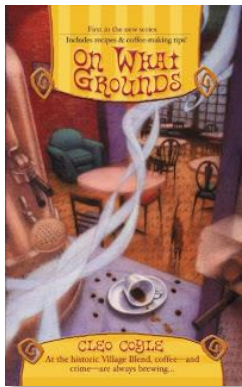


Comic Book Carbonara

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, and pancetta or guanciale (types of Italian bacon). To each his own, as they say, and when it comes to this mutable recipe, our favorite is below.



Marc and I based our spaghetti carbonara on the favorite dish of Ruben Flagg, hero of the 1980's comic book series [American Flagg](#) by Howard Chaykin. A version of this recipe appeared in the comic.

In our very first Coffeehouse Mystery, [On What Grounds](#), the dish also plays a diverting role when two alpha male characters argue about the proper way to prepare it. (No worries. Our amateur sleuth, 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

INGREDIENTS

- 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 spaghetti according to directions.

Step 2 – While your pasta water is coming to a boil, begin to make the sauce. Into a large skillet, slice up the bacon. I snip slices into 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch pieces using kitchen shears. Turn the heat up 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.

A promotional graphic for the comic book 'Shot in the Dark' by Cleo Coyle. It features the book cover on the left and a recipe guide on the right. The recipe guide includes a 'Click for Free Recipe Guide!' button, a photo of 'Lemon-Apple Bread', and a photo of 'Birthday Cakes Biscotti'. Text on the right describes the book as a 'Mystery Pick of the Month' and provides a link to learn more. At the bottom, it says 'Read the Coffeehouse Mysteries by Cleo Coyle *All photography © by Cleo Coyle/Alice Alfonsi'.

Free Recipe Guide to
Cleo's new culinary mystery
Shot in the Dark:
[click here.](#)



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.

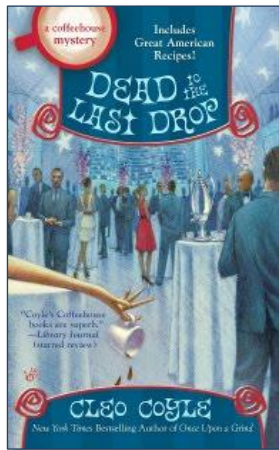
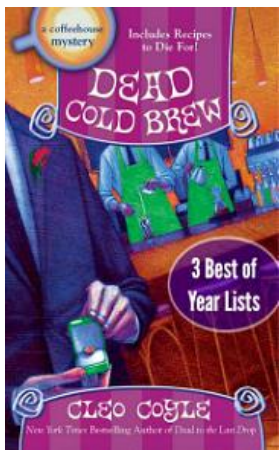
Step 4 – To the pan with the cooked bacon, add a tablespoon of butter. As soon as the butter melts, stir in the cream. Simmer until the mixture thickens. If the sauce breaks, add a bit more cream and stir again.

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 pasta and enjoy!

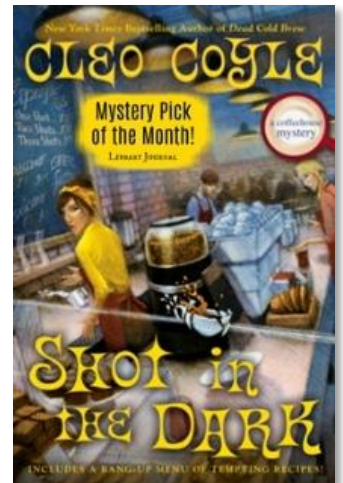


With bacon and cream, you'd think his dish would be heavy, but it's very light and so delicious that a single bowl truly satisfies. Paired with a spinach or tomato salad, it makes a lovely meal. One last note: The pasta that you see in my pictures is Garden Delight spaghetti from Ronzoni, enriched with tomato, carrot, and spinach.

Eat with joy! —Cleo



The [Coffeehouse Mysteries](http://www.CoffeehouseMystery.com) 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 And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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