Cooking Pasta and Noodles

Unit: Culinary Arts & Hospitality

Problem Area: Grains, Pasta, Noodles

Lesson: Cooking Pasta and Noodles

Student Learning Objectives.

Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. **Describe the variations of pasta.**
2. **Summarize the principles for cooking pasta.**

Resources.

The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

E-unit(s) corresponding to this lesson plan. CAERT, Inc. http://www.mycaert.com.

"Common Types of Pasta," *REAL SIMPLE.* Accessed Oct. 20, 2019. https://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/shopping-storing/food/common-types-pasta.

Labensky, Sarah R. and Alan M. Hause. *On Cooking: A Textbook of Culinary Fundamentals, 4th ed. Pearson, 2007.*

McGraw-Hill Education. (2016). *Culinary essentials*. Columbus, OH.

Prentice Hall. (2011). *Foundations of restaurant management and culinary arts*. Boston.



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Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

Key Terms.

The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- al dente
- capellini
- egg noodles
- elbow macaroni
- farfalle
- fettuccini
- lasagna
- linguine
- manicotti
- pasta
- semolina flour
- spaghetti
- spaghettini

Interest Approach.

Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

> *Ask your students what kind of pasta they like to eat. Ask them if they know what type of noodles are used to prepare that pasta. Then ask them if they know WHY those noodles are used in that specific dish. Explain to the class that there are many types of noodles to prepare pasta and that certain noodles pair best with different types of sauces. Noodles that are smooth and have no ridges do not hold sauce as well as those noodles that do have ridges or pockets to store sauce. Then ask students if they have ever eaten or made fresh pasta. Explain that there are different types of pasta fresh and dried. Use VM–A and VM–B to help with this discussion.*

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CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Describe the variations of pasta.

Anticipated Problem: What are the different types of pasta? How do fresh and dried pasta differ? What are qualities to look for when buying pasta?

I. Types of Pasta

A. Pasta is one of the easiest and most versatile food products used today. It is available in a variety of sizes, shapes, colors and flavors. ***Pasta*** is a starchy food product that is made from grains. It is considered a staple in many kitchens. Pasta increases in volume as it cooks and yields a high profit. Pasta is a very popular menu choice. To create successful pasta dishes, you need to become familiar with the varieties of pasta available and how to prepare them. Pasta can be used in place of other starchy foods in a meal.

1. One of the main ingredients of pasta is flour. Usually, wheat flour is used. The other main ingredients in pasta is a liquid, such as water or eggs. Oil is sometimes added to pasta dough to give it a richer texture. Most commercial dried pastas are made from ***semolina flour***, a hard-grain wheat flour that is high in the proteins that form gluten. Semolina flour produces a smooth dough and creamy yellow color.
2. There are more than 100 varieties of pasta available in a number of shapes, sizes, and flavors. A pasta's color reflects its flavor. You can buy pasta dried or fresh, but fresh pasta cooks faster. Here are some common pasta shapes:
   a. ***Elbow macaroni*** are curved, narrow tubes that are short in length. They are used baked, for macaroni and cheese, macaroni salad, and casseroles.
   b. ***Spaghetti*** consists of thin, round strands. Very thin spaghetti is called ***spaghettini.*** Spaghetti is boiled, and served with meat or tomato sauce, oil, butter or thin sauces.
   c. ***Egg noodles*** are long or short ribbons with spinach, tomato, or other flavorings that are added to the dough. Egg noodles are baked into casseroles, some sauces and puddings.
   d. ***Lasagne*** are wide, flat noodles that have rippled edges. They are used baked as a layered casserole with tomato sauce, cheese and meat or seafood.
   e. ***Capellini***/Angel Hair is a fine, solid, strand like pasta that is thinner than spaghetti. Capellini is boiled and used with thin sauces, seafood, tomatoes, garlic or in soups.
   f. ***Linguine*** is thin, flattened spaghetti that is about 1/8-inch wide. It is boiled, and often served with clam sauce, marinara sauce, and seafood.

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g. ***Farfalle*** are flat, wide noodles that are squeezed in the center to resemble bow ties before they are dried. Farfalle are boiled, or baked with artichokes or seafood. With farfalle, you would use medium or rich sauces with meat or vegetables.

h. ***Fettuccini*** are flat, long ¼-inch wide noodles. They are best boiled and served with reach cream sauces, such as alfredo, or meat sauces that adhere well to these ribbon-like noodles.

i. ***Manicotti*** are medium-size hollow tubes, cut straight or angled. They are stuffed with cheese, meat, seafood or vegetables, and baked.

3. The shape of some pastas makes them ideal for certain sauces. For example, a thinner, tomato-based sauce like marinara is ideal for angel hair pasta, while alfredo sauce adheres well to fettuccini.

B. Quality Characteristics of Pasta

1. FLOUR: Semolina, a high protein flour, produces the best dry pasta. Dry pasta should contain 100% semolina flour.
2. FRESHNESS: Dry pasta should be hard and brittle. It should snap cleanly instead of bending easily.

C. Purchasing and Storage — Both dried and fresh pasta usually are purchased by weight. Dried pasta is available in 1, 5 and 10-pound bags and boxes. Twenty bulk cases are also common. Fresh pasta can be purchased in 1 to 2-pound boxes, or frozen in 10 to 20-pound cases. Fresh pasta is also available in bags or cartons.

1. DRIED PASTA: Dried pastas, often purchased in bags or boxes, are available in tube, flat and shaped forms. Tubes and shaped pastas are generally not available fresh. Dried pastas should be brittle and should break easily. The surface should look dull or be marked by small pits or scars. Sauces cannot soak into smooth, shiny, dried pastas. Dried pasta comes in a variety of interesting and unusual flavors. Besides the typical spinach, tomato, and plain pastas, you can also get a variety of combination flavors, such as tomato-dill, spinach-herb, or carrot-ginger. Dried pasta can be stored in a cool, dry place for several months.
2. FRESH PASTA: Fresh pasta can be made in the kitchen. However, it requires a great deal of labor, or hard work, to produce. It is also difficult to get a consistent product. Fresh pasta can be purchased fresh or frozen. Fresh pasta also comes in a variety of flavors, such as spinach, tomato-garlic, and whole-wheat. Fresh pasta must be tightly wrapped and kept refrigerated to prevent its drying out. Even when refrigerated, fresh pasta should be used within a few days after it has been made. It can also be kept in the freezer to be used within a few weeks.

Teaching Strategy: *Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Use VM–A through VM–M to facilitate a discussion of the variations of pasta and principles of purchasing and storing pasta.*

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Objective 2: Summarize the principles for cooking pasta.

Anticipated Problem: What are the different ways pasta can be cooked? How do I know if pasta is done cooking?

II. Cooking Pasta

A. Cooking pasta is a simple process. However, you will need to be familiar with the recipe. Some pasta dishes require the pasta to be fully cooked. Other recipes require pasta to be partially cooked and added to a casserole along with a variety of other ingredients. Pasta can be boiled or baked. Boiling pasta is a simple process. Both fresh and dried pasta can be boiled.

1. BOILING PASTA: When boiling pasta, you need to use enough water to cook it properly. Pasta can be cooked when a customer orders it. It also can be cooked in large amounts ahead of time. Dried pasta is sometimes cooked ahead of time. Fresh pasta is not because it cooks quickly and becomes too soft.
2. BAKING PASTA: When pasta is baked with a filling and a sauce, or simple a sauce, the flavors blend during the baking process. You cannot achieve, or do, this simply by adding a sauce to the top of plain cooked pasta. Some types of pasta, such as lasagna noodles, are cooked and then layered in a casserole with other ingredients such as cheese, meat, spinach, and tomato sauce for a hearty, baked dish. Manicotti and cannelloni are stuffed with a filling such as cheese and covered in sauce. Macaroni and cheese is also a baked pasta dish.
3. DETERMINE DONENESS: When cooking Italian-style pasta, cook it ***al dente***, or "to the bite", meaning that the pasta is tender, but still firm. If pasta is cooked past the stage at which it is tender but still firm when bitten into, it quickly becomes soft and mushy. Each type of pasta has a different cooking time. If pasta is overcooked or undercooked, the dish being prepared could be ruined. The amount of water, the altitude, and various other factors can affect the cooking time. It is important to check pasta carefully to stop the cooking process at the al dente stage. To check for doneness, you can bite into a piece of pasta. If it is tender, but still firm, remove it from the heat and drain carefully. Another alternative is to cut through a piece of pasta with a fork. If it cuts easily, it is done.
4. STUFFING PASTA: Once cooked, some pasta can be stuffed with ingredients. Tubular pastas, such as manicotti or cannelloni, are usually stuffed. Ravioli are stuffed squares, rounds, or triangles. A variety of other pasta shapes can be stuffed too. The filling ingredients may include cheese, meat, seafood, poultry, or vegetables. The fillings, with the exception of meat, can be cooked or uncooked. Meat fillings, however, must be completely cooked before being stuffed into the pasta. This is because the time it takes the pasta to cook may not be sufficient to cook the meat safely. Some large tubular pastas, such as cannelloni and manicotti, are often only partly cooked in boiling water. They

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are then stuffed with a filling and covered in a sauce. These dishes are baked as casseroles to finish the cooking process. When you partially cook pasta, make sure it does not become overcooked. It will continue to cook during baking.

Teaching Strategy: *Many techniques can be used to help students master this objective. Assign LS–A.*

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. If a textbook is being used, questions at the ends of chapters may also be included in the Review/Summary.

- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.

- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

- **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Matching

1. d
2. e
3. f
4. a
5. b
6. c

Part Two: Completion

1. elbow macaroni
2. al dente
3. pasta
4. semolina flour
5. Spaghettini
6. Farafalle

Part Three: Short Answer

1. Answers may vary and would be similar to the following. Semolina, a high protein flour, produces the best dry pasta. Dry pasta should contain 100% semolina flour.

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Dry pasta should be hard and brittle. It should snap cleanly instead of bending easily.

2. Answers may vary and would be similar to the following. When cooking Italian-style pasta, cook it al dente, or “to the bite”, meaning that the pasta is tender, but still firm. If pasta is cooked past the stage at which it is tender but still firm when bitten into, it quickly becomes soft and mushy. Each type of pasta has a different cooking time. If pasta is overcooked or undercooked, the dish being prepared could be ruined. The amount of water, the altitude, and various other factors can affect the cooking time. It is important to check pasta carefully to stop the cooking process at the al dente stage. To check for doneness, you can bite into a piece of pasta. If it is tender, but still firm, remove it from the heat and drain carefully. Another alternative is to cut through a piece of pasta with a fork. If it cuts easily, it is done.

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Sample Test

Name _____

Cooking Pasta and Noodles

Part One: Matching

Instructions: **Match the term with the correct definition.**

a. Fettuccini
b. Manicotti
c. Capellini
d. Spaghetti
e. Egg noodles
f. Linguine

_____1. Consists of thin, round strands

_____2. Long or short ribbons with spinach, tomato, or other flavorings that are added to the dough

_____3. Thin, flattened spaghetti that is about 1/8-inch wide. It is boiled, and often served with clam sauce, marinara sauce, and seafood

_____4. Flat, long ¼-inch wide noodles. They are best boiled and served with reach cream sauces, such as alfredo, or meat sauces that adhere well to these ribbon-like noodles

_____5. Medium-size hollow tubes, cut straight or angled. They are stuffed with cheese, meat, seafood or vegetables, and baked

_____6. Solid, strand like pasta that is thinner than spaghetti

Part Two: Completion

Instructions: **Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.**

1. _____ are curved, narrow tubes that are short in length. They are used baked, for macaroni and cheese, macaroni salad, and casseroles.

2. When cooking Italian-style pasta, cook it _____, or "to the bite", meaning that the pasta is tender, but still firm.



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3. _____ is a starchy food product that is made from grains.
4. Most commercial dried pastas are made from _____.
5. Very thin spaghetti is called _____.
6. _____ are flat, wide noodles that are squeezed in the center to resemble bow ties before they are dried.

Part Three: Short Answer

Instructions: **Answer the following.**

1. Describe the quality characteristics of pasta to look for when purchasing.

2. Describe how to test pasta for doneness.

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WHAT IS PASTA?

Pasta is one of the easiest and most versatile food products used today. It is available in a variety of sizes, shapes, colors and flavors. Pasta is a starchy food product that is made from grains. It is considered a staple in many kitchens.



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FRESH PASTA

Fresh pasta can be made in the kitchen. However, it requires a great deal of labor, or hard work, to produce. It is also difficult to get a consistent product. Fresh pasta can be purchased fresh or frozen. Fresh pasta also comes in a variety of flavors, such as spinach, tomato-garlic, and whole-wheat.



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SEMOLINA FLOUR

Most commercial dried pastas are made from semolina flour, a hard-grain wheat flour that is high in the proteins that form gluten. Semolina flour produces a smooth dough and creamy yellow color.



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VM–D

ELBOW MACARONI

Elbow macaroni are curved, narrow tubes that are short in length. They are used baked, for macaroni and cheese, macaroni salad, and casseroles.



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SPAGHETTI AND SPAGHETTINI

Spaghetti consists of thin, round strands. Very thin spaghetti is called spaghettini. Spaghetti is boiled, and served with meat or tomato sauce, oil, butter or thin sauces.





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VM–F

EGG NOODLES

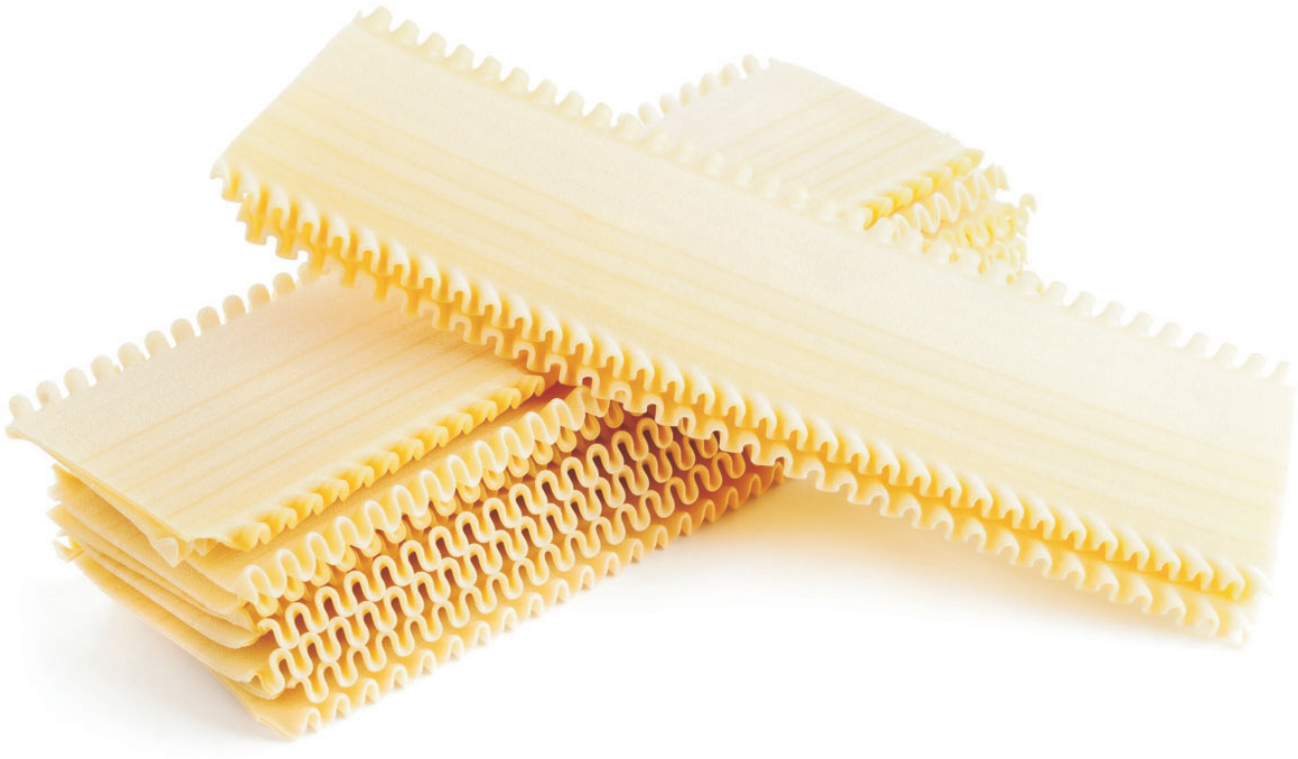
Egg noodles are long or short ribbons with spinach, tomato, or other flavorings that are added to the dough. Egg noodles are baked into casseroles, some sauces and puddings.



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LASAGNE

Lasagne are wide, flat noodles that have rippled edges. They are used baked as a layered casserole with tomato sauce, cheese and meat or seafood.



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VM–H

CAPELLINI

Capellini/Angel Hair is a fine, solid, strand like pasta that is thinner than spaghetti. Capellini is boiled and used with thin sauces, seafood, tomatoes, garlic or in soups.



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LINGUINE

Linguine is thin, flattened spaghetti that is about 1/8-inch wide. It is boiled, and often served with clam sauce, marinara sauce, and seafood.



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FARFALLE

Farfalle are flat, wide noodles that are squeezed in the center to resemble bow ties before they are dried. Farfalle are boiled, or baked with artichokes or seafood. With farfalle, you would use medium or rich sauces with meat or vegetables.



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FETTUCCINE

Fettuccini are flat, long ¼-inch wide noodles. They are best boiled and served with reach cream sauces, such as alfredo, or meat sauces that adhere well to these ribbon-like noodles.



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MANICOTTI

Manicotti are medium-size hollow tubes, cut straight or angled. They are stuffed with cheese, meat, seafood or vegetables, and baked.



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Name _____

Preparing Fresh Pasta

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to prepare fresh pasta.

Objective

Research, plan and prepare fresh pasta.

Materials

- lab sheet
- device with Internet access
- rolling pin and pasta machine
- ingredients as needed to prepare the dish and/or variations of the food item

Procedure

1. Work with a partner or small group to complete this lab activity. Review your class notes about cooking pasta.
2. Access the Tasty video: "The Best Pasta You'll Ever Eat". At http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNHqjFyk5gU. Watch the video demonstration for instructions.
3. Using classroom standard practices, plan for the preparation of the pasta. Have your instructor approve the lab plans.
4. Conduct mis en place. As, directed prepare, roll out and cook the fresh pasta. Toss with sauce provided by your instructor.
5. Turn in your completed lab sheet to your instructor.



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