



## Pasta & Sauce Pairing Guide

### INTRODUCTION

Italians can get passionate when asked to explain why pasta should be cooked and eaten a certain way, why matching the pasta shape to the right sauce is of the utmost importance, why shape and size do matter, and that each shape and each size have a specific purpose. My goal of this guide is to shed light on the Italian tradition of pasta and sauce pairing that has been in the making for centuries!

#### Overview

##### FOR RICH, ROBUST SAUCES

Rich, robust sauces work better with tubular pasta like rigatoni, where the chunks of meat (ragù) or vegetables (vegetable ragù), are captured in the hollow of the pasta. But they're also good with thicker, flat, long pasta, like tagliatelle, fettuccine, and pappardelle that are able to capture the chunky sauce.

##### DELICATE, LIGHTER SAUCES

Delicate, lighter sauces, with panna (cream) or oil, work better with skinny thin shapes like spaghetti and linguine. They also work well with shaped pasta like farfalle, fusilli, and cavatappi where the sauce can be absorbed in the curves and crevices. Creamier and oilier sauces are able to better coat the whole strand of the thinner pasta.

##### HEARTY VEGETABLE SAUCES OR BAKED CHEESE DISHES

Hearty meat or vegetable sauces or baked cheese dishes go particularly well with penne and rigatoni. In the case of vegetable and meat sauces, the pieces are captured in the hollow of the pasta, making it a truly delicious bite.



# Pasta & Sauce

## PAIRING GUIDE





**SPAGHETTI**  
("spah-GEH-tee")

SAUCES: Famously with Carbonara and Cacio e Pepe. Also tomato, light cream sauces, light seafood sauces



**LINGUINE**  
("lin-GWEE-nee")

SAUCES: Famously with clam sauce, but also other seafood, and pesto sauces



**FETTUCCINI**  
("fay-tuh-CHEE-nee")

SAUCES: Famously with Alfredo sauce, but also robust meat, seafood, and vegetables



**CAPELLINI**  
("cah-peh-LEE-nee")  
aka Angel Hair

SAUCES: Light, thin sauces, tomato, oil-based, light seafood sauces



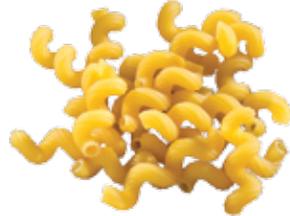
**LASAGNA**  
("luh-ZAHN-yuh")

SAUCES: Baked dishes, cream, cheese, meat, tomato, and vegetable sauces



**FARFALLE**  
("fahr-FAH-ley")  
aka Bow Tie

SAUCES: Cold pasta salads, light, creamy sauces, pesto, tomato sauces.



**CAVATAPPI**  
("cah-vah-TOP-pee")

SAUCES: Cream, cheese, meat, vegetables, pasta salads and soups.



**FUSSILI**  
("foo-ZEE-lee")

SAUCES: Butter, oil, cream, cheese, meat, vegetables, and pesto



**ELBOWS**  
("el-bohs")

SAUCES: Famously American mac and cheese. Traditionally used in soups.



**SHELLS**  
("shels")

SAUCES: American-inspired pasta salads. Traditional Italian baked casseroles and meat sauces.



**PENNE**  
("PEH-neh")

SAUCES: Baked, butter, oil, cream, cheese, tomato and vegetable sauces.



**RIGATONI**  
("rig-uh-TOH-nee")

SAUCES: Full flavor, chunky vegetable and meat sauces, or baked cheese dishes, bolognese or ragu.



**ORZO**  
("OR-zoh")

SAUCES: Oil and vinaigrettes. Soaks up flavor readily. Soups, salads, and even stuffed into vegetables.



### Cooking Tips

*Always salt the water in the pot before adding the pasta. One tablespoon per quart of water.*

*Use a large enough pot and enough water, so the pasta has room to roam, and stir after adding pasta to the water. This keeps it from sticking and getting gummy.*

*Do not add oil to the water in the pot. Sauces won't be absorbed by the oily pasta.*

*Italians take the pasta out of the water a few minutes before the suggested time and finish it in the pan with sauce. This allows the sauce to coat and soak into the pasta perfectly.*

*If you're going to bake your pasta, take it out of the water at half the cooking time. Pasta will continue cooking in the oven and won't be overcooked.*

*Never rinse pasta under running water. This will remove the starchy coating and prevent the sauce from adhering to the pasta.*

### Serving Tips

*In Italy, pasta is served on shallow plates and never cut with a knife or fork.*

*It's served as a course by itself (primo, first course). Also, it is never accompanied with a salad, side dish, or protein of any sort.*

*Being the first course, it is preceded only by the antipasto (appetizer) and followed by everything else, but nothing with it.*

*Dinnertime is its own event in Italy. Italians do not treat dinner as a time to just fuel up, but rather it is a time to come together, relax and enjoy one another's company. Italians eat dinner much later, around eight p.m and it lasts 2-3 hours.*

*I have learned to enjoy this tradition completely. I slowly savor the antipasti, pasta, fish, and meat dishes, and share this dining culture with those sitting at my table. I invite you to do the same.*