

San Francisco-Style Vietnamese American Garlic Noodles



Sang An for The New York Times. Food Stylist; Simon Andrews.

By [J. Kenji López-Alt](#)

Time 15 minutes

1

Rating 4 ★★★★★ (6649)

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These noodles, adapted from the cookbook "The Wok" by J. Kenji López-Alt, and based on the noodle dish originally created and served by Helene An at San Francisco's **Thanh Long restaurant**, are extraordinarily simple and delicious on their own, but that doesn't mean you can't fancy them up a bit. They go very well with seafood, and some raw, shell-on shrimp stir-fried along with the garlic right from the start would be an excellent addition. Recently, I've taken to adding a few spoonfuls of tarako or mentaiko — Japanese salted pollock roe. Sushi-style flying fish roe (tobiko) or salmon roe (ikura) would also be a great addition, as would chunks of crab or lobster meat, or even Western-style caviar (if you're feeling flush).

Featured in:

[These Garlic Noodles Cross Cultures, but Are Deeply San Franciscan](#)

INGREDIENTS

PREPARATION

Yield: 4 servings

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 20 medium garlic cloves, minced or smashed in a mortar and pestle
- 4 teaspoons oyster sauce
- 2 teaspoons light soy sauce or shoyu
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce
- 1 pound dry spaghetti
- 1 ounce grated Parmesan or Pecorino Romano (heaping ¼ cup)
- A small handful of thinly sliced scallions (optional)

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Ingredient Substitution Guide

[Nutritional Information](#)

Step 1

Melt the butter in a wok or saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant but not browned, about 2 minutes. Add the oyster sauce, soy sauce and fish sauce, and stir to combine. Remove from the heat.

Step 2

Meanwhile, bring 1½ inches of water to a boil in a 12-inch skillet or sauté pan over high heat. (Alternatively, heat up just enough water to cover the spaghetti in a large Dutch oven or saucepan.) Add the pasta, stir a few times to make sure it's not clumping, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just shy of al dente (about 2 minutes short of the recommended cook time on the package).

Step 3

Using tongs, transfer the cooked pasta to the garlic sauce, along with whatever water clings to it. (Reserve the pasta water in the skillet.) Increase the heat to high, add the cheese to the wok, and stir with a wooden spatula or spoon and toss vigorously until the sauce is creamy and emulsified, about 30 seconds. If the sauce looks too watery, let it keep reducing. If it looks greasy, splash some more cooking water into it and let it re-emulsify. Stir in the scallions (if using), and serve immediately.

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