



A fresh start for pasta

Why fresh pasta?

The market for fresh pasta in European countries has been growing steadily in recent years, partly because of a health trend which favours low-cholesterol food and partly because people are more conscious of what they eat. It is not just the nutritional value of pasta that has made it a worldwide success but also its taste and convenience. Pasta can be simple or complex. It can be prepared quickly to help us with our busy lifestyle or it can be served on special occasions as a more elaborate dish. This popular world food **staple** has an infinite potential for variety thanks to its many shapes, recipes and sauces. Watching pasta being made is a theatrical experience, whether by a pasta machine or by hand. In fact, making pasta for family or friends is all about the pleasure of cooking at home; it is not a necessity but a creative joy. The basic **dough** for fresh pasta consists of eggs and all-purpose flour. Dried pasta, on the other hand, is usually made of semolina flour ground from durum **wheat** and mixed with water. Alternatively, you can make organic pasta with locally sourced flour and eggs. In addition, there are new lines of fat and cholesterol-free ravioli on the market. Two new grains, South American quinoa and Egyptian kamut, are being used to make wheat-free pasta.

Fresh pasta business opportunity

Most dried pasta which fills supermarket shelves today is made using an industrial process that no longer satisfies consumers who are asking for more high quality, fresh, locally produced food. It is not surprising to find new small businesses being set up to deliver fresh pasta to restaurants or retail stores or just selling their artisan product at farmers' markets. Businesses that are expanding often invest in vacuum- packing machines so that the shelf-life of fresh pasta can be increased from one day to five. This means that they can extend their delivery area and supply larger retailers. There seems to be a genuine job satisfaction and passion when it comes to pasta. A person can work alone or with few assistants and this inexpensive product can be tailored to the needs of the consumer. Its many shapes, sizes, flavours and colours are as varied and as fascinating as its history.

A brief history

Although it is a popular belief, Marco Polo was not the first Italian to enjoy pasta. This amazingly versatile food probably found its way to Sicily with the Arab invasions in the 8th century and there is evidence that it was being produced in great quantities in Palermo at that time. The Sicilian word "maccaruni" which means "making dough forcefully" could well be the origin of the modern "macaroni". Although it was very popular in the 18th century, dry pasta was the food of the people in the street and was eaten with bare hands, plain or with grated cheese. Only the wealthy ate fresh pasta that was stuffed and seasoned with cheeses and meats. But it is when pasta met the tomato that it became a fashionable dish endorsed by gourmets and leading chefs. The first recipe for tomatoes with pasta appeared in 1839 and from then on there was no looking back. Pasta travelled to the USA with Italian immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and for a long time was considered an ethnic dish. Garibaldi said, "It will be macaroni, I swear to you, that will unite Italy." Little did he know that pasta today has become a staple food in the USA and an integral part of many households around the world.

Glossary

staple: principale; **dough:** impasto; **wheat:** grano

practice

A. Add question tags to these sentences then decide if they are True or False.

	T	F
1. Pasta comes in a limited number of shapes, ... ?		
2. There aren't any substitutes for durum wheat, ... ?		
3. Fresh pasta doesn't ruin your health, ... ?		
4. Tomatoes were used with pasta in the 19th century, ... ?		
5. Marco Polo introduced pasta to Europe, ... ?		

B. Read the text again and complete the sentences by matching part A and part B.

A

- Even though pasta is delicious,
- Fresh pasta is usually made with flour and eggs
- Vacuum-packing machines are used in order
- In spite of new evidence, people still think that
- Pasta is popular in the USA

B

- Marco Polo brought pasta back from China.
- while dried pasta is made with semolina flour mixed with water.
- it is not fattening.
- to extend the shelf-life of fresh pasta.
- as well as Europe.

C. Complete the instructions for a pasta recipe with the following connectors.

on the contrary • so that • finally • then • first • whereas • as

..... (1) chop up an onion and some mushrooms and sauté them in a little olive oil.
 (2) add spices and tomato sauce and let it simmer. (3)
 throw the pasta into boiling water. Use a large quantity (4) the pieces can float
 freely. Don't add oil to the cooking water (5) it doesn't prevent the pieces from
 sticking together. (6), it prevents the pasta from fully absorbing the sauce after
 draining. Fresh pasta should be cooked for a very short time (7) dried pasta takes
 longer. Once it is cooked put some sauce on top and enjoy your meal.

D. Read this flyer promoting fresh pasta and replace the words in italics with the phrasal verbs in the box.

look for • look forward to • run out of • fed up with • put up with • call in

VISIT OUR PASTA SHOP

Have you (1) (*finished your supply*) of ideas about what to cook at dinner parties?

Are you (2) (*bored*) with the same old recipes?

Are you (3) (*searching for*) good healthy food that is also tasty?

Then try our fresh pasta. You don't have to (4) (*bear*) those unenthusiastic expressions of your guests as they eat.

Just (5) (*pay a short visit*) to our shop at fifteen Queen Street.

We (6) (*expect your visit with pleasure*).

E. Download a pasta recipe from the internet and present it to the class using a Power Point Presentation. You can use the following link <http://www.pastrywiz.com/archive/category/pasta.htm>