

# Spaghetti all'assassina

## Braised Spaghetti, “Female Assassin-Style”

Serves 4

**PREP TIME**

10 minutes

**COOK TIME**

20 minutes

**INGREDIENTS**

7 oz. (200 g) tomato paste

Fine sea salt

3 dried chile peppers

2 cloves garlic

3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

5 ¼ oz. (150 g) passata  
(tomato puree)

A scant 18 oz. (500 g) spaghetti

5 sprigs flat-leaf parsley

*This spaghetti dish is an Apulian specialty that originated in the city of Bari. Its bizarre name should actually be all'Assassino, or “male assassin-style,” since it was male restaurant chef Enzo Francavilla who was accused by a guest of attempting to murder him with this spicy dish, thus creating the legend behind this recipe. Aside from its spiciness, which is customizable as desired, what makes this recipe distinctive is that the pasta is not cooked in water as it usually is. The uncooked noodles are simmered in tomato broth, becoming caramelized and crispy in the process. Now a cult classic in Bari, throughout Italy, and even around the globe, this pasta dish exemplifies the sophistication of Italian cuisine with minimal use of ingredients. The spiciness epitomizes the fondness Apulians have for peperoncini: The region's peperoncino olive oil is also renowned for its quality, as the chiles used in making it are also grown there.*

First, make a tomato broth using water and the tomato paste. To make the broth, dissolve the tomato paste in approximately 4 ½ cups (1L) of boiling water and season with salt to taste. Keep the broth warm. Finely chop the chiles. In a large cast-iron pan with a diameter equal to the length of the spaghetti, sauté the garlic cloves, and chile peppers in the olive oil. Add the passata and season with salt to taste. Next, add the uncooked spaghetti to the pan. Using a wooden spoon, gently move the spaghetti back and forth until the sauce covers the pasta. If the pasta sticks to the bottom of the pan, as it should, add a little tomato broth. When the broth has been completely absorbed, add some more. Carefully turn the spaghetti over, so that the top side of the pasta is now simmering on the bottom of the pan. Repeat this process until the pasta is al dente. The spaghetti should be crispy and slightly browned, but not burned!

Finely chop the parsley and sprinkle over the plated pasta portions.

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**OUR TIP** Even though it appears easy to make, this recipe requires your undivided attention and careful handling of the pasta. The pasta should not be moved too often, or it won't be able to steep and soak up the flavors. This dish pairs well with a Sangiovese from the Marche region, with its aromas of red fruits such as blackberries and fresh plums and firm but soft tannins.

