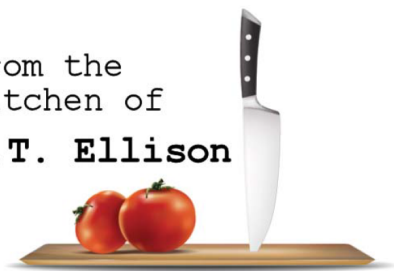


From the  
kitchen of

**J.T. Ellison**



## Ingredients

- ✓ 1/2 pound long pasta \*
- ✓ 1 1/2 cups freshly grated Pecorino Romano
- ✓ 1 to 1 1/2 tsp. of freshly ground black pepper
- ✓ 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil (or butter)
- ✓ Sea salt

\* Tonnarelli is the traditional noodle, but I use gluten-free fettuccine and it works perfectly.

## Cacio e Pepe

(serves 2 as a full meal, 4 as a side dish)

There is nothing I like more than carbonara – Italian bacon and eggs – but the caloric load is huge. I get too full, and it's a complicated timing dish. Also, raw eggs freak me out. So when I found this awesome recipe for a slightly lighter version that is a typical Roman dish, I jumped in with both feet. It's so simple that it's become a weekly thing around Casa Ellison. The trick is good cheese – the cheap stuff won't melt properly – and heating the pepper in the oil before you combine. All you need is some good Romano, some good noodles, and bam – an incredibly tasty, filling, hearty dish.

## Directions

1. Grate the cheese and grind the pepper.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Once it starts to boil, add a generous quantity of sea salt, five or six teaspoons is a good amount. Add the pasta to the boiling water.
3. While the pasta is cooking, heat the oil (or butter) in a separate pan, one that's large enough to eventually hold all of the ingredients, including the pasta.
4. Pour the pepper in the hot oil and stir around for about a minute or two.
5. When the pasta is a bit firmer than al dente (about two to three minutes before it would normally reach al dente), scoop out one to 1 1/2 cups of the pasta water (the extra 1/2 cup is for fine tuning, if necessary).
6. Strain the pasta and pour one cup of the hot pasta water into the pan with the oil and pepper. It should start boiling, or at least simmering, fairly quickly.
7. Pour in the pasta. Stir around and add an additional 1/2 cup of pasta water (a little more if it seems too dry.) Simmer the pasta for a total of about 2 minutes and then remove from heat.
8. In the same pan, while still hot, dump in the grated Pecorino Romano, and stir vigorously until you've achieved a creamy consistency. Divide and serve.

Chef's note: You can add some crisp pancetta and you'll never know you aren't eating carbonara...

\*Adapted from The Takeout

As seen in J.T. Ellison's newsletter. For more recipes, visit [JTEllison.com/Recipes](http://JTEllison.com/Recipes). Want a wine to go with your recipe? Check out J.T.'s wine blog at [TheWineVixen.com](http://TheWineVixen.com).