



Blue Crab Spaghettini

by **Rocco DiSpirito**



This once-a-year Christmas Eve pasta is built for patience and payoff. Whole blue crabs are sautéed until blushed, then slow-simmered into a silky, deeply aromatic sauce that captures pure ocean sweetness. It's a family tradition — not a shortcut dish — and that's the point.

Prep Time:

30 Minutes

Cook Time

2 Hours

Serves:

10 Servings

Level:

Advanced

Ingredients

Crabs & Base

- 12–14 whole blue crabs, cleaned and cut into 1-inch pieces
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 10–12 cloves garlic, sliced
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups diced celery
- 2 large yellow onions, diced
- 2 large leeks, cleaned and sliced
- 4–5 fresh chilies (Fresno or Calabrian), sliced
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups dry white wine
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry vermouth
- 2 cans (28 oz each) peeled whole tomatoes, crushed or milled
- 3–4 cups water, as needed
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt & black pepper

To Serve

- $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs spaghetti, thin linguine, or angel hair
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Chopped parsley
- Chili flakes or lemon zest (optional)

Instructions

Step 1:

Heat olive oil in a large pot. Add crab pieces and sauté until shells turn bright red. Season lightly and remove.

Step 2:

Add garlic, celery, onions, and leeks. Cook until softened. Add chilies.

Step 3:

Return crab to pot. Deglaze with white wine and vermouth, scraping browned bits.

Step 4:

Add tomatoes, water, bay leaves, salt, and pepper.

Step 5:

Simmer gently for $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 hours.

Step 6:

Remove bay leaves and shells. Pass sauce through a food mill until silky.

Step 7:

Cook pasta just until al dente

Serving & Finishing

- Toss directly with sauce.
- Finish with olive oil, parsley, and optional chili flakes or lemon zest.