

Linguine with Clams

Classic Linguine with Clams recipe featuring fresh littlenecks in white wine garlic sauce. Authentic Italian coastal flavor in 35 minutes.

15 min

PREP

20 min

COOK

35 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Easy

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 16 oz pasta
- 500 g clam
- 5 clove garlic
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup parsley
- 1 tsp chili flakes
- 1 lemon
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper

Instructions

1 Prepare the clams

Scrub 2 pounds littleneck clams under cold running water with a stiff brush to remove sand and debris. Discard any clams with cracked shells or that remain open when tapped sharply.

2 Start the pasta water

Fill a large pot with water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Add 2 tablespoons salt to the water until it tastes like seawater.

3 Build the sauce base

Heat 1/4 cup olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add 5 cloves sliced garlic and 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, cooking for 1-2 minutes until fragrant but not browned.

- 4 Pour 1 cup white wine into the pan and bring to a simmer. Cook for 2-3 minutes until the alcohol smell dissipates and liquid reduces by half.
- 5 **Cook the linguine**
Add 16 ounces linguine to the boiling water and cook according to package directions minus 2 minutes for al dente texture. Reserve 1 cup pasta cooking water before draining.
- 6 **Steam the clams**
Add the cleaned clams to the wine mixture and cover with a tight-fitting lid immediately. Cook for 5-7 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, until the clam shells open wide.
- 7 Remove and discard any clams that failed to open completely. Add the drained linguine directly to the pan with the clams and their juices.
- 8 **Finish the dish**
Toss the pasta with the clam mixture for 1-2 minutes over medium heat, adding 1/2 cup reserved pasta water gradually until a silky sauce forms that coats the noodles.
- 9 Remove from heat and stir in 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley and 1 teaspoon lemon zest. Season with salt and 1 teaspoon black pepper to taste, then serve immediately in warmed bowls.

Tips

Purge Clams Properly: Soak fresh clams in cold salted water for 20-30 minutes before cooking. This allows them to expel sand and grit naturally. Scrub shells with a stiff brush under cold running water just before cooking.

Don't Overcook the Pasta: Cook linguine 1-2 minutes less than package directions suggest. It will finish cooking in the clam sauce, absorbing flavors while maintaining the perfect al dente texture that's essential to this dish.

Save That Pasta Water: Reserve at least 1 cup of starchy pasta cooking water before draining. This liquid gold helps create a silky sauce that properly coats the noodles and prevents the dish from seeming dry or separated.

Heat Control is Critical: Keep heat at medium when cooking garlic to prevent burning, which creates bitter flavors. When clams are added, increase heat slightly to create proper steam for opening shells.

Timing the Clam Addition: Add fresh clams to the hot wine mixture and cover immediately. They typically open within 5-7 minutes. Remove opened clams to prevent overcooking while waiting for stubborn ones.

Fresh Parsley at the End: Add chopped fresh parsley off the heat just before serving. This preserves its bright color and fresh flavor, providing the perfect aromatic finish to complement the briny clams.

Quality Over Quantity: Use the best olive oil you can afford and don't skimp on fresh garlic. Since this dish relies on so few ingredients, each one should be of excellent quality to achieve restaurant-worthy results.