



## SPAGHETTI NAPOLITAN (JAPANESE KETCHUP PASTA)

*Recipe serves 3-4.*

### INGREDIENTS

5 strips bacon, cut into 1" pieces (~125g)

2 small red bell peppers, thinly sliced (~200g or 2 cups) (see recipe note 1)

½ white onion, thinly sliced (50g or 1 cup)

3 garlic cloves, minced

8 large cremini or white mushrooms, very thinly sliced (~325g or 4-5 cups)

½ C ketchup (note 2)

1 tbsp soy sauce

¾ lb dried spaghetti (340g) (note 3)

### ***To serve:***

Tabasco sauce

Grated Parmigiano Reggiano (or Kraft parmesan)

### METHOD

Fill a large pot with 3 quarts of water for cooking pasta and start bringing to a boil.

Separately, place bacon pieces into (unheated) Dutch oven or heavy-bottom pot and set it over medium heat to slowly cook the bacon, stirring occasionally. When bacon is crisped and most of the fat rendered out, scoop bacon out and drain on paper towels. Pour off some of the bacon fat, leaving about 3 tablespoons in the pan.



Add sliced onions to bacon fat and sauté for a minute. Add garlic and sauté another 30 seconds. Add mushrooms (all at once or in two batches if pot is crowded) and sauté to cook down, increasing heat to evaporate if a lot of water is drawn out of the mushrooms. Once softened and moisture has mostly evaporated from the mushrooms, season with salt and stir.

At around this point, I start cooking my pasta for 10 minutes (time yourself based on your specific package directions for al dente). Add 2 tablespoons of kosher salt or amount needed for water to “taste as salty as the sea”. Cook pasta according to package direction for al dente.

Add peppers along with sprinkle of salt and sauté briefly until they just lose their crispness but are not soggy (we prefer the red peppers to still have a bit of firmness rather than being mushy at the end).

Add ketchup and soy sauce. Allow mixture to cook a good 5 minutes to deepen the flavour of the ketchup. Don't rush this part as it makes all the difference to the final taste! Stir frequently since mixture is on the drier side at this stage.

Add 1 cup of pasta water to the pot. Use tongs to transfer cooked pasta directly over into sauce and mix thoroughly to coat. Cook one minute more to absorb the sauce and thicken a bit. Add splashes more pasta water if needed to adjust consistency. Add reserved bacon and give everything a final toss. Serve with sprinkles of cheese and tabasco sauce, to taste.

#### RECIPE NOTES:

1. **Bell pepper type:** Green bell peppers are also often used in this dish so feel free to sub if you prefer their taste over the red variety. The final dish will be a little less sweet as well.
2. **Ketchup:** I use organic Heinz (not sponsored) because it uses organic cane sugar rather than High Fructose Corn Syrup. Feel free to use your favourite at home, including sugar-free varieties.
3. **Pasta amount:** Use up to a full pound (454g) of dried pasta to stretch the meal out to feed more. The sauce is definitely tasty enough to do that!

*Recipe adapted from The Gaijin Cookbook by Ivan Orkin and Chris Ying.*

*Let me know what you think of this recipe in the blog comments. And if you make it, tag me on [Instagram](#) so I can see!*