

Teaching Points Summary – Chestnut Lasagne with Chestnut Mushroom Ragù and Porcini Cream Sauce

FRESH CHESTNUT PASTA DOUGH

1. Feel is Everything

- Too dry? Add a flick of water. Too sticky? Dust with flour.
- Chestnut flour hydrates fast and can become tacky after resting – adjust as needed.
- Aim for a soft, pliable ball that just pulls clean from the bowl.

2. Chestnut + 00 = Tender but Tricky

- Chestnut flour has no gluten – all structure comes from the 00.
- Use a 50/50 or 60/40 mix. Less water needed than wheat-only dough.
- Don't over-knead – you're not making bread.

3. Kneading – How Long and Why

- Knead for 6–8 minutes (longer for big batches).
- Look for a smooth, elastic dough that slowly springs back when pressed.
- 00 flour builds a soft but durable network ideal for rolling.

4. How Thin is Thin Enough?

- Don't go see-through – aim for just thinner than a coin (1–1.5 mm).
- Too thin tears in water; too thick goes chewy.
- Bear in mind that it becomes thicker during cooking

5. Easiest Shapes for Beginners

- Avoid ribbons. Start with lasagna sheets or ravioli.
- These lie flat, are easy to move, and cook evenly.

6. Moving & Storing Fresh Pasta

- Always flour your board and use a scraper to lift.
- Cut edges cling – keep shapes separate on floured trays.
- Don't hang. Dust and loosely nest or tray-layer.

7. Cooking Fresh Pasta

- Stir in the first 30 seconds to avoid sticking.
- Use a wide pot and plenty of salted boiling water.

- Don't go by float — taste for tenderness.

8. Rescue Plan

- Tears while rolling? Rest longer or roll thicker.
- Falls apart when cooking? Overcooked or too thin.

9. Freezing Fresh Pasta

- Best: cut and freeze in nests or single layers. Cook from frozen.
- OK: freeze dough ball, defrost and rest before rolling.
- Avoid: freezing cooked pasta (unless part of a finished dish).

CHESTNUT MUSHROOM RAGÙ

1. Start Light with Oil

- Oil is a vehicle, not a flavour.
- Use just enough to start browning. Too much = greasy ragù.
- Chestnut mushrooms release water – don't add more oil until that's cooked off.

2. Browning is the Meat of the Dish

- Take time to caramelize shallot, red onion, garlic, and mushrooms.
- Let them catch slightly – build fond, don't fear it.

3. Deglaze with Intention

- Use wine, porcini liquor, or stock to loosen the fond.
- This is flavour reclamation, not just pan-cleaning.

4. Balance Miso and Passata

- Miso = umami + salt. Passata = sweetness + acidity.
- Stir in miso gently, then add passata sparingly.
- You want a *coating* ragù – not a tomato sauce.

5. Moisture Management Comes from Onion

- Onions are the moisture buffer, not mushrooms.
- Cook them gently, lid on at first if needed.

PORCINI SAUCE

1. Proper Soaking & Cleaning

- Soak porcini 10–15 minutes. Lift gently – grit hides in the bottom.
- Rinse rehydrated pieces and strain liquor through muslin or a chinois.

2. Blending the Sauce

- Aim for double cream consistency – silky, not gloopy.

3. Sauce Structure is Design

- This sauce balances the dry ragù and soft pasta.
- Consider two versions:
 - One thicker to spoon under or over
 - One looser to arc around the plate



Additional Teaching Points to Include in Cook's Mind (Keystone+)



Bench Setup & Feeling Competent in the Kitchen

- **Flour the bench like you mean it, but don't overdo it.**
A gentle scatter of 00 flour is enough to start. Think of it as dusting, not blanketing.
Add flour in pinches as you work — you're watching the dough, not following a rule.
 - **Semolina for trays, not boards.**
Use semolina or fine polenta to dust cut pasta for storage. It prevents clumping and adds tooth.
On the bench, stick with 00 flour unless you know your dough well and conditions demand it.
 - **Use a bench scraper.**
It's not just for tidying — it lifts fragile pasta, portions dough cleanly, and helps you reset your surface quickly.
It becomes part of your rhythm — clean, move, glide, reset.
 - **Professional posture cues:**
Clean flour only. Dough responds to hands, not force.
Use your left hand to anchor, right to guide. Relax your shoulders.
Flour is just the whisper between you and the board.
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Cooking Sagno Sheets (or Any Broad Pasta)

- **Lift cooked pasta with a spider or slotted spoon — don't dump it.**
These are ribbons of silk, not fusilli.
 - **Toss with a splash of pasta water or oil if holding.**
Lay flat, don't pile. Cover loosely with parchment or a damp cloth if not serving immediately.
 - **Reheat gently in broth or sauce, not separately.**
Add pasta water to help sauce and starch emulsify. It's the bridge between elements.
 - **Never rinse pasta (unless making a cold dish).**
Rinsing removes surface starch — the thing that helps sauce cling.
 - **Tiny chef habits to mimic:**
Keep a pan of sauce hot and waiting. Toss pasta *into* sauce, not the other way around.
Finish with a swirl of oil or acid to brighten.
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Flour Confidence: 00 vs Bread Flour

- **00 flour ≠ bread flour.**

00 is ultra-fine and soft — made for rolling and stretching.

Bread flour is high-protein, tough, and fights back. Save it for risen doughs.

- **Use 00 flour as your base for pasta.**

Especially when blended with chestnut flour, it gives you stretch and tenderness without chew.

- **Plain flour works in a pinch, but may need:**

More kneading

Longer resting

Slight hydration adjustments