

Homemade spelt pasta made two ways



We've made our pasta dinners more interesting with these two recipes for homemade whole-grain spelt pasta. We've been wanting to experiment with making pasta with new ingredients and a trip to a farmer's market provided just the opportunity. We picked up fresh milled (just a few days before) organic whole-grain spelt flour sold by CIPM Farm in Hastings County, Ontario. Now was our chance to be completely Italian by making really fresh food with fresh ingredients and make it with a purely Canadian product.

Spelt is an "ancient" grain and the starch in it is more soluble than regular wheat, so recipes using spelt generally require less water and produce a denser product. There aren't too many recipes out there online for making spelt pasta (while there are plenty of videos of Nonnas teaching others how to make pasta, they don't use spelt!), particularly whole grain spelt. So we had to try some experiments and come up with our own. Here's two highly-recommended recipes for making spelt pasta - one using just water, the other using eggs.

Spelt pasta made with water

Ingredients:

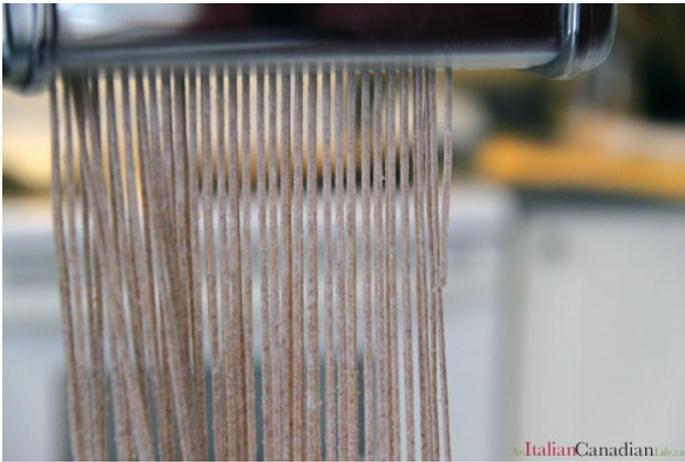
- 500g whole-grain spelt flour
- 1 cup warm water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

1. Place flour on working surface, making a well in the middle. Carefully pour water and add salt into the well and begin to mix in the flour with a fork, slowly gathering the flour from the sides of the well and being careful not to break the walls of flour. Mix until the dough begins to come together then work the dough by hand, adding flour as needed, until the dough is smooth.
2. Form into a ball and wrap in plastic.
3. Let rest at least one hour.



After resting, cut the ball into six pieces, flattening each by hand slightly. Using a pasta machine, manual or electric powered, roll the pasta into sheets to your desired thickness. To do this, set the rollers of the pasta machine to the widest setting to start and feed the dough through with one hand while guiding it out with the other. Once it is through, flour the dough lightly, fold it in thirds and feed it through the roller again. Continue to feed the dough through the rollers, setting the rollers closer together on each pass until you reach your desired thickness. Lay on a table or tray on a clean kitchen towel to dry for 10 minutes.



Once dry, run the pasta through the machine again, using a pasta cutter to create spaghetti or linguini. Feed the dough through with one hand and catch the finished pasta with your free hand as it comes out.



Twist or twirl each bunch of spaghetti into small nests on a floured, clean kitchen towel on your table or on a tray (use a tray if you intend on freezing some later). Allow to dry for at least 3 to 4 hours.



We tried our spelt pasta, made with just water, with basil pesto and roasted cherry tomatoes. The spaghetti was tender and tasty. The fresh ingredients, starting with the flour, make a big difference in Italian cooking.

Spelt pasta made with eggs

Ingredientd:

- 8 eggs
- 4 1/2 cups whole grain spelt flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

1. Like the first recipe, place flour on working surface, making a well in the middle. Crack 8 eggs and add the salt into the well and begin to mix in the flour with a fork, slowly gathering the flour from the sides of of the well and being careful not to break the walls of flour. Mix until the dough begins to come together then work the dough by hand, adding flour as needed, until the dough is smooth.
2. Form into a ball and wrap in plastic.
3. Let rest at least one hour.



After resting, cut the ball into 10 pieces, flattening each by hand slightly. Process each piece on its own, cover the others with plastic wrap or a towel while not in use. Using a pasta machine, manual or electric powered, roll the pasta into sheets to your desired thickness as instructed above in the previous recipe. Lay on a table or tray to dry for 10 minutes.



With this pasta, we decided to make homemade spiral pasta which my husband's family calls "helatede." They can also be called busiate or just fusilli. These can be made one of two ways: with a wire or small wood dowel or simply by hand. Without a small wood dowel, we decided to go free form



Cut the sheets of pasta into 1/2 inch long strips by hand. Holding one end of the strip on your work surface, use the other hand to roll the pasta towards you, causing the dough to spiral. Continue to do so as it tightens. Cut the strip into 2 to 3 inch pieces and place on a clean, floured kitchen towel to dry for at least 3 hours.



After a long day in the kitchen, we devoured this pasta with some meat sauce and fresh grated cheese. This pasta had a little more bite to it and was a little more filling, but the taste was great as well.



It's good to plan what type of pasta you are making before you dive into making the dough, especially when experimenting with a new type of flour. The water-based dough was softer, making it a little harder to handle and took longer to dry. Once completely dry, the pasta can be stored in an air tight container for a few days or frozen for use later.