

Authentic Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

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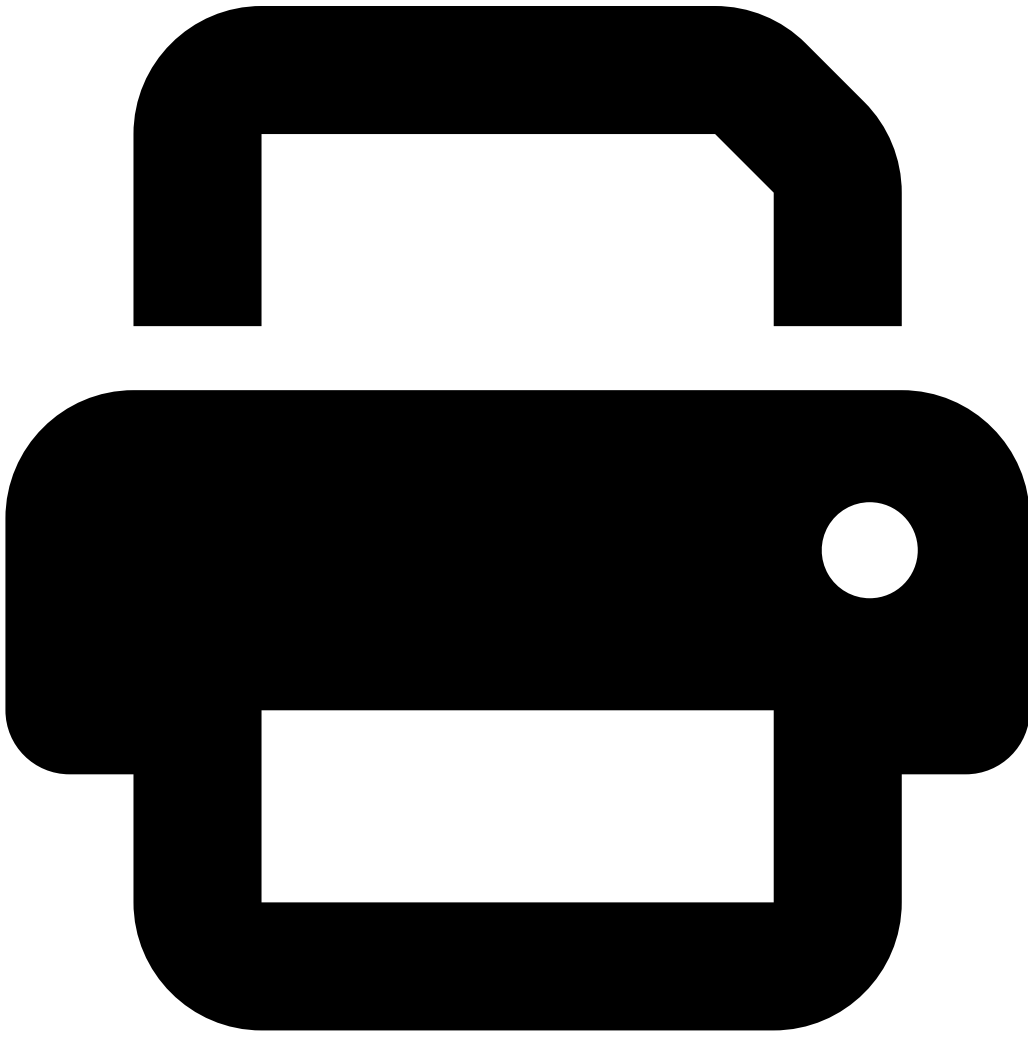
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There's something about the Italian Riviera that changes the way you cook. The food is lighter, brighter, and built on ingredients that don't need much help. This Pasta Portofino is exactly that.

Inspired by the coastal village of Portofino, this dish brings together the bold freshness of basil, the sweetness of ripe tomatoes, and the richness of good olive oil. It's often described as a cross between a tomato sauce and Pesto alla Genovese—but simpler, looser, and meant to taste like summer.

No cream. No mozzarella. Just real ingredients, handled the right way.

Things to know about this Authentic

Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

What Makes This Dish Authentic

- **No cream** – the sauce is emulsified with olive oil and pasta water
- **No mozzarella** – cheese is used sparingly and intentionally
- **Basil is the star** – not cooked down, but folded in fresh
- **Simple technique** – nothing heavy, nothing overworked

This is the kind of dish that relies on ingredient quality more than anything else.

Tips for the Best Flavor

- Use the best olive oil you have—it matters here
 - Don't over blend the basil; texture is part of the dish
 - Salt your pasta water well—it's your first layer of seasoning
 - Add pasta water gradually—you're looking for a light coating, not a heavy sauce
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Serving

Serve immediately, with extra Parmigiano Reggiano on the side and maybe a glass of crisp white wine. This is a dish that doesn't wait—and doesn't need anything else.

Final Note

This isn't about perfection. It's about balance—fresh, simple, and coastal. The kind of pasta that feels like it came straight out of a small kitchen overlooking the sea in Portofino.

Craving More Simple Italian Recipes?

If you loved this Pasta Portofino, you'll want to keep that fresh, coastal flavor going. Try some of my other go-to recipes that bring the same simple, ingredient-first approach to the table:

- [My Classic Italian Vinaigrette](#) – perfect as a marinade or light dressing
- [These Crispy Italian Potato Croquettes](#) – golden on the outside, soft and flavorful inside
- [My Authentic Bolognese Sauce](#) – slow-cooked, rich, and deeply comforting
- [This Shrimp Oreganato](#) – bright, garlicky, and ready in minutes

Head over to the blog to explore more recipes made with real ingredients and simple techniques—just the way Italian cooking should be.

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A fresh and authentic Pasta Portofino recipe inspired by Portofino. Made with basil, cherry tomatoes, olive oil, and Parmigiano Reggiano—no cream, just simple Italian flavor ready in minutes.

- 12 oz. spaghetti
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves (packed cup)
- 1 cup pasta water
- 1/3 cup pine nuts
- 1/2 cup Parmigiano Reggiano (freshly grated)
- salt and fresh cracked black pepper to taste

1. Cook the pasta

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until **al dente**. Reserve 1 cup of pasta water, then drain.

2. Build the base

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add garlic and cook gently for 1–2 minutes until fragrant (do not brown).

3. **Cook the tomatoes**

Add cherry tomatoes and a pinch of salt. Cook 6–8 minutes until softened and slightly broken down, creating a light sauce.

4. **Make the pesto (rustic)**

Using a mortar and pestle (preferred) or quick pulse in a processor, combine:

Keep it **textured, not fully smooth.**

basil pine nuts Parmigiano Reggiano

5. **Combine**

Add drained pasta to the skillet with tomatoes. Toss to coat.

Add: 2–3 tablespoons of the pesto mixture splash of reserved pasta water

Toss continuously until the sauce becomes **light, glossy, and emulsified.**

6. **Finish**

Remove from heat. Add black pepper and an extra drizzle of olive oil. Adjust salt if needed.

Serve immediately with additional Parmigiano Reggiano.

Main Course

Italian

pasta, tomato, Portofino, Italian