



## Pasta with Ham, Chestnuts, and Shallots

Serves 4

For this dish, you can use any type of pasta, but I love how shapes like orecchiette (meaning little ears) or small shells catch pieces of ham and chestnuts inside them.

Don't bring out a fresh bottle of wine to make this dish, but if you have one open, a splash of dry white helps brighten it up. (I've enjoyed this pasta made with wine and without.)

2 extra-large **shallots**

6 to 8 ounces leftover **ham** or thickly sliced deli ham

One 3.5 to 4.5-ounce bag roasted and peeled **chestnuts**

¼ cup loosely packed **parsley** leaves (optional)

12 ounces **orecchiette** or **small shell pasta**

Salt and freshly ground pepper

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup dry **white wine** or vermouth (optional)

¼ cup packed freshly grated **Parmigiano-Reggiano** cheese (about 1 ounce)

## Boil the water and prep the ingredients

Bring a large pot of water to a boil.

Cut the **shallots** in half lengthwise. Remove the outer papery skin, then thinly slice crosswise. (You should have 1 to 1 ½ cups of shallots, but if it's more or less, it will be ok.)

Cut the **ham** into bite-sized pieces. (You should have 1 to 1 ½ cups.)

Roughly chop the **chestnuts**.

Finely chop the **parsley**.

## Cook the pasta

When the water comes to a boil, add a few four-finger pinches of **salt**. Add the **pasta** and stir once or twice to ensure it doesn't stick. Cook until just al dente, which is usually about 2 minutes shy of the cooking time on the package.

Grab a mug with a large handle, scoop out some of the pasta-cooking water, and reserve.

Drain the pasta.

## Meanwhile, cook the shallots

As the pasta cooks, heat the **olive oil** in a deep skillet over medium heat. Add the **shallots** and ½ **teaspoon salt** and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are very soft and starting to brown, about 7 minutes.

If you're using the **wine**, add it and cook, stirring, until it's mostly evaporated, 1 to 2 minutes.

## Finish the pasta

Add the **ham** and **chestnuts** to the skillet and cook, stirring, just to heat through, about 30 seconds.

Add the **pasta** and a splash of the **pasta water** and cook until the pasta is incorporated with the rest of the ingredients. Add the **Parmigiano cheese** and a bit more water and cook, stirring and tossing the pasta, until it's coated in a creamy-seeming sauce. (Any time the pasta starts to feel like it's sticking to the pan, add a little more pasta water.)

Taste and season with more **salt**, if desired, along with a few grinds of **pepper**.

Sprinkle the pasta with the **parsley** if you're using it, stir again, and serve.

## The short version

- Thinly slice the shallots and cook until very soft. Add some wine if you're using it. Add the roughly chopped ham and chestnuts, then the cooked pasta and toss.
- Add the cheese and some pasta water and toss until creamy. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

## Fun for kids

- Ham and chestnuts are soft to cut so if you feel comfortable, kids can use a kid-safe knife to chop these.
- Spoon the pasta into bowls.

## Swaps

- Instead of pasta, make this with white beans.
- Instead of shallots, use a small red onion, quartered and thinly sliced.
- If you want to skip the shallots and onion overall, add some frozen peas with the ham to bring some sweetness.

## Did you make this recipe?

I'd love to see how it turns out! Tag me on Instagram [@kristincdonnelly](#).

And if you like this recipe, please forward it to a friend.

If your friend sent you this newsletter and you would like to receive it in your inbox, too, come join us!