

# Pasta and Lentils (Pasta e Lenticchie)

By [Ali Slagle](#)



Christopher Testani for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini.

**Time** About 1 hour

**Level**

**Rating** 4 ★★★★★ (2772)

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## INGREDIENTS

**Yield:** 4 to 6 servings

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving

1 yellow onion, coarsely chopped

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## PREPARATION

### Step 1

In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium-high. Add the onion and garlic, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Add 5 cups of water, the lentils, the thyme

This classic Neapolitan dish's heartiness comes from cooking pasta with lentils so that the starches thicken the liquid into something creamier and richer than a basic **lentil soup**.

There are many versions of this peasant food, including ones with pancetta, carrots, parsley or Parmesan rinds; some also use a hodgepodge of pasta shapes from half-empty boxes — it's a true pantry meal. Brown lentils will fall apart more quickly than green, but they'll create a luscious sauce either way. Stir the pasta often, especially towards the end of cooking, and add more water if the pot is dry (the sauce will thicken as it cools). Leftovers will keep for up to 3 days refrigerated; warm over low heat and add water to loosen.

- 8 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- Kosher salt (Diamond Crystal) and black pepper
- 1 cup brown or green lentils
- 3 thyme sprigs (optional)
- 3 fresh or dried bay leaves (optional)
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes, cut in the can with scissors
- 10 ounces tubular or ridged pasta, like penne or radiatore (or use long noodles broken into pieces)
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus more for serving

and bay leaves (if using). Partially cover, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, until the lentils are al dente, 25 to 30 minutes.

### Step 2

Add the tomatoes and 1 teaspoon salt, and bring to a boil over high. Add the pasta and cook, stirring often to keep the pasta from sticking to the pot, until the pasta is al dente, 10 to 20 minutes. (It may take longer than the cook time on the package.) If the pot starts to look dry at any point, add more water, ¼ cup at a time.

### Step 3

Turn off the heat, discard the thyme and bay leaves, then stir in the Parmesan. Cover and let sit for 3 minutes so the flavors meld and the sauce thickens. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Eat with more Parmesan and a drizzle of olive oil.

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Ingredient Substitution Guide

[Nutritional Information](#)

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