main component is used as the raw material flour. Durum wheat flour is flour obtained by pulverizing the endosperm part of wheat of the durum species, and is finer than semolina flour that remains on a sieve with a mesh size of 210 μm. The grain size of the durum wheat flour is, in average grain size, preferably 300 μm or less, more preferably from 50 to 300 μm, and even more preferably from 50 to 200 μm. By setting the average grain size to 300 μm or less, the proportion of semolina flour can be reduced. In contrast, if the pasta used for the present invention is produced by using semolina flour, a larger amount of moisture from the sauce will transfer to the pasta when the pasta is frozen together with the sauce during production because the grains of semolina flour are coarse, and texture will deteriorate. In the present Description, the average grain size of durum wheat flour is the value at a cumulative volume of 50% when measured according to the laser diffraction/scattering measurement method, e.g., measured by using Microtrac MT 3000II (from Nikkiso Co., Ltd.).

[0010]

In addition to the durum wheat flour serving as the raw material, it is preferable to blend a vegetable protein to the dough of the pasta used in the frozen gratin production method of the present invention, because the tough and resilient texture is improved. Examples of vegetable proteins include gluten (glutenin and gliadin) included in wheat, kafirin included in sorghum, and zein included in corn. Among the above, it is particularly preferable to use gluten. The amount of vegetable protein(s) to blend with 100 parts by mass of the durum wheat flour is preferably from 2 to 6 parts by mass, more preferably from 4 to 6 parts by mass. By setting the blending amount to 2 parts by mass or greater, improvement in pasta texture is perceived more easily. Further, by setting the blending amount to 8 parts by mass or less, it is possible to effectively prevent the pasta from getting too hard.

[0011]

As for the raw materials of the pasta dough, in addition to durum wheat flour and vegetable protein(s), it is possible to blend other raw materials ordinarily used in the production of pastas, such as wheat flour other than durum wheat flour, durum semolina flour, starches, sugars, eggs, table salt, oils and fats, emulsifiers, and/or thickeners. The blending amount of the aforementioned other raw material(s) may be from 0 to 30 parts by mass with respect to 100 parts by mass of the durum wheat flour.

[0012]

In the present invention, fresh pasta is produced by using the aforementioned dough. More specifically, water is added to the aforementioned raw material(s) and the mixture is kneaded into a dough, and fresh pasta is produced by directly

main component is used as the raw material flour. Durum wheat flour is flour obtained by pulverizing the endosperm part of wheat of the durum species, and is finer than semolina flour that remains on a sieve with a mesh size of 210 μm. The grain size of the durum wheat flour is, in average grain size, preferably 300 μm or less, more preferably from 50 to 300 μm, and even more preferably from 50 to 200 μm. By setting the average grain size to 300 μm or less, the proportion of semolina flour can be reduced. In contrast, if the pasta used for the present invention is produced by using semolina flour, a larger amount of moisture from the sauce will transfer to the pasta when the pasta is frozen together with the sauce during production because the grains of semolina flour are coarse, and texture will deteriorate. In the present Description, the average grain size of durum wheat flour is the value at a cumulative volume of 50% when measured according to the laser diffraction/scattering measurement method, e.g., measured by using Microtrac MT 3000II (from Nikkiso Co., Ltd.).

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[0012]

In the present invention, fresh pasta is produced by using the aforementioned dough. More specifically, water is added to the aforementioned raw material(s) and the mixture is kneaded into a dough, and fresh pasta is produced by directly