

# Comic Book Carbonara

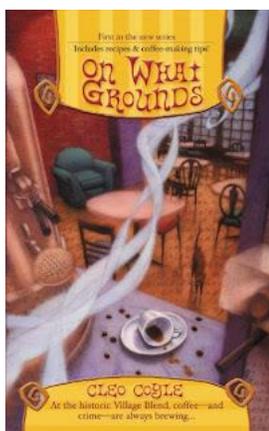
Photos (c) by Alice Alfonsi who writes [The Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) as [Cleo Coyle](#) with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

Adapted from the comic book series [American Flagg](#)

Italians make *pasta alla carbonara* using raw eggs instead of cream. The cream version is more commonly found in the US, UK, France & Spain. To each his own, as they say, and when it comes to this mutable recipe, our favorite is below.



PHOTO BY CLEO COYLE



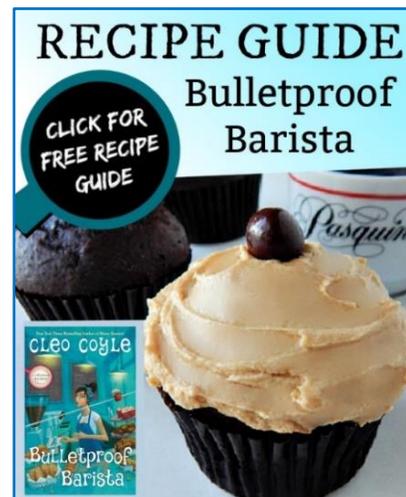
Marc and I based our spaghetti carbonara on the favorite dish of Rubin Flagg, hero of the 1980's comic book series [American Flagg](#) by Howard Chaykin. A version of this recipe appeared in the original publication of the comic (though reprint editions do not include the recipe).

In our first Coffeehouse Mystery, [On What Grounds](#), the dish also plays a diverting role when two cocky characters (a culinary student and coffee hunter) argue about the proper way to prepare it. No worries. Our intrepid amateur sleuth, master coffee roaster Clare Cosi, breaks the deadlock before cleavers are thrown. However you prepare it, Marc and I hope you will cook with love and eat with joy! ~ [Cleo](#)

- 12 – 16 ounces spaghetti** (*usually 1 package*)
- 8 ounces bacon** (*we use 5 thick-cut bacon slices*)
- 6 cloves garlic**
- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 4 tablespoons heavy cream** (*+ a tiny bit extra, just in case*)
- 1/4 cup grated Pecorino Romano (or Parmesan) cheese**
- (optional) Ground pepper to taste**

**Step 1** – Make your favorite spaghetti according to package directions. FYI - The (comic book!) colorful pasta in my pictures is Garden Delight brand from Ronzoni: semolina enriched with tomato, carrot, and spinach.

**Step 2** – While water is coming to a boil, make the sauce. Into a large skillet, slice up the bacon. We snip slices into 1/4- to 1/2-inch pieces using kitchen shears. Turn up heat to medium and begin to sweat the bacon. After a few minutes, as the fat begins to render (but long before the bacon browns or crisps), toss in the garlic.



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**Step 3** – When the bacon is browned and cooked through (but not crisp or dry), remove the garlic and drain the bacon grease out of the pan. Set aside while you finish cooking your spaghetti. When the spaghetti is completely drained, set aside and finish the sauce.

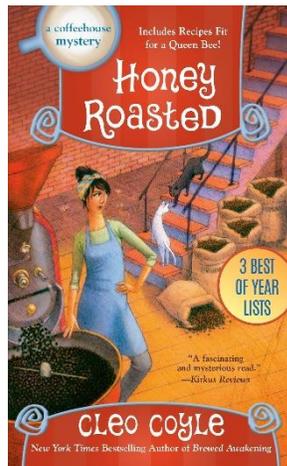
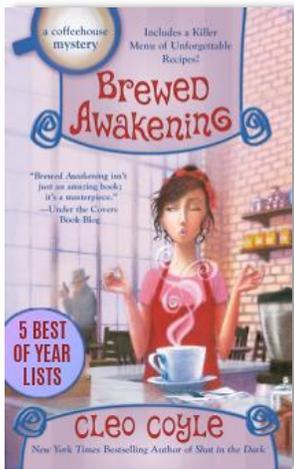
**Step 4** – To the pan with the cooked bacon, add a tablespoon of butter. As soon as the butter melts, stir in the cream. Simmer until the mixture thickens. If the sauce breaks, add a bit more cream and stir again.

**Step 5** – Add the cooked and drained spaghetti to the large skillet. Pour the grated cheese over the pasta and toss. Place a pepper grinder and a small bowl of grated cheese on the dinner table for guests to finish their plates to their taste. Then plate the pasta and enjoy!

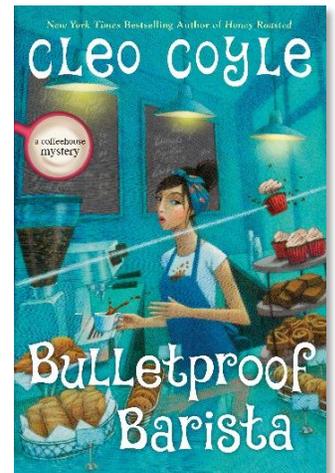


*With bacon and cream, you'd think his dish would be heavy, but it's very light and so delicious that a single bowl truly satisfies. Paired with a spinach or tomato salad, it makes a lovely meal.*

*Eat with joy! ~ Cleo*



The [Coffeehouse Mysteries](#) are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes. To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at [www.CoffeehouseMystery.com](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com) And her recipe blog at [www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com](http://www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com)



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