



Show Off Like a Chef

....with Holly Hearn

VENISON SPAGHETTI

Total Time: 30 minutes

It's unbelievable to think how fall is already knocking at the door! With hunting season, school back in full swing, and many activities, everyone gets stretched a little thin. Trying new recipes or experimenting in the kitchen can feel daunting, so I'm always looking for ways to spice up weeknight staples. In my house, nothing says weeknight staple like venison spaghetti. It's easy to make and comes together in less than 30 minutes—a must for a fast and easy weeknight meal.

While there are hundreds of recipes for meat sauce, few genuinely walk you through how to elevate this weeknight staple into a culinary experience. Here are my top tips for taking this classic dish to the next level:

Cook Your Pasta to a True Al Dente

Achieving a perfect al dente texture means

cooking the pasta about two minutes less than the package instructions suggest. Al dente pasta should have a slight firmness to the bite, offering a satisfying texture that holds up beautifully to a hearty sauce. This texture enhances the overall mouthfeel and prevents the pasta from becoming mushy when combined with the sauce.

Add Fresh Ingredients to Your Favorite Jarred Sauce

I love adding fresh tomatoes, garlic, and herbs to a jarred sauce. These additions elevate the freshness and give the illusion that the sauce is made from scratch, enhancing flavor and aroma.

Incorporate Pasta Water into Your Sauce

Adding a bit of reserved pasta water to your sauce helps thicken it and allows the sauce to cling better. The starchy water acts as a binding

agent, giving the sauce a silky texture that coats every strand of spaghetti.

Season Your Meat Thoughtfully

Before adding it to the sauce, season your venison with salt, tomato paste, and a good dose of Italian seasoning. Tomato paste adds a rich, concentrated flavor, while Italian seasoning infuses the meat with aromatic herbs, building layers of flavor that enhance the overall depth of the sauce.

Add a Touch of Lemon Peel

Add a bit of lemon peel before you pull the sauce off the heat. This brightens the sauce and adds a subtle, unexpected zing that separates your dish.

These tips inspire you to elevate and turn your classic spaghetti into something extraordinary. Whether you're cooking for family or friends,

these simple steps will make your weeknight venison spaghetti a memorable meal that's sure to impress. *For more tips, tricks, and recipes and to keep up with my hunting, fishing, shooting, and cooking adventures, follow me on Gamegirlgourmet's Instagram page and sign up for my monthly newsletter at gamegirlgourmet.com/*

INGREDIENTS

One jar of your favorite tomato sauce
1 pound of ground venison
Five fresh tomatoes
Six cloves of garlic
3 tsp of tomato paste
1 tbsp of olive oil
1 tbsp of Italian seasoning
Lemon peel
1 pound of pasta

INSTRUCTION:

1. Cook the Pasta:

Cook the pasta according to the package instructions, but reduce the cooking time by 2 minutes to achieve a firm, al dente texture. Drain the pasta and set it aside.

2. Cook the Venison and Vegetables

Heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add the ground venison and season with salt, Italian seasoning, and tomato paste. Add the tomatoes and cook until they release their juices, then add the garlic and sauté for 20 seconds until fragrant.

3. Combine with Sauce

Once the vegetables and meat are cooked, reduce the heat to low and add the jar of pasta sauce. Bring the sauce to a simmer, stirring to combine all the ingredients.

4. Finish with Lemon Peel

Add the peel from a lemon and simmer the sauce for 1 minute. Remove the lemon peel, then add the cooked pasta back into the pan, tossing to coat the pasta with the sauce. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese and garnish with parsley. ■

Bon
Appetit!

Contact

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