

Child Nutrition & Wellness
Kansas State Department of Education
Presents



**Whole Grain Pasta
Shapes and Numbers
Lesson Plan**

This class was developed by Child Nutrition & Wellness, Kansas State Department of Education. Class content and activities were adapted from the following sources:

- *Go Whole Grains*, Culinary Course, KSDE
- *The Whole Grain Train – Get On Board*, KSDE
- *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals*, National Food Service Institute, The University of Mississippi
- USDA/FNS, *Whole Grains: Tips and Guidance for Moms (4-19-12)*
- TeamNutrition.usda.gov, *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Homes*

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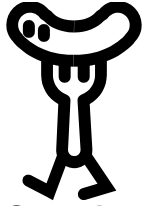
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Whole Grain Pasta Shapes and Counting

Live It Learn It Lesson Plan



Objective: Children will use dry pasta to learn shapes and practice counting.

Supplies Needed:

- Several shapes of pasta – macaroni, penne, rotini, noodles, spaghetti.
- Cupcake papers with number on the inside from 1-6.
- Glue or glue sticks if making pasta art
- Ingredients for pasta salad (optional)
- Several large hard plastic spoons
- Metal cooking kettle or play plastic kettle
- Take home message handout

Listen and Learn Activity: Pasta Shapes

- Say: Whole grain pasta is made from whole grain flour, enriched flour, water and sometimes eggs.
- Say: Whole grain rich pasta helps us get half our grains from whole grains.
- Say: Whole grain pasta comes in many shapes and sizes. There are over 600 different shapes of pasta worldwide.
 - Show examples of several shapes of whole grain pasta.
 - Let children touch different shapes of pasta.
- Pasta Salad Activity (optional)
 - Prepare beforehand for about 15 children:
 - 2 cups of cooked whole grain pasta marinated in light dressing
 - 1 cup of broccoli flowers
 - ½ cup of shredded carrots
 - 1 cup of chopped tomato or grape tomatoes cut in half
 - Say: Many shapes and colors of vegetables can be added to whole grain pasta to make pasta salad.
 - What green vegetable can we add to the salad? Broccoli
 - What orange vegetable can we add to the salad? Carrots
 - What red vegetable can we add to the salad? Tomato
 - Mix the vegetables into the salad. Show children the finished product.

Try and New Taste Activity: Tasting pasta as salad.

- Portion each child about 2 tablespoons of pasta salad in a small cup.
- If not using the Pasta Salad Activity, cooked pasta with red sauce or cheese could be used for the taste test activity.

Hands-On Activity: Using pasta to count and learn numbers.

- Prior to the activity, write numbers in the bottom of cupcake papers appropriate for age group.
- Provide dry pasta pieces for children to count.
- Demonstrate counting out 6 pieces of pasta and placing them in the cupcake paper labeled “6”.
- Direct children to place the number of pasta pieces in each cupcake paper that matches the number at the bottom.
- Optional: Use other activities for counting pieces of pasta individually or as a group.

Hands and Feet Physical Activity: Carry pasta to the cooking kettle relay.

- Prior to the relay or race, gather pasta pieces that can be carried on a large plastic spoon such as macaroni or penne pasta or rotini. Gather one large plastic spoon for each line of children and one large plastic or metal pot. Place pot a few feet in front of where children will form lines.
- Line children up in lines with one plastic spoon per line.
- To race to the cooking kettle, children will balance one piece of pasta on a large hard plastic spoon and carry it to the kettle where they will pour the piece of pasta off the spoon into the kettle and carry the spoon back to the next child in line.

Take Home Message: Whole Grain Pasta.

Adapting the Lesson Plan for CACFP Adults

Supplies:

- Whole Grain Pasta Take Home Message
- Cooked whole grain pasta marinated in low fat dressing
- Bowls and forks or spoons
- Serving dishes and serving spoons
- Assorted chopped vegetables for toppings for the marinated WG pasta – examples:
 - Chopped broccoli
 - Grape tomatoes or chopped tomatoes
 - Chopped bell peppers
 - Chopped onion or green onion
 - Shredded carrots
 - Diced celery
- 2-3 packages of whole grain pasta with varying shapes
- Glue and heavy construction paper or small sheets of poster paper

Pasta Salad Taste-Test Buffet

- Cook and marinate whole grain pasta prior to class. Process vegetables prior to class and place in individual bowls with spoons.
- Prepare enough pasta for approximately ½ cup per participant.
- Prepare enough processed raw vegetables for approximately 2 tablespoons or each vegetable per participant.

Listen and Learn

- Review take home message information with participants adding additional fun facts if desired.
- Pass around 2-3 boxes/packages of different shapes of whole grain pasta for participants to read labels and ingredient lists.

Hands-On Activity - Pasta art

- Provide each participant with a square of heavy construction paper or poster paper, glue and 1-2 handfuls of assorted dry pasta shapes.
- Encourage participants to use creativity in creating a pasta picture.

Take Home Message – Whole Grain Pasta



Culinary Principles: Basic Principles of Preparing Pasta

Basic Principles of Preparing Pasta

Pasta is a general name for a simple dough mixture made from hard wheat flour and water. Hard wheat is high in protein and gluten strength. The dough is like a paste that is rolled thin and then shaped in many different ways. Pasta can be purchased fresh, frozen, or dry. Schools usually purchase dry pasta. Lasagna noodles are available frozen for use from the frozen state. Filled pastas, such as ravioli and tortellini, are often purchased frozen. To some extent, one pasta can be substituted for another. However, most recipes suggest one or more pasta shapes that are appropriate for the sauce or other ingredients in the recipe.

Pasta Shapes

There are hundreds of shapes and sizes of pasta with each shape used for different preparations based on how the sauce will cling, the texture desired, or how the product will be used. For example:

- Pasta shapes with holes or ridges, such as wagon wheels or rotini, are perfect for chunkier sauces.
- Thin, delicate pastas, such as angel hair or vermicelli, are better served with light, thin sauces.
- Thicker pasta shapes, such as fettuccine, work well with heavier sauces.
- Very small pasta shapes, such as alphabet shapes and acini di pepe, are good for soups.

Flavored pasta is available in a variety of shapes in both the dried and fresh forms. Vegetable ingredients are added to pasta to provide both color and flavor. An example of flavored pasta is spinach noodles that are green. Follow the package directions for cooking flavored pastas.

The flavored pastas are delicious and also make pasta dishes more attractive because of the color.

Cooking time depends on the shape of the pasta.

It is important to be familiar with different shapes of pasta so cooking times can be adjusted. The larger and fuller the pasta shape, the longer the cooking time. Most pasta recipes specify cooking times for pasta cooked al dente, tender but firm. Al dente is an Italian phrase that means “to the tooth.” Some of the pasta shapes and cooking times are shown in the Cooking Chart for Various Pasta Shapes. Just seeing this chart on cooking times helps to emphasize how important it is to follow the recipe and cook pasta the right way.

Pasta gets bigger and heavier when it is cooked.

Generally, pasta doubles or triples in weight when it is cooked. Likewise, the volume increases two to two and one-half times during cooking. So, if 1 gallon of dry pasta is measured, the cooked pasta would measure 2–3 gallons. Follow the recipe to cook the amount needed.

Follow the recipe to cook pasta.

The general rule for cooking pasta in boiling water is for 1 pound of pasta, use 1 gallon of water, 1 teaspoon of salt, and 1 teaspoon of oil. For 100 servings of spaghetti, 6 gallons of water, 2 tablespoons of salt, and 2 tablespoons of oil are needed to cook 6 pounds of dried spaghetti.



Culinary Principles, *continued*

When pasta is to be used as an ingredient in a recipe that will be cooked more, like macaroni and cheese, it should be slightly under cooked. This would mean reducing the cooking time by about 2 minutes.

Pasta that is not cooked enough is tough and chewy. Pasta that is overcooked is soft and pasty. When overcooked pasta is combined with a sauce, it often breaks apart.

Handle pasta the right way after it is cooked. Like most foods, pasta is best when it is cooked and served right away. However, it is sometimes necessary to cook it ahead and hold it until time for service. Some suggestions for holding pasta are

1. When pasta is to be served immediately – drain, add the sauce, and serve.
2. When pasta is to be held a short time for service later – drain, toss with a small amount of oil to prevent sticking, cover, and hold in the warmer.
3. When pasta is to be served as part of a salad – cook the pasta a day ahead so it will be chilled when combined with all the other salad ingredients. Drain, cover with cold water just long enough to cool. The pasta does not need refrigeration for the short time it is cooling in the water. When pasta is cool, drain the water, and toss pasta lightly with oil to prevent sticking or drying out. Store covered in the refrigerator. Do not combine hot pasta with cold ingredients for a salad.
4. When pasta is cooked a day ahead for service in a heated dish, drain, and cover with cold water just long enough to cool. The pasta does not need refrigeration for the short time it is cooling in the water. When pasta is cool, drain the water, and toss lightly with oil to prevent sticking or drying out. Store covered in the refrigerator. When it is time to use the pasta, immerse it in boiling

water until just heated through. Drain immediately and use according to the recipe. The pasta should not be cooked more, just heated to serving temperature.

5. When pasta is to be used in a cooked dish, slightly undercook the pasta.



Cooking Chart for Various Pasta Shapes

Pasta Name	Shape of Pasta	Approximate Cooking Time for al dente
Lasagna		15 Minutes
Bow ties		11 minutes
Wagon wheels		11 minutes
Linguine		10 minutes
Rigatoni		10 minutes
Spaghetti		10 minutes
Ziti		10 minutes
Fettuccine		8 minutes
Rotini		8 minutes
Elbow macaroni		6 minutes
Noodles		6 minutes

Source: Adapted from Molt, M. (2006), *Food For Fifty* (p. 561). Pearson, Prentice-Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.



Culinary Principles: Basic Principles of Preparing Rice

Basic Principles of Preparing Rice

Types of Rice

Schools may purchase different kinds of rice or receive different varieties as USDA-donated foods. The rice package will state the kind of rice. There are many varieties of rice that differ in the size and shape of the grain. When long grain rice is cooked, it is fluffy and the grains separate easily. Short grain rices are sticky and plump when cooked. Brown rice still has a bran layer and so it takes longer to cook. For more information about varieties of rice, review the Cooking Chart for Varieties of Rice.

Many different varieties of rice can be enriched. Enriched rice means that certain vitamins and iron have been added to the rice.

Follow the recipe for the correct amount of liquid for the kind of rice and culinary technique to be used. Follow the directions on the recipe or the package of rice. It is not necessary to rinse most rice as it is generally clean. The standard ratio for cooking rice is two parts water to one part rice. However, follow the recipe exactly.

Instead of seasoning rice and other grains with butter or margarine, consider these options:

- The flavor of rice can be enhanced by using chicken, beef, or vegetable stock as the cooking liquid.
- Added ingredients for good flavor include onions, vegetable and fruit juices, garlic, herbs, and spices.
- Select a recipe that includes new and different flavors.

Follow the recipe for the correct cooking time. Rice can be cooked in the steamer or in the oven if a steamer is not available. Cooking times vary with the culinary technique used. Follow the recipe for a quality product. Rice that is overcooked becomes mushy or sticky and the grains cling together. Overcooking means the starch takes in too much water and the grain begins to lose its shape.

After rice is cooked, it becomes highly perishable. It should be served immediately, kept heated, or be chilled in shallow pans and kept refrigerated until time for use.



Cooking Chart for Varieties of Rice

Variety	Description	Approximate Cooking Time (Actual cooking times vary with the culinary technique used.)
Brown Rice	Least processed form of rice; contains bran and inner germ layer; available as short, medium, long grain varieties, or parboiled; may be enriched	50-60 minutes
White Rice, long-grain	Polished grains, usually enriched; cooks up firm and fluffy	25-30 minutes
White Rice, medium-grain	Polished grains, usually enriched; cooks up tender and moist with grains tending to stick together	25-30 minutes
White Rice, Short-grain	Polished grains, usually enriched; cooks up very tender and sticky; good for sushi and rice pudding; high starch content	25-30 minutes
Converted Rice	Parboiled to remove the surface starch, polished grains; may be enriched; cooks more slowly than regular milled white rice; holds well after cooking	30-40 minutes
Italian Short-Grain Rice	Short grains, polished; an example is Arborio which is very sticky, with a white color and mild flavor; used for risotto	15-20 minutes
Wild Rice	Long, dark-brown seed that is prepared in the same way as rice; has a nuttier flavor and chewier texture than traditional rice; should be rinsed	35-60 minutes



Culinary Technique Boiling Pasta

- 1. Measure the water in a steam-jacketed kettle.**
Basic recipe for pasta is 1 pound pasta, 1 gallon water, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon oil. Increase all ingredients based on the number of pounds of pasta to be cooked.
- 2. Bring water to a rolling boil and add pasta gradually. Stir to separate the pieces.**
When cooking filled pastas like ravioli, add to boiling water and then gently simmer so filled pasta pieces are not broken.
- 3. Return water to a boil and begin timing. Cook uncovered until the pasta is al dente.**
Do not stir the pasta while it is cooking. Be careful not to overcook. If pasta is to be used in a recipe that will be cooked again, cooking can be reduced by about 2 minutes.
- 4. When pasta is done, drain immediately in a colander. Do not rinse pasta that is to be served hot.**
A small amount of oil can be tossed with the pasta to prevent sticking.
- 5. Serve hot pasta immediately.** To cool pasta, cover with cold water until chilled. Drain, cover, and refrigerate until needed.
- 6. Pre-cooked pasta can be reheated by quickly immersing in boiling water.** Do not allow to cook. Drain. Add sauce or seasonings and serve immediately.



Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals

Try these USDA Recipes that include this Culinary Technique

Chicken or Turkey Noodles	D-17
Ground Beef and Macaroni	D-22
Lasagna and Ground Beef	D-25
Macaroni and Cheese	D-26
Spaghetti and Meat Sauce	D-35
Tuna and Noodles	D-37
Chicken and Tomato Bake	D-41
Chicken Tetrazzini	D-42
New Macaroni and Cheese	D-51
Macaroni Salad	E-7
Pasta Salad	E-8



Culinary Technique **Cooking Rice in a Steamer or Oven**

1. **Measure or weigh the amount of rice to be cooked.**
Pour into 12 x 20 x 2-inch pans.
Use no more than 3 pounds of rice per pan.
2. **Bring the liquid to a boil in a separate container. If additional ingredients are to be used in the rice, add them to the liquid. Pour the boiling liquid over the rice.**
For added ingredients such as sautéed onions, garlic, celery, carrots, or mushroom, use a maximum of 3 cups of added ingredients for each 1 pound of rice. For each 1 pound of rice, use 1 quart of water or stock.
3. **Cover tightly with aluminum foil and either steam or bake in the oven.** Times will vary depending on the variety of rice used.
The times shown below are for white rice, long grain (regular or parboiled), or medium grain.
 - Compartment steamer** – steam at 5 lb pressure for 25 or 30 minutes
 - Conventional oven** – bake at 350 °F for 25–30 minutes
 - Convection oven** – bake at 350 °F for 20–25 minutes
4. **Remove from heat and let rice remain covered for 5–10 minutes.** Fluff rice with a fork before serving.
5. **To hold rice before serving, cover tightly with aluminum foil and hold above 140 °F in the warmer.**



Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals

Try these USDA Recipes that include this Culinary Technique

Cooking Rice	B-3
Fried Rice	B-10
Spanish Rice	B-17
Orange Rice Pilaf	B-21
Brown Rice Pilaf	B-22
Rice-Vegetable Casserole	B-23
Rice Pudding	C-15
Orange Rice Pudding	C-33
Ground Beef and Spanish Rice	D-23
Broccoli, Cheese, and Rice Casserole	I-8



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Whole Grain Pasta Take Home Message (Child Care)

Dear Parents,

We learned how whole grain rich pasta comes in many shapes and sizes and we used pasta to practice counting. We even balanced pasta on a spoon as a race to the cooking kettle. **We learned that whole grain rich pasta contributes to half of grains as whole grains in our diets.**

A healthy diet is built on foods from the grains group. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends half of grains each day be whole grains. Pastas sold retail can be whole grain or whole grain rich. Whole grain rich pasta will list whole wheat flour as the first ingredient.

Whole Grain-Rich Pastas are:

- A good source of complex carbohydrates.
- Naturally low in fat.
- Naturally low in sodium.
- A source of B vitamins.
- A source of minerals including iron.

Some people believe that pasta is fattening which is not true. High fat sauces added to pastas do add extra calories. There are many new and interesting recipes using pasta that are great-tasting and moderate in calories.

Pasta Fun Facts:

- Thomas Jefferson is credited with bringing the first “maccoroni” machine to America in 1789 when he returned home after serving as ambassador to France.
- A bushel of wheat makes about 42 pounds of pasta.
- There are more than 600 pasta shapes produced worldwide.

Pasta is a general name for a simple dough mixture made from hard wheat and water. Hard wheat is high in protein and gluten strength. The dough is like a paste that is rolled thin and then shaped in many different ways. Pasta can be purchased fresh, frozen or dried.

Larger fuller pastas take longer to cook. Recipes and package direction provide cooking instructions for types and shapes of pasta. Pasta is cooked to al dente, tender but firm. Al dente is an Italian phrase that means “to the tooth.” Pasta that is not cooked long enough is tough and chewy. Pasta cooked too long is soft and pasty and often breaks apart when added to sauce. Generally pasta doubles or triples in weight when cooked and volume increases 2-2/12 times the size of dry pasta.

- Slightly undercook pasta that will be added to a cooked dish like macaroni and cheese.
- When pasta is made into a salad, cook ahead and chill before combining with salad ingredients.

(Adapted from: “Culinary Techniques for Heathy School Meals”, National Food Service Institute, The University of Mississippi)

Make Easy Meals with Whole Grain Pasta:

- Dry different shapes of whole grain pasta with red or low fat white sauce.
- Add chopped vegetables and cooked poultry to cooked whole grain pasta and low fat dressing to make a pasta salad supper.
- Substitute whole grain rich macaroni for refined macaroni when making macaroni and cheese.

Chic' Penne

TeamNutrition.usda.gov

**Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Homes
(makes 6 1-1/2 cup servings)**

Ingredients

3 cups Penne pasta, whole-wheat, dry (12 oz)
1 tsp Granulated garlic
2 cups Fresh broccoli florets
1 cup Cooked diced chicken, ½" pieces (4 oz)
1 ½ cups Fat-free half and half
1 Tbsp Enriched all-purpose flour
1/8 cup Low-sodium chicken broth
1 tsp Salt
½ tsp Ground black pepper
½ cup Reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded (2 oz)
½ cup Low-fat mozzarella cheese, low-moisture, part-skim, shredded (2 oz)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. In a large pot, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Gradually stir in pasta and return to a boil. Cook uncovered for 8-10 minutes or until tender. Do not overcook. Drain well. Toss pasta with ½ teaspoon garlic.
3. Fill a medium pot with water and bring to a boil. Add broccoli florets and cook for 5 minutes. Drain well. Sprinkle with remaining garlic.
4. Transfer pasta and broccoli to a medium casserole dish (about 8" x 11") coated with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken. Mix well.
5. In a small mixing bowl, mix ½ cup half and half with flour. Whisk to remove lumps.
6. In a medium skillet, heat chicken broth, salt, pepper, and remaining half and half. Stir constantly. Stir in half and half/flour mixture. Stir constantly and bring to a boil.
7. Reduce heat to low. Stir frequently for 5 minutes. Sauce will thicken. Add cheese and stir until cheese melts. Remove from heat. Pour sauce over broccoli/pasta mixture.
8. Cover casserole dish with lid or with foil. Bake at 350 °F for 8 minutes. Heat to an internal temperature of 165 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds (use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature). Remove from oven.

Whole Grain Pasta Take Home Message (Adult Care)

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- Slightly undercook pasta that will be added to a cooked dish like macaroni and cheese.
- When pasta is made into a salad, cook ahead and chill before combining with salad ingredients.

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(makes 6 1-1/2 cup servings)

Ingredients

3 cups Penne pasta, whole-wheat, dry (12 oz)
1 tsp Granulated garlic
2 cups Fresh broccoli florets
1 cup Cooked diced chicken, ½" pieces (4 oz)
1 ½ cups Fat-free half and half
1 Tbsp Enriched all-purpose flour
1/8 cup Low-sodium chicken broth
1 tsp Salt
½ tsp Ground black pepper
½ cup Reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded (2 oz)
½ cup Low-fat mozzarella cheese, low-moisture, part-skim, shredded (2 oz)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. In a large pot, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Gradually stir in pasta and return to a boil. Cook uncovered for 8-10 minutes or until tender. Do not overcook. Drain well. Toss pasta with ½ teaspoon garlic.
3. Fill a medium pot with water and bring to a boil. Add broccoli florets and cook for 5 minutes. Drain well. Sprinkle with remaining garlic.
4. Transfer pasta and broccoli to a medium casserole dish (about 8" x 11") coated with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken. Mix well.
5. In a small mixing bowl, mix ½ cup half and half with flour. Whisk to remove lumps.
6. In a medium skillet, heat chicken broth, salt, pepper, and remaining half and half. Stir constantly. Stir in half and half/flour mixture. Stir constantly and bring to a boil.
7. Reduce heat to low. Stir frequently for 5 minutes. Sauce will thicken. Add cheese and stir until cheese melts. Remove from heat. Pour sauce over broccoli/pasta mixture.
8. Cover casserole dish with lid or with foil. Bake at 350 °F for 8 minutes. Heat to an internal temperature of 165 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds (use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature). Remove from oven.