

ALL ABOUT PASTA

Read all about wheat, pasta shapes,
and how to use your garden produce
to make a new favorite dish.



ILLINOIS WHEAT

Illinois is one of the leading states in soft red winter wheat production. Soft red winter wheat is great for products like cookies, cakes, cereals, biscuits, and pancakes.

Soft red winter wheat is a fall-planted crop that lies dormant in the winter and then resumes growing again in the spring, with a June through July harvest. This makes it the perfect wheat to grow in Illinois since that timing allows it to be double-cropped with corn or soybeans. This means that when corn or soybeans are harvested in the fall, wheat is planted, and the wheat can be harvested just in time to plant corn or soybeans in the early summer. Farmers that follow this plan then get the benefits of two crop harvests per year on one plot of land. In fact, this pairing works excellently because wheat benefits from the nutrients left behind by corn or soybeans.



CLASSES OF WHEAT

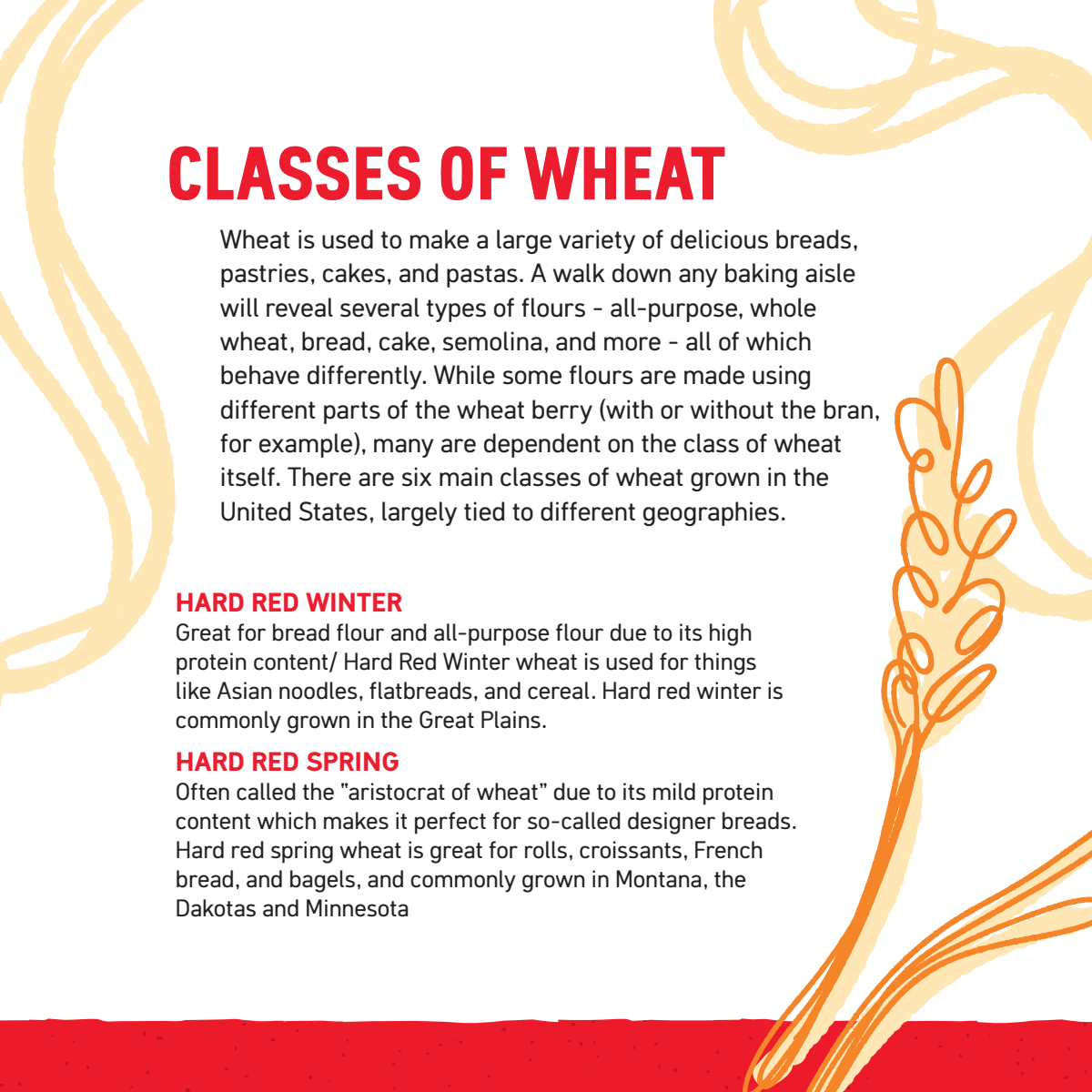
Wheat is used to make a large variety of delicious breads, pastries, cakes, and pastas. A walk down any baking aisle will reveal several types of flours - all-purpose, whole wheat, bread, cake, semolina, and more - all of which behave differently. While some flours are made using different parts of the wheat berry (with or without the bran, for example), many are dependent on the class of wheat itself. There are six main classes of wheat grown in the United States, largely tied to different geographies.

HARD RED WINTER

Great for bread flour and all-purpose flour due to its high protein content/ Hard Red Winter wheat is used for things like Asian noodles, flatbreads, and cereal. Hard red winter is commonly grown in the Great Plains.

HARD RED SPRING

Often called the "aristocrat of wheat" due to its mild protein content which makes it perfect for so-called designer breads. Hard red spring wheat is great for rolls, croissants, French bread, and bagels, and commonly grown in Montana, the Dakotas and Minnesota





SOFT RED WINTER

A low gluten and low protein wheat ideal for cookies, flatbreads, crackers, and pretzels. Illinois is one of the leaders of Soft red winter wheat production! Soft red winter is grown east of the Mississippi River.

SOFT WHITE

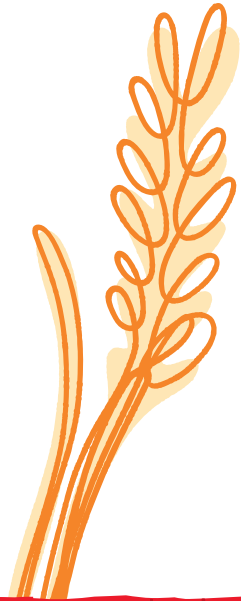
Appearing much whiter in color than other classes, this wheat low in protein is perfect for cakes, pastries, and Middle Eastern flatbreads. Soft white is grown in the Pacific Northwest.

HARD WHITE

Best used in tortillas, ramen, and hard flatbreads. Hard white also makes excellent white whole wheat bread because of its light color. Hard white is the newest class of wheat and also grown in the Great Plains.

DURUM

High in gluten and protein, Durum wheat is perfect for pasta. It's rich amber color is indicative of it being the "gold standard" for premium products like high-quality pasta, couscous and Mediterranean breads. Durum wheat is primarily grown in Montana, and North and South Dakota, with less grown in Arizona, and California.



HOMEMADE PASTA



Homemade pasta is an easy way to add a hint of fanfare and freshness to your next family meal.

SERVING SIZE

4 4-OUNCE SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups flour; "00" flour is recommended, but all-purpose flour can be used
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt, or more to taste
- 2 Tbsp water, or more as needed

DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix flour, eggs, oil, and salt in a medium-sized bowl until well combined. Add water 1 tsp at a time until a thick, smooth dough forms.
2. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 10 minutes, or until the dough is firm and smooth in texture. Let rest for 10 minutes.
3. Divide dough into 8 equal balls and work into desired shape by hand or using pasta maker (more information on reverse).
4. Cook immediately in boiling water for 2-6 minutes depending on pasta shape, or until pasta is soft, but still firm. Or store unshaped dough in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
5. Serve with your favorite sauce and toppings and enjoy!

"00" Flour is also called doppio zero. This flour is best for pasta because of it is finely milled, meaning it is extremely soft and powdery, helping to make elastic and delicate pasta dough.

PASTA SHAPES

Make pasta night your own and incorporate your favorite pasta shape into your meal! Pasta makers can be purchased, but these are easy to make using common kitchen tools.



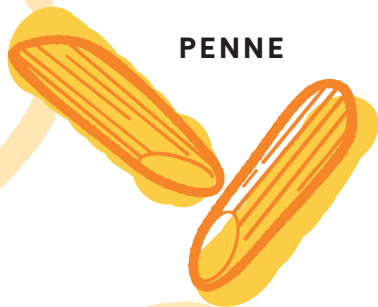
Using a rolling pin, roll dough into a $\frac{1}{16}$ th -inch-thick sheet. With floured hands, tightly roll dough into a spiral, as you would when rolling cinnamon roll dough. Use a sharp knife to make horizontal cuts roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ " in width. Unwind and enjoy the fettuccini!

On a floured surface, roll the dough into an even, thin sheet about $\frac{1}{16}$ " thick. Cut the pasta into even sized rectangles (approx. 1" by 2") using a knife, pizza cutter, or crinkly pasta cutter. Position each rectangle so the longest edges are on the top and bottom. Using your thumb and index finger, place the thumb at the bottom center and index finger at top center. Gently push fingers together to make a small ridge parallel to each edge (like an upside-down W), then pinch the ridges together to create the butterfly (farfalle) shape.



FARFALLE

PENNE



On a floured surface, roll the dough into an even, thin sheet about $\frac{1}{16}$ " thick. Cut the pasta into even rectangles, about 1" by 2" using a knife or pizza cutter. Place the end of a thin wooden spoon or wooden skewer, at a corner of each rectangle of pasta and roll diagonally, pressing at the end to seal.



FRESH BASIL PESTO

Pesto is full of fresh herbs and flavor, perfect for a comforting bowl of pasta any time of year.

YIELD

1 ½ cups of sauce, roughly enough for 1 lb. of pasta (approximately 4 servings)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups of fresh basil leaves, tightly packed
- ¾ cup fresh, shredded Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup pine nuts
- 2-3 garlic cloves
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1 tsp black pepper, or to taste
- Water

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place all ingredients into a food processor and process until smooth.
 2. Season with more salt and pepper to taste, if needed.
 3. To achieve a sauce-like consistency, add water to the pesto mix 1 Tbsp at a time until desired consistency is reached. Serve atop prepared pasta.
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PORK AND BEEF MEATBALLS

A blend of lean pork and beef create the perfect flavor and texture for these Italian meatballs.

SERVES 6-8

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. lean ground beef (90-93% lean is recommended)
- 1 lb. lean ground pork
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ¾ cup Italian style breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- ½ large onion
- 2 Tbsp Italian seasoning mix
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tsp red pepper flakes, optional for added spice
- 1 Tbsp olive oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat non-stick or cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Coat or spray bottom of pan with a thin layer of olive oil.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl, mixing by hand until well combined.
3. Shape meat mixture into 2" meatballs.
4. Place in hot, seasoned skillet and cook for 3-4 minutes per side, covered, until meat thermometer reads internal temperature of 160° F.
5. Remove from skillet and let the meatballs rest for 5-10 minutes.
6. Serve meatballs on a bed of your favorite pasta, top with sauce, and enjoy!



HIGH PROTEIN ALFREDO SAUCE



This creamy alfredo sauce is a crowd-pleaser and full of protein to give your family a boost of nutrition and energy.

SERVINGS

Enough sauce for 1 lb. of cooked pasta, approximately 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

Recipe courtesy of US Dairy

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 2 cups low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 shallot, diced
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ Tbsp sea salt
- 2 tsp black pepper
- ½ Tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- ½ Tbsp Italian seasoning
- 2 cups Italian cheese blend, like Parmigiano-Reggiano and Romano, freshly grated

DIRECTIONS

1. In a blender, combine Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, and chicken broth. Blend until smooth and set aside.
2. In a large skillet, melt butter with olive oil over medium heat. Add diced shallot and onion and saute until softened, about 3-4 minutes.
3. Add garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.
4. Add sea salt, black pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and Italian seasoning to the sauteed aromatics, stirring to combine.
5. Pour the blended Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, and broth mixture into the skillet with the sauteed aromatics. Stir gently until the sauce begins to warm through.
6. Gradually add the shredded Italian cheese blend, stirring constantly until the cheese melts and sauce becomes smooth and creamy.
7. Allow the sauce to simmer for 5-7 minutes on low heat, stirring occasionally, until thickened to your desired consistency. If sauce becomes too thick, gradually whisk in a small amount of additional broth (or water) until desired consistency.
8. Toss the Alfredo sauce with cooked pasta and enjoy!



HOMEMADE MARINARA

This bright marinara sauce is the perfect use for your homegrown garden-fresh vegetables.

SERVING SIZE

Enough sauce for 1 lb. of cooked pasta, approximately 4 servings





INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion
- 3 fresh garlic cloves, minced
- 3 lbs. fresh tomatoes, chopped (San Marzano or Roma tomatoes recommended)
- 3 Tbsp Italian blend seasoning
- 2 tsp sugar, optional for a sweeter sauce
- 2 tsp red pepper flakes, optional for spicy sauce
- Salt to taste, optional
- Black pepper to taste, optional
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat non-stick 5 quart pot with olive oil. Add onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes until fragrant, taking care not to burn it.
2. Add chopped tomatoes to the pot. Stir well and cook, covered, for around 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Once tomatoes are cooked down, use an immersion blender or regular blender to blend. The sauce can be made smoother or left chunky depending on preference.
4. Return the sauce to the pot. Add seasonings, including salt and pepper, and combine.
5. Add fresh basil and any other fresh herbs during the last 5 minutes of cooking and stir to combine.
6. Heat through and serve with favorite pasta. Enjoy!

COOKING AND STORING PASTA

To cook your homemade pasta, bring 4 quarts of water per pound of pasta to a rolling boil and add 2 Tbsp salt. One pound of pasta is approximately four 4-ounce servings. Once water is boiling, gently place the fresh pasta in the water and stir to avoid the pasta sticking together or to the pot. Depending on the pasta shape, it will be cooked to al dente within 2-6 minutes. Drain water and enjoy with your favorite sauce!

**Fresh pasta takes less time to cook than storebought dried pasta. Watch it carefully so not to overcook it.*

Fresh pasta is best cooked immediately but can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. However, it is recommended to use within 48 hours for peak freshness and flavor.

Freezing pasta is the best way to extend its shelf life. Pasta can be frozen as unshaped dough for up to 3 months if properly stored in an airtight container to prevent freezer burn.

