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How to Prepare Pasta

Baking and stir-frying are some of the methods used to cook pasta, but boiling is the most common method used to prepare pasta. To prepare 1 pound of dry pasta, 4 quarts of water are needed since a quart of water is only enough to prepare 4 ounces of pasta. The cook should keep in mind that pasta expands as it cooks, therefore, he or she should select a pot that is large enough to accommodate the expansion (Ghan, et al 82). Once the water begins to boil, add one tablespoon of salt and stir gently. Salt should not be added before the water boils because it will make the water develop an odor, which can affect the taste of the pasta. If the salt is added later when the pasta is in water, it may not dissolve properly and it may fail to hold the pasta's shape as well as failing to bring out the desired flavor (Alessandra, Guidetti, and Azapagic 148). When the water is boiling, add 1 pound of pasta and continue stirring so that it does not stick to the sides of the pot, or sticking together.

To avoid the pasta sticking together, the cook is advised to add a little oil to the boiling water. When pasta is added to the boiling water, the temperature will reduce and therefore the temperature should be kept constant until the pasta comes to the full boil again (Alessandra, Guidetti, and Azapagic 151). This time, the heat should be reduced but should be kept at a temperature that will maintain the steady boil. It should be noted that if the pasta is added to water that has not yet boiled or the cooking temperatures are too low, it will become mushy and soft, which is a cuisine disaster (Ghan, et al 84). It is not advisable to cut the long strands before inserting them in water. The cook should force the long strands slowly into the pot by holding them from one end and push them slowly into the pot as they soften. Then the strands are supposed to be stirred slowly to prevent them from sticking to the bottom and to the sides of the pot.

The cook should keep checking for the doneness of the pasta for a couple of times when the pasta is still cooking. The cooking time of the pasta depends on the length, shape and the

thickness of the pasta (Alessandra, Guidetti, and Azapagic 154). The cook should, therefore, read the cooking time instructions on the packaging. To avoid overcooking, the cook should keep checking by tasting after every 30 seconds. Pasta that is ready to serve should be in an ‘al dente’ state, which is a loose Italian translation to mean ‘to the tooth’. This means that the pasta should have a firm bite and not be too soft but smooth and tender (Ghan, et al 85). Pasta should drain in a colander before it is done cooking. Once it is cooked, it should be removed from the heat and mixed with the prepared sauce whose thickness depends on the level of the thickness of the pasta to reduce its stickiness. Pasta is now ready to be served with the appropriate stew the cook has prepared.

Works cited

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