Main dishes / Italy

Squid Ink Pasta with Clams

Glossy jet-black pasta tinted with cuttlefish ink, tossed with clams in a white wine sauce — dramatic, briny, and unmistakably of the Venetian lagoon.

Time 75 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 % Tipo 00 flour
- ☐ 40 % Egg yolks
- ☐ 10 % Whole eggs
- ☐ 2 % Squid or cuttlefish ink (sachets or fresh)
- ☐ 5 % Extra-virgin olive oil
- ☐ 1 % Fine salt
- ☐ 400 g Fresh clams (vongole veraci or littleneck), scrubbed
- ☐ 150 ml Dry white wine (Soave or Pinot Grigio)
- ☐ 3 cloves Garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ☐ 0.5 tsp Red pepper flakes
- ☐ 1 small bunch Flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

Let's make it.

01 Mound the flour on a clean work surface and make a wide well in the centre. Add the egg yolks, whole eggs, squid ink, olive oil, and salt to the well. Using a fork, beat the eggs gently within the well, gradually drawing flour from the inner walls. Once the mixture becomes too thick for the fork, use a bench scraper to chop and fold the dough together until all the flour is incorporated into a rough, shaggy black mass. The dough will look alarming — deeply, uniformly jet-black. Begin kneading firmly with the heel of your hand, folding and pressing for 8 full minutes until the dough is smooth and springy. Wrap tightly in cling film.

02 Let the wrapped dough rest at room temperature for 30–45 minutes. Meanwhile, set up your pasta machine. After resting, divide the dough into 4 portions — keep others wrapped while you work each one. Flatten each portion into a rough oval and pass through the pasta machine at its widest setting. Fold in thirds like a letter, rotate 90 degrees, and pass through again. Repeat 3 times, then progressively work down through the settings to setting 5 or 6 (1–2 mm thick). Cut to tagliolini (2 mm) or spaghetti (3 mm) width. Dust sheets generously with semolina to prevent sticking.

03 Set a large, wide pan over high heat. Add the olive oil and garlic and let it sizzle for 20 seconds until fragrant. Add the pepper flakes. Tip in all the scrubbed clams, pour in the wine, and clamp the lid on immediately. Cook over maximum heat for 3–4 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, until all the clams have opened. Discard any that remain shut. Using a slotted spoon, lift the clams out and set aside, keeping the pan and all its fragrant liquid. If the broth seems gritty, pour it through a fine sieve lined with a damp cloth into a clean pan.

04 Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a rolling boil. Cook the fresh ink pasta for 60–90 seconds only — fresh pasta cooks in a fraction of the time of dried. Taste a strand at 60 seconds; it should be tender but with a faint backbone. The pasta will continue cooking in the sauce, so pull it 10 seconds before you think it is ready. Reserve a ladleful of the black starchy cooking water before draining.

05 Add the drained pasta directly to the pan of clam broth over high heat. Toss vigorously for 60–90 seconds, adding small splashes of the reserved inky pasta water if needed to keep the sauce fluid and glossy. Return the clams to the pan in the final 15 seconds. Remove from heat and scatter the parsley. The finished dish should be jet-black with clams nestled throughout — serve immediately in warmed bowls. Never add cheese to seafood pasta in the Venetian tradition.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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