of mixed mushrooms - oyster, cremini and shiitake.. About ½ a pound each
  - Cut the cremini mushrooms into quarters
  - Slice the shiitake
  - And peel the oyster mushrooms from the base
- 1½ tsp salt
- ¾ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp of crushed red pepper.. This provides a very small kick and is optional.
- 3 tbs tomato paste
- ¾ cup dry red wine, Pinot Noir (Oregon or Burgundy)
- 1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes
- ¾ cup vegetable broth
- 1 ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- ⅓ cup heavy cream



- ½ cup grated Parmesan (for serving)
- ¼ cup each fresh basil & parsley, chopped, for garnish
- Zest of ½ a lemon (Garnish)

Now before we get into how we actually make the dish let's go over a few things here. First the mushroom part.. Like I said.. I love mushrooms. They are one of my favorite things to cook and one of my favorites to eat. I chose this selection of mushrooms because you get a slightly different texture from each, plus the different shapes that you have here make the dish a lot more interesting. The Cremini mushrooms will provide a burst of flavor as they will soak up a lot of the sauce from the ragu. The shiitake will add a nice earthiness to the dish and the oyster mushrooms will give a nice silky texture. This will, at the end, round out your dish in flavor and texture. It's always good to have a balance. Now onto the wine.. Depending on where you get your wine, I gave two options and both will do just fine. I prefer the burgundy because I like the oakiness of the flavor of this wine in this dish specifically. An Oregon pinot noir would provide an earthiness which would pair well with the mushrooms. It's your choice really.. If your palate is a little more complex, then choosing one or the other would be based on preference. If you're still teaching your palate, whichever you can find the easiest will do. I wouldn't stress this super hard.. Really, any pinot noir will do.

Ok! Let's make something fucking delicious!

Let's start with the pasta, and this process is making it without the stand mixer:

- On a clean surface or in a bowl, pile the flour into a mound and create a well in the center.
- Crack the eggs into the well, add salt and olive oil.
- Using a fork, beat the eggs gently while gradually incorporating the flour from the edges. Now be careful when you're doing this because you have to keep the well intact until you get the dough forming. If you start whisking like a madman and you break the walls of the well your egg will run all over the place. Nice and easy.
- Once the dough starts coming together, knead by hand for 8-10 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Dust with flour if the dough becomes sticky on your work surface. Work into a ball at the end of the kneading time.

Now there is a proper way to knead. You're going to roll the dough back and forth on your surface, stretching the dough with every push. It takes a little practice, but you're essentially trying to stretch this dough and get that gluten network we talked about to form. Super important part, if not the most important part of the entire pasta making process. It may make your hands tired, but trust me.. You'll be one pissed off chef if you didn't knead it enough or properly and have to go back and knead again.

Now if you do happened to have the stand mixer, follow these instructions:

- Attach the dough hook and add the flour and salt to the mixing bowl.
- Crack the eggs into a separate bowl, then add them to the flour. This will help prevent the shells from falling in and having to take the machine apart to get them out.

- Start the mixer on low speed, usually setting 1 or 2, to gradually incorporate the eggs into the flour.
- Once the dough starts forming clumps after about 2 minutes, increase the speed slightly to setting 3 or 4 to help it come together.
- Let the stand mixer knead for 5-7 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic.
- If the dough looks too dry → Add 1 teaspoon of water at a time.
- If the dough looks too sticky → Sprinkle in a little extra flour until it firms up.
- Once it forms a firm but pliable ball, remove from the mixer.

Now at this point, no matter which method you chose to go with you should be at the “ball stage”. Wrap this ball in plastic wrap and store in your refrigerator for about 30 minutes to an hour. This will help the flour absorb all of the liquid from the egg and oil. I recommend resting this for as long as you can. You can even make this dough the day before if you think you will be pressed for time.

Now the fun part..

Once your dough has rested, roll and shape the dough ball into a large equal tube and cut it into 4 or 5 equal parts. Use 1 part at a time and wrap the others in plastic wrap so not to dry out. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin first before going into the pasta machine. You don't have to do a lot of work here, but it will help you create the shape of the pasta. You just need an even rectangle shape about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the width of the press. Lightly flour the dough. Set the machine's thickness level to the thickest it can get and roll your dough piece through twice. Fold this sheet in half and run it twice again through the machine. Repeat this process 2 more times with the same piece. This serves a final kneading for the dough.

Set the machine to the next level of thickness and run the dough through. Keep running the dough through, adjusting the rollers to a thinner setting each time until you get to about 1/16" thick. It should be pretty thin, probably the second to last setting on the rollers. Lightly flour the dough throughout the entire process so that it doesn't stick to the rollers.

Once you have the sheet complete, Lay it out on a lightly floured surface. Using the pasta cutter or your chef's knife, cut the pasta into 1/2" strips. Gather the strands into little nests by wrapping the pasta around your hand. Dust these nests with a little more flour and place on a sheet pan. Now repeat this entire process for the rest of the dough pieces in the log.

These nests can be freeze dried and then put into a zip bag and frozen for up to one month.

And... BOOM we just made some fuckin pappardelle! This entire episode and everything we talked about led all the way up to this point. Now when you attempt this recipe, take your time. Have time to make it.. Don't rush.. This is one of those labor of love deals.. Don't rush love.. Only fools rush in.. I think that's how the song goes.

Now for this tasty mushroom ragu..

- In the Dutch oven, deep skillet or pot on medium high heat, add the olive oil and butter. You may ask.. Why am I adding butter and oil.. And that's a really good question. This

process is called fortifying the butter. We do this so that the butter solids don't burn as quickly, but still retain that buttery flavor.

- After this melts and comes to temperature, add the mushrooms in a single layer on the bottom of the pan and allow them to sear. You may have to do this in batches. Adding all of the mushrooms at once will cause them to release their juices and then you end up boiling them. You're doing this to lock in the flavor of the mushrooms and give you a really good texture. After each batch is complete, remove the mushrooms and hold on a plate until ready to use.
- Now add onion, garlic, carrot, and celery, red pepper flakes, salt & pepper and sauté until softened, about 5- 7 minutes. If you need to add more butter and oil during this process that is fine. You have to have fat to saute properly. If you find that these ingredients are cooking too fast or if they are starting to brown, pull your pot off the burner and cut the heat down a little bit. It's important that we sweat these vegetables.
- Stir in tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes until it darkens slightly. Cook out the can taste and develop that beautiful fond on the bottom of your pot.
- Pour in red wine, stir and let it reduce for 3-4 minutes, scraping up any browned bits off of the bottom of the pan. We all remember how to deglaze right? Of course you do, cause you've liked and subscribed to the show and now are on your way to being a super chef.
- Now add the crushed tomatoes, broth, oregano, thyme, bay leaf and now the mushrooms and any juices that are left in the holding plate. Raise the heat and bring to a simmer.. Then reduce the heat to low, and cook uncovered for 25-30 minutes, stirring occasionally. And this is really a light simmer, not a boil or hard simmer.. A nice light simmer. Give these beautiful ingredients the opportunity to meld and bloom. Now should you notice that the liquid is seizing and drying out, add a half cup of water at a time to get that saucy consistency and bring it back to life.
- At the end, remove the bay leaf. Stir in heavy cream for richness and cook for about another minute.
- Now taste this shit and impress yourself a little bit.

Once you're done patting yourself on the back, take it off the heat and cover. We're going to reserve this until we need it.

Now it's time to cook that pasta you busted your ass on.

In the second large pot, fill with water about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up and add about  $\frac{1}{2}$ C of salt. Bring this water to a rolling boil... this is one of the few times I'm going to tell you to boil hard, so go nuts here.

When the pot has reached the roiling bowl, add the fresh pasta in. Tease this pasta with your tongs by lightly grabbing it in an upward motion. This keeps the pasta from sticking to each other and sinking to the bottom and burning. You should do this occasionally throughout the cooking process. Fresh pasta cooks way faster than dry pasta, about 2-3 minutes total. You have to be careful here because if fresh pasta is too overcooked it will start to get really mushy and disintegrate in the rolling water. Taste the pasta and make sure that it is al dente or how you

want it to be cooked. I recommend al dente because you're going to cook this pasta again in the sauce.

Remove 1C of the pasta water and hold it to the side. This is going to be in case your ragu gets a little thick and you need to loosen it up. The salty, starchy water is best for this versus regular water.

Now strain the pasta into the colander and shake off any excess water.

Let's talk about some plating methods and garnishing tips that will help your dish look just as incredible as it tastes. You can plate this a couple of different ways. If you're at home you could just throw the pasta right into the ragu, toss and garnish and then serve in the middle of the dining table family style just like that. Or, you could portion out the pasta in individual serving bowls and ladle the ragu on top, garnish and serve.

If you're in a restaurant, you've made this ragu way in advance and have heated up the portion you need in a saute pan when the ticket came in. After you blanch the pasta and shake out the excess, you will add it to the saute pan with the ragu and toss. To make a great presentation, Twist the pasta around your tongs and carefully place a nest directly into the middle of the bowl and then add the sauce on top, then garnish. Garnish with the grated or shredded parmesan first so that the white cheese pops against the red sauce. Then top that with your chopped parsley and chiffonade of basil, and then your zest of the lemon and send through the pass. In any case, you just made a killer dish that is sure to please.

Now I know today's recipe and back story was a lot to digest at once, especially if you've never made fresh pasta before.. But if this is the case, listen to this episode again and pay attention to the steps and don't skip over the history.. Let that seep in so you have something to appreciate at the end of this whole deal. This recipe feeds 4-6 and rightfully so.. After going through all of this effort you better have a group of people patting your ass on the back. Not to mention you probably fucked your whole kitchen up and need some, full little helpers to restore your laboratory back to the way it was before your tornado ass got in there. Don't forget to clean your crank or pasta attachment and don't do it with water cause it'll rust the parts. If you don't clean it, the pasta will harden and the next time you go to use it you're gonna get little bits of hard pasta stuck in your dough. Yes, this tip is directly from experience. Don't forget to post pictures of your work and tag the incredible discourse on X. Best one gets a special shout out from yours truly!

Now that our bellies are full... you know what time it is..

**BREAK THE TAPE HERE**

It's time for FOOD FOR THOUGHT.. Or what I like to call PRO TIPS FROM A CHEFS LIPS.

**TOPIC 2 - [Home Cook Advice] - *Cooking Pasta***

Today's first topic is all about.. You guessed it.. Cooking pasta. I figure, while we have pasta on the brain, may as well finish the thought. I decided that I would elaborate on some dos and don'ts when cooking pasta to help give you guys the best chance at nailing pasta every single time you cook it. Most of all of this will be in a downloadable resource on [theincrediblediscourse.com](http://theincrediblediscourse.com) so you have something handy to refer to. Let's jump right in shall we? I have 9 rules of thumb that you should follow when cooking pasta. If you follow these rules, you will have perfect pasta pretty much every single time.

Rule 1: the amount of water you boil for pasta matters.

Believe it or not, it's true. The amount of water you use is part of the recipe. Even in the smallest of settings that you may not notice, it matters. Ever boiled the macaroni in those little kraft boxes? You'll notice that the package doesn't say "just boil water". It gives you a measurement that you should follow. The common rule of thumb here is 4-6 quarts of water for every pound of pasta you're going to make. Using too little water will make your pasta overly starchy and gluey.. Having too much water takes the pot too long to boil and dilutes the starch in the water.

Rule 2: Salt like the ocean!

Adding enough salt to your pasta water is key. The ROT here is about 3-4 tablespoons per every gallon of water. This seasons the pasta itself, enhancing the final dish you're making. Taste the water! It should be somewhat salty! When I was a young sous chef, I worked for a chef who used to tell the brigade "salt like the ocean" whenever someone would ask how much water should go in the pasta water. Now salt like the ocean may be a little overboard, but the water should have some taste.

Rule 3: Don't add oil to the pasta water

Now I may get a little push back on this one because I actually know people who would put oil in the pasta water, and maybe their thought process *Could* make sense, but when science is applied it's actually a dumbass move. Adding oil to the pasta water makes the pasta slippery and prevents whichever sauce you're tossing it in to stick. It actually makes the sauce repel from the pasta, which defeats the entire purpose of what you're doing. Stir shorter pasta and tease longer pasta with tongs to prevent sticking and clumping. Now, one may ask can I toss the pasta in oil if I'm cooking off a lot in advance.. And the answer is you could yes.. But here's a pro tip from yours truly.. Add this pasta in a single layer of a dish and cool down your pasta water until it's warm. Toss the pasta in a small amount of the pasta water and then chill. The residual starch in the water will coat the pasta and prevent it from sticking.

Rule 4: Save that pasta water!

The water that you boil the pasta in can be used to help emulsify sauces and thicken or loosen them up depending on what you're doing. Just like in the recipe that we did today.. With the mushroom ragu.. If you cook it for too long, it thickens up.. Now you could use regular water to do this, but you would get a much better consistency from using the pasta water. The starch helps keep it that sauce consistency without having to do much else.

#### Rule 5: Never Rinse!

Never ever rinse your pasta in water. It rinses off the starches that help the sauce that you're adding to stick. Now.. if you're making a pasta salad or a cold pasta dish, then yes rinsing your pasta is something you should do so that your end dish isn't gummy. But for warm pasta dishes you should be boiling the pasta, straining it and immediately adding to your sauce.

Which brings me to my next rule..

#### Rule 6: Finish cooking your pasta in the sauce!

So throughout this episode we've used the term "al dente" multiple times. It refers to pasta that is cooked just enough to be tender but still offers a slight resistance when chewed. And we cook our pasta this way because we want to finish cooking in the sauce. We do this because pasta absorbs liquid as it cooks.. It only makes sense to finish cooking it in the sauce so that it can absorb the flavor of the sauce.

#### Rule 7: Time your cook!

I think that this one is a no-brainer right? Depending on the pasta shape and ingredients it's made with, dry pasta can take anywhere between 8 and 12 minutes to cook to al dente. Fresh pasta is way less. But I will share a little secret with you.. You know how to tell when pasta is cooked properly? You fucking taste it. Yes it's boiling hot and that may intimidate you.. But keep in mind, it's flour and eggs.. Not a dragon. So... take a piece out and wait till it cools after a couple of seconds and then eat it.. If it sticks to your teeth and gets stuck, it ain't ready. If you eat it and it just falls apart in your mouth, you've overcooked it. Besides, you should be tasting everything anyway and honing that palate, right?

#### Rule 8: Cook the pasta last.

Always make your sauce first. And of course there are always exceptions, but for 98% of all the pasta dishes you're going to make, you can make the sauce first. Cook your pasta last. You shouldn't have your pasta waiting on the sauce.. The longer it sits there waiting.. The longer it continues to cook.. And eventually will overcook and turn into mush. You have to set yourself up to cook the pasta, strain and immediately get it in your sauce to finish cooking. This is one of those little things where you plan your cook correctly, but will elevate your dish so much more. A lot of the time, it's not the ingredients that make your dish mediocre, it's the technique you didn't execute properly that drags the dish down.

And lastly..

#### Rule 9: Learn the twirl!

Teach yourself to twirl longer pasta and present it on the plate a little elegantly. If you're at home maybe you're just trying to feed your family and the presentation doesn't really matter.. But maybe you're in a restaurant and people are paying good money for your dishes or maybe you're cooking for someone at your house that you're trying to impress... and you gotta make it look good. You've done all this work to make chef's amazing mushroom.. Now close the deal and make it look nice.. The impression will last much longer. I mean.. You could throw it on the

plate and make it look like shit and that'll leave an impression as well.. But we're trying to become better cooks right? That's the entire reason why you've listened to every episode of the incredible discourse so far, yes?

Using these tips will unquestionably elevate your pasta cooking skills. Use them, that's why I'm sharing them with you. I will add a downloadable resource that has all of this information on it for you to have with you. Practice them, you won't get every single one the first couple of times, but as you continue to use them and learn and grow, they will become second nature to you every single time you make pasta.

I have a funny story that I like to share about cooking pasta, and my professional cooks enjoy it. Most of the cooks or chefs who have worked with or for me at some point have heard this story on numerous occasions. Anyway, so I was working for this little Italian place here in Miami, and as a matter of fact I was actually consulting the owner and trying to develop working systems that they could duplicate at the second restaurant they were opening. So, one night they were a little light staffed and asked me to work the line, which I didn't mind. The "executive chef" was also working the line that night, and when I arrived for my shift he told me that I would be cooking and he would be plating. Now in this kitchen, the saute station or pasta station was the busiest station outside of the pizza station, so it usually took 2 people to work this station.. One preparing the sauces and one preparing the pasta and plating. So this guy tells me that he's going to "show me how it's done", which is wild cause.. You know.. It's me. I can throw down, but I said "ok, ready chef" and jumped onto my station without my usual egotistical nonsense.. Now at this point in my career, in this particular place, I wore a lot of shorts on the line.. We all did, but it was at our own risk I guess. So as we start to pick up this guy is blanching the pasta in the boiling water, takes the whole basket out of the water and slings the hot water on the ground, right at my feet between us. I felt a little spray of this hot water and asked... why are you throwing the water on the floor? This guy laughs it off and we keep going. Then it happens again.. And then again. After a few times, you know I had to speak up, the big mouth in me wasn't going to allow this guy to burn me unnecessarily. So I speak up "yo, stop throwing the water on the floor. First of all you're making a big goddamn mess for no reason and wasting the water and second, if you throw this water and it hits me in the ankle, we're going to have a problem. And laughs the shit off again and tells me that's how they do it in real restaurants, now I'm pissed off, because now I know you're doing it to be a dick.. And those who know me, I can be the biggest of them all so don't test the water.. Pun intended... the next order of pasta comes in and sure enough this guy throws the water to the ground except he hits me in the fucking ankle... bruh. I went off on this dude like he's never seen before. After I yell, I hit him with "yo I just told you not to throw the fucking water on the floor and now you burned me.. Who the fuck throws boiling water on the ground?" and he looks up and says "I do".. I lost my shit.. Literally.. I say "no the fuck you don't not anymore you don't.. Then next time you throw the water on the floor I'm gonna kick your ass.. For real man" and he tells me "no no I don't want any problems.. I don't want to fight.. You shouldn't be wearing shorts cause you can get burned". Which this comment just made it worse and I say "no, I'm not going to stop wearing shorts because you are intentionally trying to hurt someone.. Throw the water again, and I promise you I'm going whoop your ass.. Right here in front of everyone... do it. I dare you.".... Needless to say, there wasn't a

lot of talking between us for the rest of that shift and I led the entire line through that dinner service.. Never again did we work together on the line.. Hell, he lasted all of a month after that incident.. Throwing the boiling water on the floor was the least of the things he was fucking up.. But that's a story for another show. Just a humorous memory, I thought would be funny to tell since we are.. Talking about pasta today. So word of advice if you're a line cook on the pasta station working right next to someone.. Don't throw the water on the floor. It's fucking stupid. I would say that it's common sense.. But common sense ain't all that common I guess.

### **TOPIC 3 - [Professional Chef Advice] - *Managing Your Professional Kitchen***

Now.. for you guys.. My young professional apprentices..

Today's advice comes from a place that all chef's feel at some point in their careers. Shit, After all this time I still feel it from time to time. And that's frustration. Frustration often occurs because we're not managing as well as we think we are. Remember, that the team you're leading is only as good as you lead them to be. Yes there are isolated cases of poor cooks and staff, but those you can easily identify and fix. But there are days when you feel like you're running in quicksand.. And one thing goes wrong.. And then another and then another.. And before you know it, you're overwhelmed and don't know how to fix it. So.. the following tips are designed to keep you from getting to that point. These tips will help you be able to see what's happening in the kitchen and keep your team on their toes. These tips will foster accountability and a strong culture that you can build on every day.

I want to start with tunnel vision. For young chefs, sous chefs and lead cooks.. This can be one of your worst enemies. You can't get so caught up in what you're doing that you stop paying attention to what everyone else is doing. When you've become so overly focused on the task that you're working on, that's when shit starts falling through the cracks and is often the moment you step into this "quicksand". A tip that I tell my young chefs is always take on smaller jobs in the task list you've set for the day. Sure, there are things that maybe you are the one that does it, things that require your certain expertise.. But if you're not focusing on the quality of work everyone else is doing.. Is what you're doing really going to shine? Or will it get lost?

Making lists will help keep you on track with everything that you have to do during a shift. Trying to remember what to do and who you have assigned these things to do them is difficult to remember. As the chef in charge of the kitchen, you're not just cooking or prepping.. You're taking calls, answering texts and emails, receiving trucks, writing specials, monitoring and reporting your KPI's to your boss, negotiating prices, checking quality.. I mean I can go on and on with what goes on through a chef's day.. Now tell me.. Is it possible to remember every single task and who has to do them? And even if you could answer that.. Could you answer that every day for a week? A month? And once you've made these lists and posted it, it creates accountability and ownership. Now you know exactly who to go to when something isn't right or hasn't been done.. Or even better.. Who to recognize when the job was done better than your expectations. And after you've made these lists.. VERIFY VERIFY VERIFY. Don't ever take for granted that the person you have assigned a task to completed it 100% the way it was needed



to be. Mistakes happen.. Humans are humans.. Some with the best intentions.. And some not. Cover your ass. Inspect what you expect.. And make it a habit to do so. Then your team will know that you're going to check it and verify the work is getting done properly.. No shortcuts will ever be taken because they know there is a system in place that won't allow it.

Always set clear expectations.. Doing this helps prevent confusion and ensure that everyone in your brigade knows exactly what you're looking for. This helps foster accountability and improves workflow. Accountability is huge in managing. If you can't create an environment that is based on accountability, you ultimately create chaos. Chaos is bad. Establish guidelines for behavior, performance, and standards of work from the get go. This includes job roles, responsibilities, and the standards of cleanliness, food quality and timing. In a busy kitchen.. Ambiguity leads to the chaos and mistakes. Leave nothing to interpretation!

Develop strong communication.. It truly is the backbone of an efficient kitchen. If communication breaks down, no matter how well you planned it and put it together, everything will crumble. Keep the lines of communication open between all members of the brigade.. Dishwasher all the way to executive chef. You have to be able to communicate quickly and precisely.. Remember every second counts and it is and always will be a team effort. We win together and we lose together. Most kitchens have a lingo that they all speak.. When you have rookies in the kitchen, you have to teach them the lingo.. Otherwise they just stare at you like you're speaking Chinese or something. It's important for everyone to be on the same page.

Lead by example. Now you may have heard this a million times.. But what does that look like in a professional kitchen? A professional kitchen runs on leadership and by showing your team how things should be done, you create and foster a culture of professionalism. Demonstrate all of the standards that you set.. Punctuality, cleanliness, cooking techniques.. Practice what you preach. Being professional could also mean doing things that you don't necessarily like to do. But the reality is, who gets to do everything that they want to.. At work or in life? That's just the way the cookie crumbles. And a professional understands that not everything is glorious and sometimes you gotta get your hands dirty to get the job done. Being professional boosts morale and encourages your team to push through in the trenches when shit gets tough. If you haven't listened to my two part episode about professionalism, you should check it out. It dives deeper into the role we play as professional chefs and how we should carry ourselves in our day to day careers.

Be organized.. I feel like a lot of these topics I've covered before in previous episodes, but let's touch on it one more time.. An organized kitchen is a productive kitchen.. Disorganization leads to inefficiency, mistakes and stress. Have a system for inventory, ingredients storage, prep and anything else that will help your particular kitchen flow better. Keep your kitchen layout optimized for workflow.. This will minimize the time spent looking for tools, ingredients or utensils. Regularly audit stock levels if you're not the one who counts inventory for the orders. Rotate your inventory as much as you can and always ensure that everything is in its place.

Time is one of the most critical factors in a professional kitchen. Managing time effectively helps prevent delays and guarantees that food is prepared and plated on time. Organize tasks into priority levels to manage peak service hours efficiently. Teaching the team how to multitask appropriately and stay focused on their station will also save valuable time. I use timers all the time. Not only to time my food cooking,, but also my cooks! I give them a set of tasks and tell them that they have a certain amount of time to complete them and then I actually time them. This sets an expectation and gives you a point in time of when you will inspect the work. I always tell my cooks to do their best to beat the time they had the last time they did the same tasks. Push them to be better, faster and more accurate cooks by using this method.

As the chef you should always foster a positive and respectful team culture. A positive, respectful work environment reduces stress, minimizes turnover, and promotes a more harmonious kitchen. In a high-pressure environment like a professional kitchen, stress can create tension. Encourage mutual respect and collaboration rather than fostering a toxic, competitive atmosphere. Praise hard work, and give constructive feedback to correct mistakes. A kitchen that respects its workers results in better morale and higher retention rates. And let me clarify something here.. I am a competitive person by nature.. And I don't like to lose.. But I have created a competitive space in my kitchens, but respectful ones. There's nothing wrong with pushing each other to be better by being competitive.. But there is a right and a wrong way. Always keep in mind that you all are in the same boat, rowing to the same place.. Push each other, but build each other same time. Win Win.

Food quality is your reputation, and it needs to be consistent. As a leader, you need to oversee the preparation and presentation of every dish that leaves your kitchen. Conduct regular taste tests, ensure recipes are followed correctly, and maintain portion consistency. Instilling a pride in the quality of work among your team will maintain a high standard and give your staff something to look forward to every day. It's amazing the wildfire that ensues when you create a work environment of high standards.

A safe kitchen is a productive kitchen. It's essential to avoid accidents and health violations. Follow all food safety regulations, and ensure your team is properly trained in handling equipment and ingredients safely. Enforce cleanliness, proper food handling, and the use of personal protective equipment. Regularly inspect your kitchen for hazards like wet floors, hot surfaces, or sharp objects. A safe environment helps reduce injuries and illness. This is pretty self explanatory, but safety cannot be emphasized enough.

Learn to adapt to the pace and flow of your kitchen. Kitchens are dynamic, fast-paced environments. The ability to adapt to change quickly is crucial to maintaining order. Be prepared for unexpected changes, whether it's a change in guest volume, supply shortages, or equipment malfunctions. Stay calm under pressure and encourage your team to do the same. When you're flexible and adaptable, your kitchen will be able to weather any storm. I have heard a saying in professional kitchens my whole career... if it's possible to happen, it's likely it will. And so with this in mind, the chef is always poised and collected during the worst of any situation. Being cool , calm and collected instills confidence in your team that you can handle the pressures of the

job. If you can't stay cool, calm and collected.. How can you expect them to be?.. You know.. Lead by example..

Lastly.. Implement staff development and training. Continuous learning is vital for improving performance and keeping morale high. Provide your team with ongoing training to improve their skills and ensure they're up to date on industry trends. Offer career advancement opportunities, mentorship, and skills development. This not only improves your kitchen's performance but also keeps your staff motivated and loyal. Work one on one with them and take the time to help them perfect their skills. No one wins when you are the be all end all of the knowledge in the kitchen. Pass your knowledge on and help them perfect their craft. Training them and setting your expectations cannot be emphasized enough. You can't expect them to perform something that they do not know how to do, and that's in any job or field.

Now look, I know it's a lot to digest here. But that's the job of the chef.. And we didn't even talk about the actual physical duties that you have to perform for your job. So if you are a new chef, sous chef or lead cook... understand that this list should help you realize that it's not a small job to be a chef. For all intents and purposes.. In my humble opinion.. Not everyone can do it. The stress is extremely high.. The amount of knowledge you have to possess AND perfect is enormous. It takes time to do a great job in this position. You have to do these things every day with repetition so that it becomes second nature to you.. Like it's a part of you.. When you see something fucked up your spider sense goes off and you just immediately know.

So new chefs understand that being the best cook is really the tip of the iceberg when it comes to being

"The chef".. Most chefs will tell you that they wish they got to cook more because all the extra shit that comes with the job is taxing mentally and physically. Take pride and interest in the journey of learning and perfecting all of this shit, because at the end of the journey it truly is enriching. Keep learning. Keep pushing. Push those around you. Be better than yesterday.. Today. Focus on that and you will be fine. Trust me.. I've done this many.. Many times before.

### **Outro**

Again chefs, I apologize that this episode was an extended episode compared to what you are used to when you tune in. However, in my defense, I thought that this episode really gave you something to think about on many fronts. How to make fresh pasta, where it came from, how to cook it and then how to manage your brigade. If you take a minute to examine just how much information was unloaded here, you'll realize your brain just doubled in size. Lol

I hope you try making today's recipe and have fun with it. Like I said at the beginning of the show, it truly is therapeutic for me. It does take some time to master and get good at, but it's totally worth it. Send us pictures of your work on X and tag us for a chance to get featured on the show; and check out [theincrediblediscourse.com](http://theincrediblediscourse.com). We have a lot of downloadable resources that will help you out with your culinary journey, including one based on today's show all about pasta. Check out the blog and sign up for the newsletter while you're up there. Lastly, like this

episode and subscribe to the show so you never miss a beat. It was great talking to you today, thank you for your time as always.. I'm Mark Grigsby and you've just been put through.. The incredible discourse, until next time....