# Clam Pasta With White Wine and Garlic



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**Ready In** 1 hr 30 mins

**Rating** ★★★★☆ (54)

This recipe was created specifically for foraged clams, which are bigger and gnarlier than the neat littlenecks or cockles you can buy. Here, they're steamed in wine separately from the pasta, then the steaming liquid is used as the foundation of the sauce. As an added benefit, you can do most of the work in advance. The number of clams is flexible here. For a well-flavored dish, use two dozen larger clams (chowder clams, big cherrystones) or three dozen small clams (littlenecks, smaller cherrystones or cockles). But feel free to use more clams if you have them (or fewer if you don't). Clams vary widely in their inherent saltiness, so don't salt the clam pasta until just before serving. It might not need any extra once you've combined the clams with pasta that's been cooked in salt water.

## INGREDIENTS

**Yield:** 4 to 6 servings

Fine sea salt or table salt

2 to 3 dozen clams, well scrubbed under running water

Dry white wine, as needed for steaming the clams

1 pound long pasta, such as linguine or spaghetti

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

6 to 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper, plus more to taste

## PREPARATION

**Step 1**

Fill a large bowl with cold, salted water. Add the clams and let them sit in the fridge for at least 30 minutes and up to a couple of hours to purge any grit. Drain and rinse.

**Step 2**

Pour about ¼ inch of wine into a large skillet or pot with a well-fitting lid and bring to a simmer. Add the clams and cover the pot. Let cook until the clams open, 5 to 10 minutes (or up to 15 minutes for huge ones). Use tongs to transfer them to a large bowl as they open.

**Step 3**

Pour the clam broth remaining in the bottom of the pan

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 lemon, zested and juiced, plus more to taste

½ cup finely chopped fresh parsley, mint, basil or chives

through a fine mesh strainer and reserve. When the clams are cool enough to handle, pluck them from their shells (discard shells). Chop up any clams that are larger than about an inch. (Clams and broth can be prepared a day ahead.) Cover and refrigerate until ready to cook the pasta.

**Step 4**

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil for the pasta. Cook the pasta according to the package directions until about a minute shy of al dente. Drain.

**Step 5**

Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add the oil, letting it heat until shimmering, then add the garlic and cook, stirring, until pale golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the red pepper and cook for 30 seconds more. Add ½ cup of the strained clam broth and let simmer until the mixture reduces by half. Stir in butter and simmer, stirring, until the butter is melted.

**Step 6**

Add the reserved clams and drained pasta to the pot. Cook, tossing gently, until a light sauce tightens around the pasta. If the pasta looks dry, add a little more clam broth. Toss in the lemon zest, lemon juice and fresh herbs. Taste and add more lemon juice and zest, salt or crushed red pepper to taste before serving.

**TIP**

*You can substitute 2 (5- to 6-ounce) cans of clams for the fresh (skip Steps 2 and 3), and use the clam juice in the can instead of the clam broth. You might have to season with extra salt, since canned clams tend to be less salty than fresh clams, and extra lemon since you won't have the acidity from the wine.*

Private Notes