

**I'm  
Going To**  
Make Him An Offer He Can't Refuse



Leave The  
**Gun!**  
Take The  
**Cannoli!**



**CIAO!**

# Mama Mia! Tupperware's Gone Italian!

**Capish?**

Going to the  
**Mattresses?**

**BADA  
BiNG!  
BADA  
BOOM!**

**HEY  
FUCHED DA BOUDIT**

## Theme: Pasta Party

Display: Italian colors of course! Red, White and Green! Fresh Garlic, an Onion, an unopened bottle of Chianti and an Imported box of pasta!. Let your imagination rule! For something very inexpensive, I've used red, white, and green curling ribbon, cut up and tossed on my display table! Be sure to have your Modular mates with a variety of pastas stored inside! Providing a display that resembles an Italian Market, could enhance the shopping experience!

### Get Acquainted Activity:

Get guests involved with the theme with an introduction game: Ask each guest to not only share her name but her favorite Italian Restaurant . Really gets the crowd connected as they share their best. It gets them hungry for Italian food!!!

Transition into the demo by saying something like “tonight you’re invited to Kathy’s (your hosts name here) Italian feast—where we will only use the finest of ingredients! AND.....while we’re talking about finest, let me introduce you to the NEW Pasta Maker from Tupperware!

### Did you know?

The following pages are loaded with great information—use this to sprinkle cooking tips throughout your party or to create auction questions!

The best pasta is made of 100% semolina (the label will say durum - wheat semolina or semolia). Pasta made from durum wheat retain their shape and firmness while cooking. When cooked properly they do not get mushy or sticky. Pasta that are not made with semolina produce a softer noodle and will not hold up well when tossing.

## **How To Measure Pasta - Pasta Equivalents**

Most dried pasta doubles in volume when cooked. The general rule is one pound of dry pasta or freshly made pasta will serve six as an appetizer or four as a main course. **Remember** - Shapes may vary in size according to the manufacturer, so use these measurements as generalizations.

The easiest way to measure pasta is to use your digital scale.

4 ounces of uncooked pasta (elbow macaroni, shells, rotini, cavatelli, wheels, penne, or ziti) = 1 cup dried pasta = 2 1/2 cups cooked pasta.

4 ounces of uncooked pasta (spaghetti, angel hair, vermicelli, fettuccine or linguine) = a 1-inch diameter bunch of dry pasta = 2 cups cooked pasta.

## Pasta Trivia

- The word “pasta” comes from the Italian word for paste, meaning a combination of flour and water. It includes the many forms of spaghetti, macaroni and egg noodles. The term pasta has always been used on Italian restaurant menus to encompass all the various pasta offerings
- One cup of cooked spaghetti provides about 200 calories, 40 grams of carbohydrates, less than one gram of total fat, no cholesterol and only one gram of sodium (when cooked without salt).
- Cooked *al dente* literally means “to the tooth,” which is how to test pasta to see if it is properly cooked. The pasta should be a bit firm, offering some resistance to the tooth, but tender
- In Italian, fettuccine means *ribbons*; stelline means *little stars*; and capelli d’angelo means *angel’s hair*.
- There are more than 600 pasta shapes produced worldwide
- Christopher Columbus, one of Italy’s most famous “pastaphiles”, was born in October, which is now National Pasta Month
- Pasta existed for thousands of years before anyone ever thought to put tomato sauce on it. The Spanish explorer Cortez brought tomatoes back to Europe from Mexico in 1519. Even then, almost 200 years passed before spaghetti with tomato sauce made its way into Italian kitchens.
- According to Miss Manners (a.k.a. Judith Martin), a fork is the only utensil that may be used to eat spaghetti while anyone is looking
- Consumers enjoy pasta for dinner more than 40 times a year (approximately once a week), with dry pasta as their favorite form, according to Harry Balzer, NPD Group, Chicago, IL.
- The Chinese are on record as having eaten pasta as early as 5,000 B.C.
- Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing macaroni to the United States. It seems that he fell in love with a certain dish he sampled in Naples while serving as the U.S. Minister to France from 1785 to 1789. In fact, he promptly ordered crates of “maccheroni,” along with a pasta-making machine, sent back to the States.  
*Editor’s Note: However, the pasta did not spread beyond his close circle of friends. Broadscale pasta-making did not occur until the Italian immigration of the late 19th century.*

## **How To Cook Perfect Pasta**

**Important Rule: Pasta should be prepared just before serving it.**

### **Use a Large Pot:**

To cook pasta properly, pasta needs a lot of water. A too-small pot and too little water encourages the pasta to clump and stick together, thus cooking unevenly.

For a pound (16 ounces) of pasta, you will want a pot that holds at least 5 or 6 quarts of water.

### **Use plenty of water and use only COLD or COOL Water:**

Using plenty of water helps to prevent pasta from sticking together by quickly washing away the exuded starch.

If your water contains any impurities, it will taint the finished flavor of the pasta. Filter your home water if possible.

Fill that big pot 3/4 full of COLD water or use at least one quart of cold water for every four ounces of dry pasta. Four quarts is a bare minimum per 12-ounce package of pasta, six to eight quarts is ideal.

The reason for this is that hot water will dissolve anything (including contaminants like lead) much more easily than cold water and if that water encounters something like an older leaded pipe or some rust before coming out in your kitchen sink, it could very well end up in your glass. The most common problem is water that has been sitting in your home pipes for over 6 hours.

### **Bring the pot of cold water to a fast boil:**

Covering the pot of cold water with a lid will help bring the water to a boil faster.

### **Add Salt:**

Salting the water makes pasta taste better by bringing out the natural flavor of the pasta. This does not increase the sodium level of your recipes. NOTE: I always use kosher (coarse) salt.

Do not add your salt until the water has come to a full boil. There are two reasons for this:

1. First, unsalted water has a lower boiling point than salted water, so it will come to a boil a few seconds faster.
2. Second and more important, salt dissolves faster in hot water. Undissolved salt crystals in cold water can mar the surface of your stainless-steel pots with small white dots or pits.

Add plenty of salt, about 2 tablespoons of kosher (coarse) salt per pound of pasta. This may seem like a lot, but it is necessary for getting the pasta properly seasoned. Plus, most of the salt drains off with the water. If you taste the salted water, it should resemble "sea water." NOTE: If you are on a sodium restricted diet, please follow your doctor's orders before adding salt.

**Do NOT add oil of any kind.** Oil has the unwanted effect of coating the pasta so the sauce will not stick.

### **Adding the dried pasta:**

Add the pasta, all at once, to the boiling salted water, and keep the heat high to bring the water back to the boil as quickly as possible. NOTE: Never mix pasta types in one pot.

**Explanation or Science of Boiling Water:** Pasta added to water before it starts to boil gets a heat start on mushiness. Pasta quickly begins to break down in tepid water as the starch dissolves. You need the intense heat of boiling water to "set" the outside of the pasta, which prevents the pasta from sticking together. That's why the fast boil is so important; the water temperature drops when you add the pasta, but if you have a fast boil, the water will still be hot enough for the pasta to cook properly.

**Stir at the beginning** - After you add the pasta to the boiling water, stir with a long wooden spoon (stirring prevents pasta from sticking to each other and from sticking to the bottom and the edge of pan). Frequent stirring with a long wooden spoon or fork while the pasta is cooking will help the pasta to cook

Cook the pasta, uncovered, at a fast boil. NOTE: Once you have added your pasta, do not cover the pot with a lid. You can regulate the heat so the pasta/water mixture doesn't foam up and over the pot sides. Lower it the tiniest bit, and everything should be under control.

### **Cooking Time:**

## The Italian pantry

By stocking your kitchens with a few basic ingredients, you will be ready to prepare many Tuscan and Italian recipes. These days, most major grocery stores carry many items imported from Italy, so spend some time looking and see what you can find. Other sources for those necessary ingredients would be Italian specialty stores in your area, or possibly you may consider online ordering.

High-quality ingredients are essential to Italian cooking: the better your olive oil, tomatoes, and cheese, the better the simple dishes will be.

In most good Italian kitchens, you will find most if not all of the following items in the pantry:

**OLIVE OIL** - One of the essential ingredients of Italian cooking, olive oil is used not simply as a cooking oil but for the flavor it adds to a dish. For this reason, it's important to use only extra-virgin olive oil -- it has the most flavor. If you splurge on any one item, I would suggest you buy the best you can find.

**DRIED PASTA** - Use pasta imported from Italy such as Barilla and De Cecco. Generally, any imported pasta products made from semolina flour are good choices. For egg pasta, avoid the "fresh" pasta sold in refrigerated cases. Either use homemade or buy the dried noodles packaged in nests.

**TOMATOES** - When fresh, ripe tomatoes are not available, use good canned tomatoes (unless the recipe specifically calls for fresh). Choose whole, peeled tomatoes rather than chopped or crushed. Use imported Italian San Marzano tomatoes if you can find them; they're the best.

**ONIONS AND GARLIC** - Generally, white onions for cooking and red onions for salads and dishes that do not require cooking because they are milder. Garlic is used, but it is not generally an overwhelming presence.

**PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO** - Only cheese that is produced in a limited area surrounding Parma according to strict guidelines may be sold as Parmigiano-Reggiano. It's a cheese of incomparable flavor, texture, and richness that make it not only an excellent grating cheese but also one of the world's great table cheeses.

**CHEESES** - Cheeses are also important for Italian dishes. There are so many varieties but the most commonly used include Parmigiano-Reggiano, pecorino Romano, mozzarella, ricotta and provolone.

**LEGUMES** - In our house we generally have on hand dried cannellini beans, borlotti beans, ceci and lentils to use mainly in soups.

**CORNMEAL** - Use a medium textured cornmeal for polenta. Keep it in a tightly closed container, and it will last for months. I also use cornmeal to dust my pan when making pizza, and to add texture to some of my baked goods.

**RICE** - Arborio is the most common rice used in making risotto, but other varieties, such as Carnaroli or Vialone Nano which are just now becoming available in America, are perhaps even better. One characteristic they all share is a translucent, starchy exterior that melts away in cooking to give risotto its distinctive creamy consistency.

**BALSAMIC VINEGAR** - There are a variety of different balsamic vinegars. Depending on its age, it can be extremely expensive. You can use an inexpensive one for salads, as long as the quality is good.

**ANCHOVIES** - Although I'm not an anchovy fan, I keep a jar packed in oil in my fridge to add a special zip to certain dishes. You can also find anchovy paste in a tube, which is milder in taste and is quite convenient.

**DRIED PORCINI MUSHROOMS** - Look for packages that have large slices of whole mushrooms. They add a wonderful rich flavor to risottos, pasta sauces, and stews, and can infuse cultivated white mushrooms with their robust flavor. Although they can be an expensive item, a little goes a long way, and if kept in an airtight container, they'll keep for a long time. Keep the water used to rehydrate them. Strained, it will add a depth of flavor to many soups, sauces and stews.

**CAPERS** - You can find two types of capers. The smaller ones that are pickled in vinegar, and the larger ones that come packed in salt. The larger ones are very flavorful, require rinsing of the salt before using, and tend to be a little more difficult to locate. A few chopped capers can add a punch of flavor to dishes that seem to need just a little something.

**OLIVES** - Both the black and green varieties are good, if packed in brine and imported from Italy even better.

**HERBS AND SEASONINGS** - Generally fresh herbs are preferred in everyday cooking, but it is also important to keep dried oregano, rosemary, thyme, and sage available. Whole black pepper to be ground at the moment of use, sea salt and red pepper flakes are also important seasonings to have on hand.

**FLOUR** - We usually have both an all-purpose flour for making pasta and pizza dough and bread flour for cakes and desserts. Semolina flour is also very useful.

Although these are the bare basics to have in an Italian kitchen, stocking these basic staples in your pantry will ensure that you are ready to begin cooking Tuscan and Italian recipes. All you'll need to add is a few fresh ingredients and you'll be all set to prepare your Tuscan and Italian dishes that will impress your friends and family

Don't rely on the package to give you the correct cooking time (this is only a guideline). Start timing when the water returns to a boil. Most pastas cook in 8-12 minutes.

Test dry pasta for doneness after about 4 minutes of cooking by tasting it. It is difficult to give exact cooking times since different shapes and thickness of pasta will take less or more time to cook.

Watch the cooking process of the pasta carefully. Pasta can overcook very quickly. Pasta should be tender but still firm when you eat it, what the Italians call "al dente." To be sure, bite into a piece of the pasta (take a piece of pasta from the pan, cut off a tiny piece, and chew it in your mouth). REMEMBER - Pasta will continue to cook and soften even after it has been taken from the water.

**Definition of "al dente"** (ahl-DEN-tay): In Italian the phrase means "to the tooth" and is a term used to describe the correct degree of doneness when cooking pasta, risotto, and vegetables. The food should have a slight resistance (chewy) when biting into it, but should not be soft, overdone, or have a hard center.

**Fulvia Guyger's Italian tip for stopping cooking time:** Once pasta has reached the "al dente" stage, immediately turn off your gas heat or remove the pot from the heat if using electric heat. Add approximately 1/2 to 1 cup COLD water to the hot water with the pasta. This will immediately lower the temperature of the water and stop the cooking.

**Cooking Pasta For Baked Dishes:** Because the pasta is cooked twice (boiled first and then combined with other ingredients and cooked in the oven), pasta in baked dishes should boil less time than normal. Boil until just flexible but still quite firm (usually about a 1/3 of the normal cooking time). To test, cut into a piece.

### **Drain immediately:**

Drain immediately into a large colander standing in the sink, and then pick up the colander with its contents and shake it well to remove excess water.

Do NOT rinse unless the recipe says to do so. the starch that makes the pasta stick to itself also helps the sauce stick to the pasta. If you're going to toss the pasta with the sauce immediately, sticking shouldn't be a problem.



## **Never, Never Over Drain Pasta:**

**EXCEPTION:** Except when saucing with thin or brothy sauces such as fresh tomato or seafood, pasta needs to be moist to combine well. As soon as it is drained, remove it from the colander and place it either back in the cooking pan to keep warm to toss it with the sauce, or place it in a preheated serving dish or individual preheated serving bowls. Once the pasta is in the pan or bowl, use a fork and spoon and quickly toss it with the sauce.

## **Do NOT Rinse Pasta:**

**EXCEPTION:** Do rinse the wide pasta, such as lasagna noodles. If you don't, you will have a hard time separating the noodles without tearing them.

Also rinse when making a cold pasta salad. The thin coat of starch on the pasta will be sticky when cold.

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## **Don't Drown Pasta**

Never over sauce pasta. Italians complain that Americans drown their pasta in too much sauce. The Italians way is to toss pasta with just enough sauce to coat it without leaving a big puddle on the bottom of the plate.

## **Warming A Serving Bowl:**

Pour some hot water into it and let stand until ready to use. Then pour out the water and dry the bowl. Warm plates by putting them into a 250 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes just before serving.

## **Reheating Pasta:**

Microwave the pasta in the storage container on HIGH for 1 to 3 minutes, tossing the pasta halfway through. The length of time in the microwave depends on how much pasta you have. You can also reheat the pasta by putting it in a colander and running very hot water over it. Be sure to drain the pasta well before putting on sauce.

## **Making Pasta Ahead:**

Cook the pasta as usual, being particularly careful to cook it only until al dente. Drain, rinse under cold running water to stop the cooking, and again drain thoroughly. Let pasta cool completely, then toss with a couple of teaspoons of oil so it won't stick together. Pasta can be stored in a plastic bag or in a covered bowl in the refrigerator for up to three days.

## **Pasta Etiquette**

It is considered proper, in Italy, to eat pasta with only a fork, not a fork and a spoon.

You can get some leverage by turning the pasta while holding the tines of your fork against the edge of your plate. It's even correct to neatly cut the pasta if twirling is too hard.

What is undeniably bad manners is slurping in a mouthful of trailing pasta without benefit of twirl or knife. It's often loud, and it's never pretty.

If possible, serve warm pasta in warm, shallow bowls instead of on dinner plates. The sides of the bowl aids in turning pasta noodles on the fork.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the ordinary people ate spaghetti with their hand. When the fork was invented, pasta became food fit for royalty as well, because they could now eat it without a loss of dignity. The Italians say that a character of a man can be determined by the way he eats spaghetti.