

# Pasta (Pasta Asciutta)



## General Overview

Pasta is a type of food made from flour, water, and sometimes eggs, which is mixed, kneaded and formed into various shapes, and boiled prior to consumption. While the name comes from Italy, pasta is very popular all over the world. The English word Pasta generally refers to noodles and other food products made from a flour and water paste, often including egg and salt. Less frequently, the term “maccheroni” (miswritten as “macaroni” in English) is used for the same products, especially when used in combination with cheese.

Dried Italian-style pasta is made from durum wheat semolina or flour, which gives a light yellow color and a slightly chewy texture when properly prepared. Certain American pastas are produced from a mixture of Farina and Semolina. Such pastas often have an inferior texture and flavor and are only useable in a casserole or other dish where texture is less important. Asian-style noodles as well as most fresh noodles are made from regular (non-durum) wheat flour. Some pasta varieties, such as Pizzoccheri, are made from buckwheat flour. Pasta is made either by extrusion, where ingredients are forced through holes in a plate known as a die, or by lamination, in which dough is kneaded, folded, rolled to thickness then cut by slitters. Fresh pasta cooks quickly and has a delicate taste, but spoils quickly due to its high water content. Dry pasta generally contains about 10% moisture, which makes it shelf stable for about three years.

Packed refrigerated or frozen, pasta can be found virtually everywhere in the world. More varieties tend to be available where expatriate Italian communities have taken root.

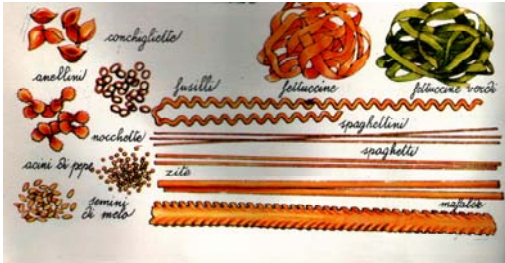
## History and Background

Pasta was developed independently in a number of places around the globe. In each of these places, locally available grain was the primary starch source in the diet. Grains had, before the invention of pasta, been consumed as a grain paste, or rendered into flour and eaten as bread. Pasta noodles were likely developed as an alternative to bread. Pasta noodles can be created even where there is no oven, or not enough fuel to support an oven. In contrast, bread requires a great investment in time and effort to create. In terms of outcome for the effort, pasta is therefore simpler than bread. Any place that something can be kept dry, one can have pasta noodles.

The earliest known record of noodles in Europe are found on Etruscan tomb decorations from the 4th century B.C. Recently noodles dating back to about 2000 BC have been found near Lajia at the Huang He in Western China. The yellow noodles survived in an upside down clay pot underneath a thick layer of loess. Analysis shows that the noodles with a length of approximately half a meter and a diameter of three millimeters were produced from millet.

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Utensils that are thought to have been used to make pasta were also found in the ruins of Pompeii, where other Chinese objects were found and the Silk Road having extended to Rome in 30 BC. Thus we know the popular legend of Marco Polo bring back pasta to Italy from China is absolutely false. Note, however, that Chinese noodles before the age of industrialized food production were always used fresh, and they are comprised of one giant noodle mass through the cooking process because it is considered bad luck in China to cut noodles before serving them to eat.

Thomas Jefferson is credited with bringing the first macaroni machine to America in 1789 when he returned home after serving as ambassador to France. The first commercial pasta manufacturer in the United States was Antoine Zerega, a Frenchman of Italian descent who began making pasta in Brooklyn, NY in 1848.

## Pasta Varieties

Pastas come in many different shapes and sizes. There are simple string-shaped pasta like spaghetti and vermicelli, ribbon-shaped ones like fettucine and linguine, short tubes like elbow macaroni and penne, large sheets like lasagna tiny grains like couscous and orzo, and hollow pasta stuffed with filling, like ravioli, manicotti, and tortellini.

The products imported by Paganini Foods LLC using the BellaVita™ Brand are truly unique... The secret being an ingredient that is not found in most common types of pasta. This ingredient, wheat germ, the heart of the grain itself, contains vitamins and vegetable protein. This pasta offers a distinctive and delicious taste, which releases a wonderful aroma on cooking.

BellaVita™ pastas are considered to be of the finest quality, not only because of the wheat germ ingredient, but also because they select the best semolina which is processed according to craft techniques. The intrinsic taste and nutritional properties of the product are maintained. BellaVita™ offers vast range of specialty pasta products which are free of preservatives and coloring agents. The result is truly wholesome pasta, with a wonderfully rich flavor and full consistency. The following are the main features and benefits of these pastas:

## Fast Cooking

Firm even when sautéed in the pan

Highly original....each piece is as unique as hand-made

Flavor enhanced with wheat germ

Good yield on cooking, therefore less raw product required

Sauce grabbing texture due to the bronze dyes.

Various flavored straccetti pastas can be mixed together

Specialty flavors include Garlic and Basil & Peperoncino.



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## Health Benefits

Pasta is a healthy food and a good carbohydrate.

- Pasta has a low glycemic index of 41. Pasta does not cause sugar in the blood to rise quickly, so consumers receive the benefits of prolonged carbohydrate absorption. Slow-release carbohydrates/low glycemic index (GI) foods may have benefits for healthy longevity and physical and cognitive performance, and may play a key role in preventing chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease and certain cancers. (GI measures how rapidly a carbohydrate triggers a rise in blood sugar -- the higher the number, the greater the blood sugar response.)

- Pasta meals are efficient “delivery systems” for healthy foods. Pasta is not eaten alone, but with “partners,” such as vegetables, fish, olive oil, tomato sauce, legumes, and lean cuts of poultry and meat. By combining multiple healthy ingredients, the pasta meal slows digestion and absorption of glucose in the blood and provides essential nutrients such as fiber, protein and vitamins.

- Pasta is a “good” carbohydrate. Most pasta is made from semolina flour, which is ground from durum wheat. White flour used to make white bread is ground from common wheat, which is not digested as slowly as durum wheat and, as a result, has a higher GI.

- Pasta does not promote weight gain. Weight gain is not caused by one particular food – it is caused by consuming more calories than you burn. When eaten in the proper portions and in combination with healthy foods, pasta does not cause weight gain. A healthy portion of pasta is one to two cups cooked.

- Carbohydrates are essential in healthy, balanced diets. Carbohydrates are the source of most of the body's glucose, which is the crucial fuel energy source for the brain, red blood cells, muscle and organs. Without carbohydrates, a diet is not balanced or complete. There is worldwide consensus among high-level nutrition scientists and international dietary guidelines that carbohydrates are a key ingredient in an eating pattern that promotes healthy longevity: 45-60 percent carbohydrates, 25-30 percent fat, and 15-20 percent protein.

## Recipes:

### Linguine With Seafood

2 tbsp Olive oil	3 Shallots chopped - or green onions
1 tsp Grated lemon rind	1/2 tsp Red chili pepper flakes
2 tbsp Parsley, chopped	12 large Shrimp or prawns
12 Scallops	1/2 cup White wine
2 lb Mussels	28 oz Tomatoes, canned
1/4 cup Basil, fresh, shredded	1 lb Linguini

Serve pasta and sauce in a large bowl on the table and let people help themselves. Vary the seafood according to your tastes. If you prefer a

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vegetarian version, saute mushrooms and peppers instead of seafood and add into tomato sauce. Grated parmesan is traditionally not offered with seafood dishes. 1. In a large skillet, heat olive oil on medium-high heat. Add shallots and garlic. Saute for 1 minute or until softened slightly, then add lemon rind, parsley, shrimps and scallops. Saute together until shrimps just turn pink and scallops are translucent, about 1-2 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon from skillet. Season with salt and pepper. 2. Add white wine to skillet, bring to boil and add mussels. Cover and steam mussels until they open, about 3 minutes. Remove mussels from skillet and reserve with shrimps and scallops. Discard any mussels that do not open. Remove mussel meats from half the mussels, leaving remainder in their shells. 3. Meanwhile drain tomatoes and chop, reserving juice. Add tomatoes, juice and chili flakes into skillet and bring to boil. Stir in 2TB basil and simmer for 10 minutes to combine flavours. Season with salt and pepper. Sauce can be made ahead to this point. 4. When ready to serve: bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente, about 10-12 minutes. Drain well. 5. Return seafood to sauce, sprinkle with remaining basil then reheat. Toss with pasta and serve.

## **Spaghettoni Alla Carrettiera**

4 tsp Ground red chile	1 lb Fresh tomatoes, cut up
3 cl Garlic	2 tbsp Olive oil
3/4 cup Heavy cream	2 tbsp Vodka
10 Sprigs Italian parsley	Coarsely chopped
1 lb Spaghettoni	

Combine the chile, tomatoes, garlic and olive oil. Simmer the sauce for 30 minutes and run through a food mill to remove seeds and skins. Add the cream and vodka and simmer until the sauce is reduced. Cook the spaghettoni in 4 quarts of boiling salted water until tender but still firm (al dente), being very careful not to overcook this thin spaghetti. Drain. Mix the sauce with the spaghettoni, top with the parsley and serve.

## **Penne With Zucchini & Parmesan**

1 lb Penne or Mostaccioli -or other medium pasta-shape, uncooked  
1 lb Medium zucchini                      2 tbsp Butter or margarine  
1 tbsp Olive or vegetable oil   1 large Clove garlic, minced  
1/4 tsp Hot red pepper flakes or to taste  
2/3 cup Grated Parmesan cheese -(freshly grated)  
Cook pasta according to package directions. While pasta is cooking, grate zucchini. Heat butter and oil together in large skillet until mixture begins to bubble. Add grated zucchini and cook about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 more minute, stirring constantly. Stir in hot pepper flakes and 2/3 cup of grated Parmesan cheese. Heat 1 minute more.

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