

Authentic Spaghetti alla Puttanesca Recipe

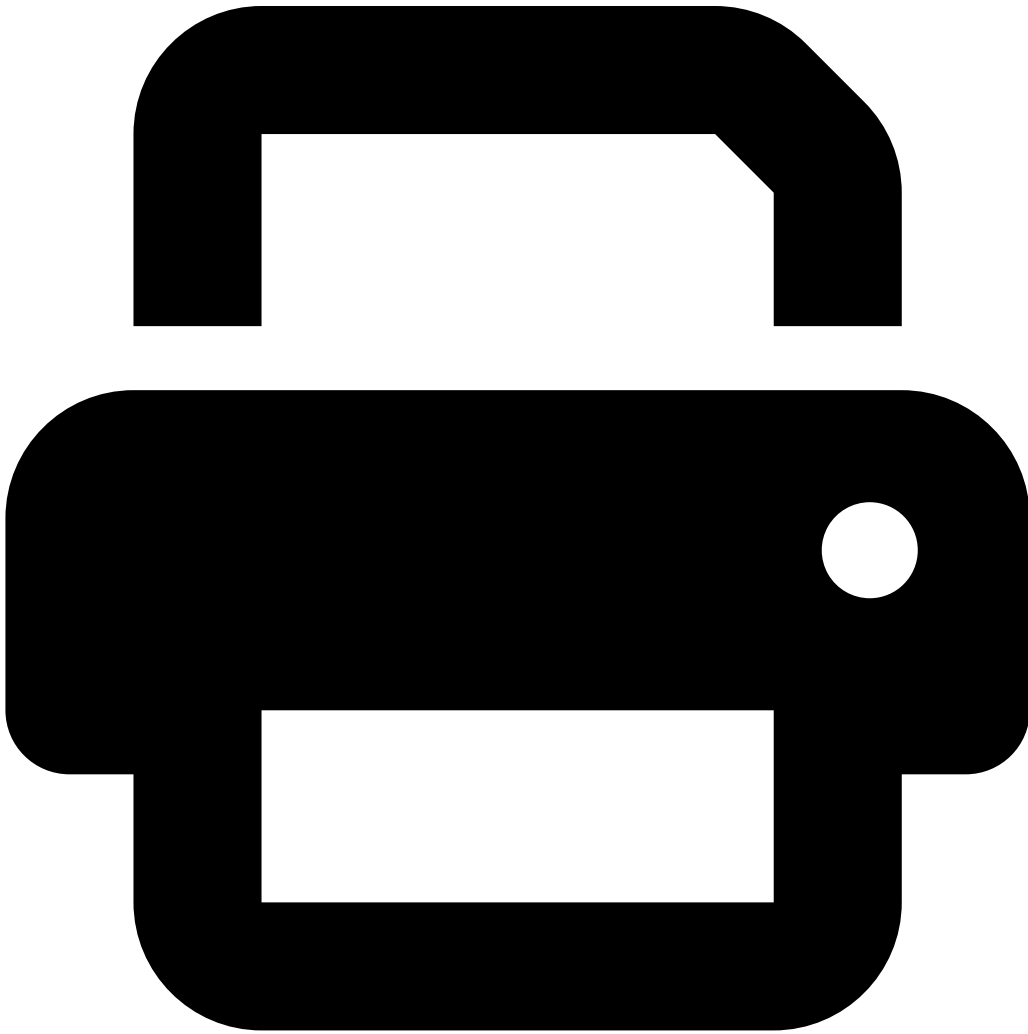
Authentic Spaghetti alla Puttanesca Recipe This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











Spaghetti alla Puttanesca Recipe is one of those bold, rustic pasta dishes that proves simple ingredients can create incredible flavor. Spaghetti alla Puttanesca is a traditional Italian recipe made with tomatoes, olives, capers, garlic, and anchovies, bringing together salty, briny, and rich Mediterranean flavors in every bite.

This pasta recipe comes together in about 30 minutes, making it perfect for busy weeknights when you want something comforting but full of character. It's the kind of pantry pasta I grew up around in Italy—simple, unfussy, and always deeply satisfying. Once the sauce simmers and the pasta is tossed through, you get a dish that tastes like it took hours, not minutes.

Things to know about Authentic Spaghetti alla Puttanesca Recipe

- Don't skip the anchovies. They melt into the sauce and add incredible depth without making the pasta taste fishy.
- Cook the pasta just until al dente so it finishes perfectly in the sauce.
- Save some pasta water to help the sauce cling to every strand of spaghetti.
- Use good-quality olives and capers for the best flavor.

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently in a skillet with a splash of water.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Puttanesca traditionally contain anchovies?

Yes. Traditional Spaghetti alla Puttanesca includes anchovies, which dissolve into the sauce and provide a savory, umami-rich flavor.

Can I make it vegetarian?

Absolutely. Simply omit the anchovies. The olives and capers will still provide plenty of bold flavor.

What pasta is best for Puttanesca?

Spaghetti is the classic choice, but linguine and bucatini work beautifully as well.

Final Thoughts

Spaghetti alla Puttanesca is proof that some of the best Italian recipes come from humble ingredients. It's quick, affordable, and packed with the bold Mediterranean

If you enjoy simple Italian recipes made with everyday ingredients, here are a few more favorites from my kitchen. From classic pasta dishes to fresh salads and appetizers, these recipes pair beautifully with Spaghetti alla Puttanesca and bring a taste of Italy to your table.

- **Classic Bruschetta** – “Serve this pasta alongside my Classic Bruschetta for an easy Italian-inspired dinner.”
- **Italian Roasted Pepper Salad** – “Pair Puttanesca with a fresh Italian Roasted Pepper Salad for a complete Mediterranean meal.”
- **Italian Tomato Salad with Heirloom Tomatoes** – “A simple tomato salad makes the perfect light side dish.”
- **Spaghetti alla Nerano** – “If you love classic Italian pasta recipes, be sure to try my Spaghetti alla Nerano.”
- **Spaghetti Carbonara** – “Another Roman favorite you'll love is my authentic Spaghetti Carbonara.”
- **Orecchiette with Italian Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes** – “Looking for another quick pasta dinner? Try this flavorful orecchiette recipe.”

Love easy Italian pasta recipes? Be sure to save this Spaghetti alla Puttanesca recipe and browse the pasta section of the blog for more authentic Italian favorites inspired by my childhood in Tuscany and 40 years in the restaurant business. From comforting classics to seasonal dishes, you'll find plenty of restaurant-quality recipes made simple for home cooks.

Authentic Spaghetti alla Puttanesca Recipe



Spaghetti alla Puttanesca is a classic Southern Italian pasta dish made with simple pantry staples like tomatoes, olives, capers, garlic, and anchovies. Ready in about 30 minutes, this bold and flavorful pasta is perfect for busy weeknights when you want a satisfying homemade meal without spending hours in the kitchen. Every bite delivers the savory, briny flavors that make Italian cooking so memorable.

- 12 oz. spaghetti
- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 4 fillets anchovy chopped
- 1 each Calabrian chili adjust to taste (can substitute red chili flakes)
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 cup Kalamata olives, sliced
- 1/3 cup capers (drained)
- 1/3 cup chopped Italian parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the spaghetti according to package directions until al dente.
2. While the pasta cooks, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

3. Add the garlic, anchovies, and red pepper flakes. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring frequently, until fragrant and the anchovies have melted into the oil.
4. Stir in the crushed tomatoes, olives, and capers. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for about 15 minutes.
5. Reserve 1 cup of pasta water before draining the spaghetti.
6. Add the drained pasta to the sauce. Toss well, adding a splash of pasta water if needed to loosen the sauce.
7. Stir in the parsley and season with black pepper. Taste and add salt only if needed, as the olives and capers already provide plenty of seasoning

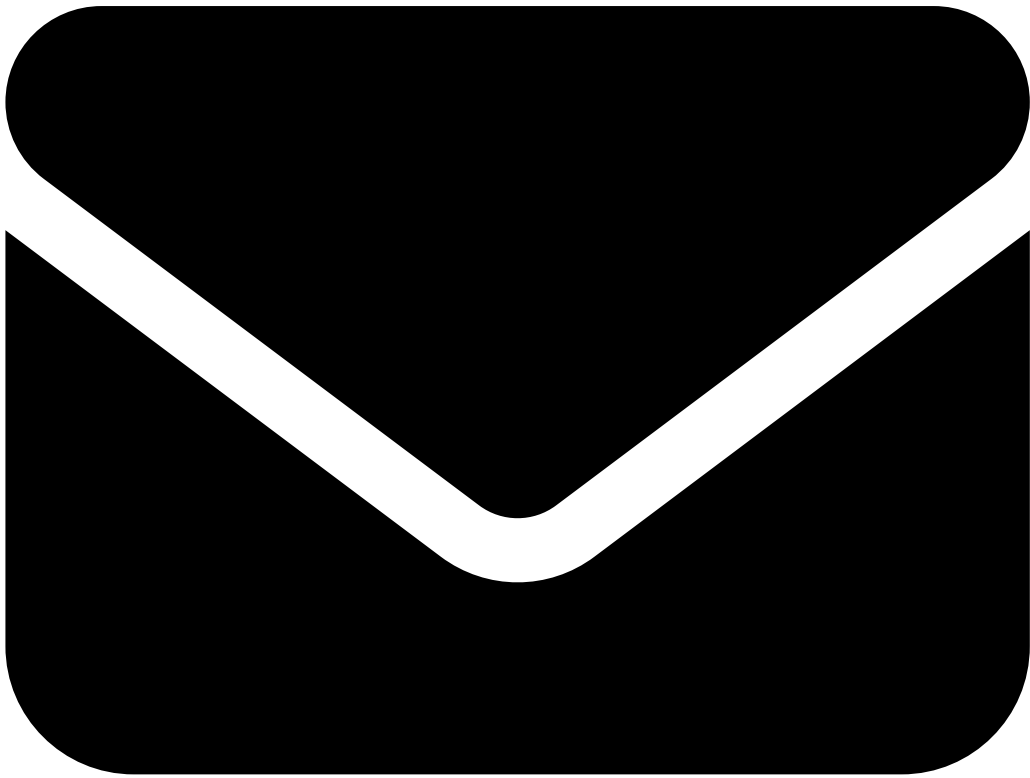
Spaghetti alla Puttanesca Recipe Spaghetti alla Puttanesca
classic Italian pasta recipe

Italian Rigatoni with Silky Whipped Ricotta and Summer Vegetables

Italian Rigatoni with Silky Whipped Ricotta and Summer Vegetables

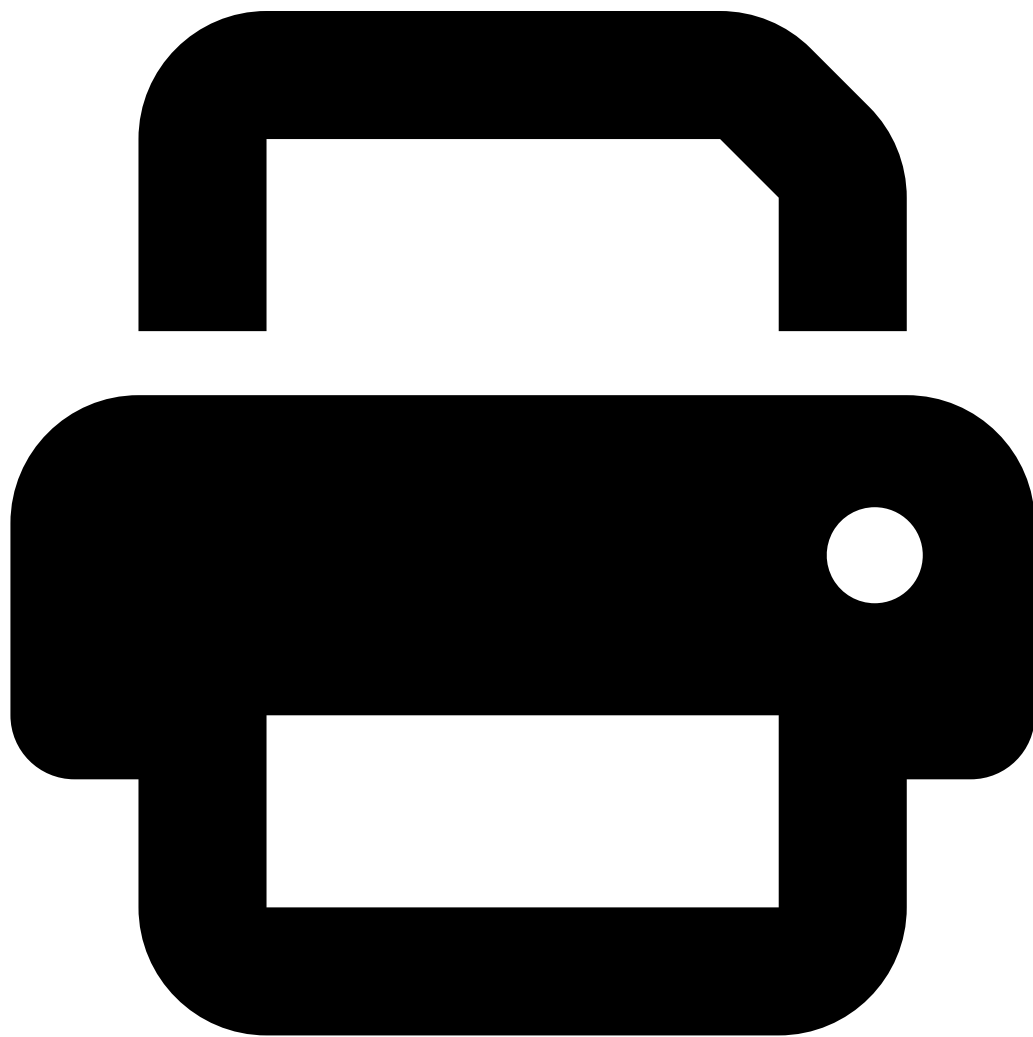
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This is the kind of pasta I make in the middle of summer when the garden is producing more zucchini and cherry tomatoes than I know what to do with.

Italian cooking has always been about making the most of what's fresh and in season. Some of the best meals come from looking at what's growing right now and letting a handful of simple ingredients shine.

For this recipe, sweet cherry tomatoes, tender zucchini, and fresh spinach are tossed with rigatoni and a silky whipped ricotta sauce. Instead of simply stirring the ricotta into the pasta, I blend it with Pecorino Romano and warm pasta water until it's completely smooth and creamy. The result is a light, velvety sauce that coats every piece of pasta while allowing the vegetables to remain the star of the dish.

Finished with fresh basil and a touch of lemon zest, this is

the kind of simple Italian-inspired dinner I find myself making on repeat all summer long.

Things to know about this Italian Italian Rigatoni with Silky Whipped Ricotta and Summer Vegetables

Tips for the Silkiest Ricotta Sauce

How to make ricotta silky smooth

If your ricotta is grainy, don't skip this step. Whisk it with warm pasta water until it becomes loose and creamy. For an ultra-smooth texture, you can even blend it for a few seconds. Whole milk ricotta works best because it naturally emulsifies better.

Prevent watery zucchini

Zucchini releases water as it cooks. To avoid a watery sauce:

- Sauté it over medium-high heat so moisture evaporates
- Don't salt it too early (this draws out extra water)
- Let it get lightly golden for better flavor

Why pasta water matters

The starch in pasta water is what turns ricotta from thick to silky. Add it gradually—it helps bind everything into a glossy sauce instead of a dry mixture.

Don't overheat the ricotta

Once the ricotta is added to the pasta, keep the heat low or off. High heat can cause it to tighten or separate instead of staying smooth and creamy.

Best pasta shapes to use

Short pasta like rigatoni, penne, or paccheri hold the sauce best. Long pasta like spaghetti also works, but short shapes give a more traditional Italian texture.

Variations

- Add peas for a spring version
- Add pancetta for a salty, savory twist
- Swap basil for mint for a fresher finish
- Add chili flakes for subtle heat

More Italian Recipes You'll Love

If you're into simple, seasonal Italian cooking like this zucchini pasta, here are a few more recipes from the blog that fit the same fresh, no-fuss style

- **Classic Zucchini Ricotta Pasta (Rustic Version)** – This is the simpler, more traditional home-style version where ricotta is gently stirred in instead of whipped.
- **Authentic pasta Portofino**— fresh tomatoes, basil pesto, and pasta for a simple summer classic
- **Sausage and Peppers Italian Skillet** – rustic, savory, and perfect for weeknight dinners or sandwiches
- **Baked Ricotta with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes** – warm, creamy ricotta topped with burst tomatoes and herbs

These are all built around the same idea—simple Italian ingredients, cooked at their peak, and kept beautifully uncomplicated.

Italian Rigatoni with Silky Whipped Ricotta and Summer Vegetables



This **Italian Rigatoni with Silky Whipped Ricotta and Summer Vegetables** is a fresh and flavorful pasta recipe made with zucchini, cherry tomatoes, spinach, and a velvety whipped ricotta sauce. Blended with Pecorino Romano and pasta water until smooth, the ricotta creates a light, creamy coating that perfectly complements the seasonal vegetables. Ready in about 30 minutes, it's an easy Italian-inspired dinner that's perfect for summer.

- 12 oz. rigatoni
- 2 medium zucchini, cut into half-moons
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 2 cups whole milk ricotta
- 1/2 cup Pecorino Romano, grated
- 2 gloves garlic minced
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp lemon zest
- 1- 1 1/2 cups reserved pasta water
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- basil leaves for serving

1. Cook the pasta

Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil. Cook the rigatoni until al dente.

Reserve 2 cups of pasta water before draining.

2. Make the whipped ricotta sauce

In a tall container or measuring cup, combine the ricotta, Pecorino Romano, lemon zest, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm pasta water.

Using an immersion blender, blend until completely smooth and creamy. Add additional pasta water as needed until the ricotta becomes silky and pourable.

3. Cook the vegetables

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Add the zucchini and cook for 5–6 minutes until lightly golden and tender.

Add the cherry tomatoes and continue cooking for another 4–5 minutes until they begin to burst and release their juices.

Stir in the garlic and cook 1 minute longer

Add the spinach and cook until wilted, about 1–2 minutes.

Season with salt and pepper.

4. Combine

Add the drained rigatoni to the skillet.

Remove the pan from the heat and pour in the whipped ricotta sauce. Toss gently until the pasta is evenly coated, adding additional pasta water as needed to loosen the sauce.

5. **Finish and serve**

Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and black pepper.

Top with fresh basil, extra Pecorino Romano, and a drizzle of olive oil before serving.

Main Course

Italian

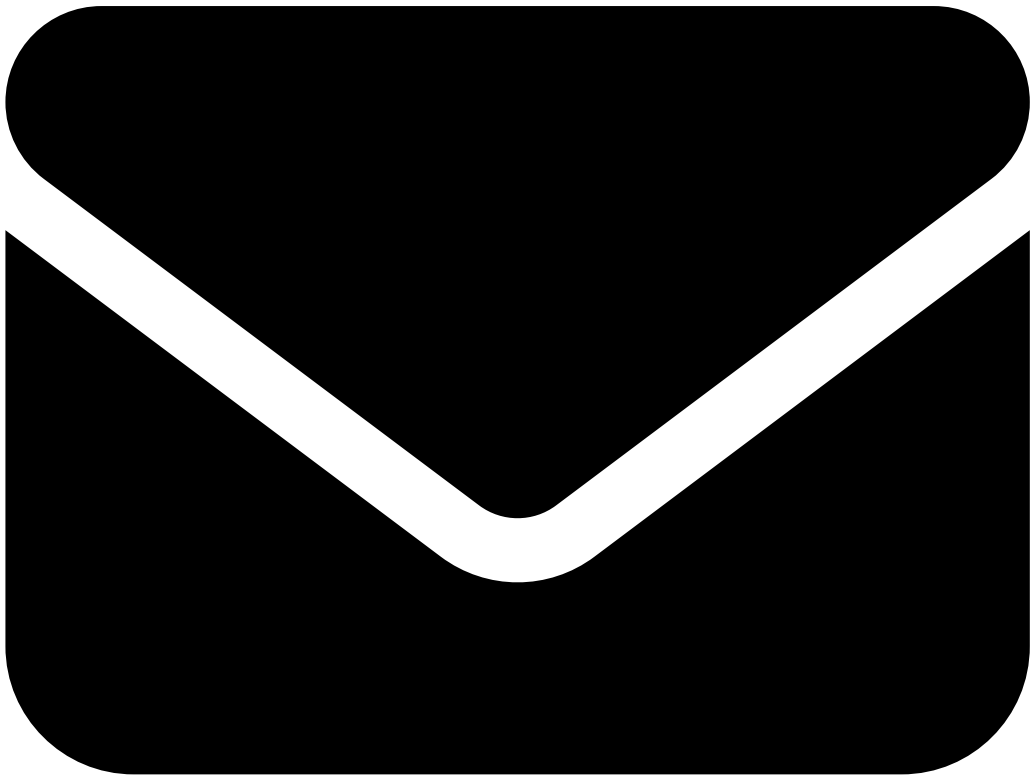
Italian vegetable pasta with ricotta sauce

Italian Orecchiette with Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes

Italian Orecchiette with Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes

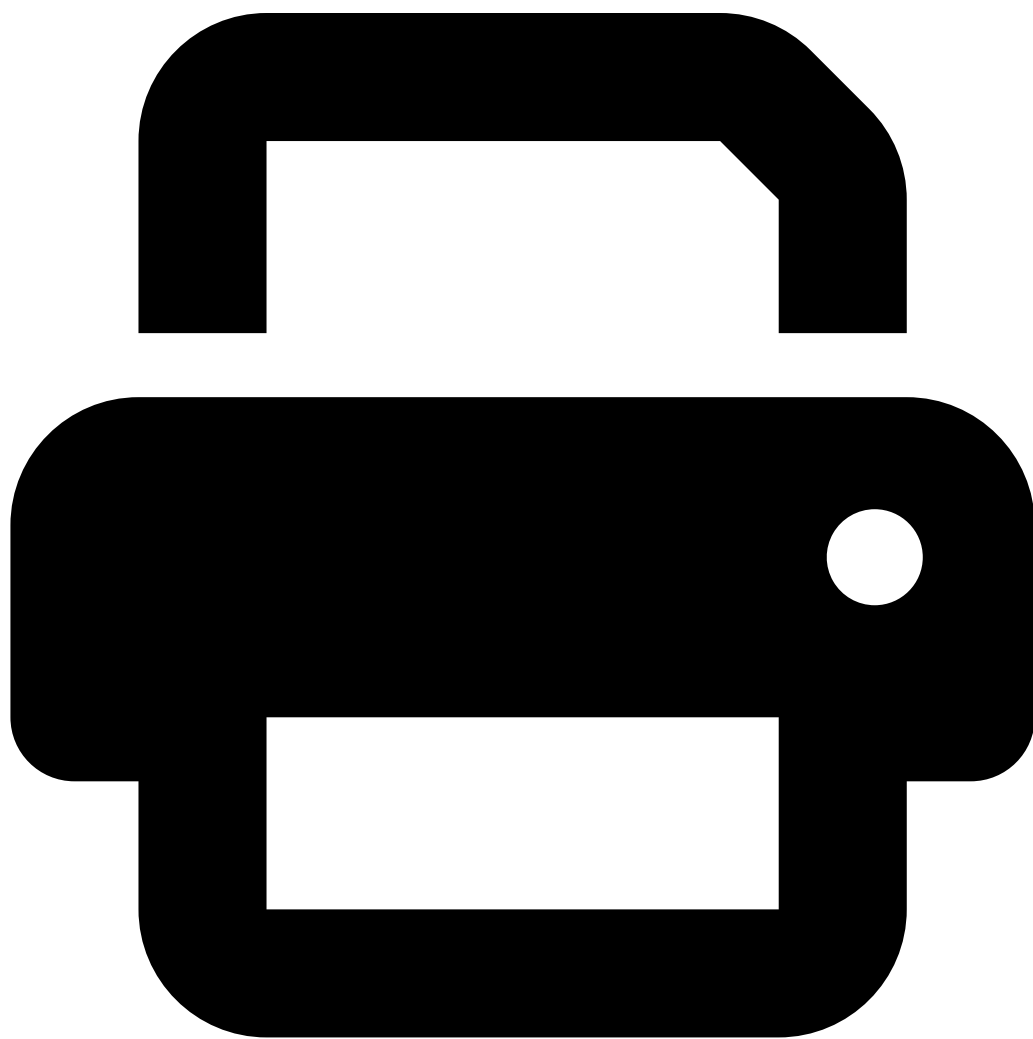
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This is the pasta Italians actually make on weeknights.” And honestly, recipes like this are exactly why I love Italian cooking so much. With just a handful of simple ingredients, you can create a pasta that tastes like it came straight from a small trattoria in Southern Italy. The Italian sausage adds richness, the cherry tomatoes burst into a light fresh sauce, and the Pecorino Romano melts into the pasta water creating the silkiest finish.

This orecchiette with sausage and cherry tomatoes is one of my favorite quick dinners because it’s ready in less than 30 minutes but still feels comforting and homemade. It’s rustic, simple, and the kind of pasta recipe you’ll want to keep on repeat all summer long.

Things to know about this Italian Orecchiette with Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes

Tips for the Best Orecchiette Pasta

- Use high-quality Italian sausage for the best flavor.
- Salt your pasta water generously – it seasons the entire dish.
- Don't skip the pasta water. It helps create the silky sauce.
- Add the Pecorino Romano off the heat so it melts smoothly into the pasta.

What to Serve with Orecchiette and Sausage

This pasta pairs beautifully with:

- A crisp Italian green salad
- Garlic bread or crusty Italian bread
- Roasted vegetables
- A chilled glass of Pinot Grigio or Vermentino

Storage

Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently with a splash of water to loosen the sauce.

More Italian Recipes You'll Love

If you loved this orecchiette with sausage and cherry tomatoes, here are a few more authentic Italian recipes to try

next:

- Italian Tomato Salad
- Chopped Peach Caprese Salad with Italian Vinaigrette]
- Easy Summer Zucchini and Tomato Gratin
- Acqua Pazza (Italian Poached Fish
- Italian Pesto tortellini Pasta Salad
- Authentic Sicilian potato salad (no Mayo)

These simple Italian recipes are perfect for summer dinners, family gatherings, and easy weeknight meals.

Italian Orecchiette with Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes



This Italian Orecchiette with Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes is a simple Southern Italian pasta made with Italian sausage, burst cherry tomatoes, garlic, white wine, fresh basil, and Pecorino Romano. Finished with pasta water for a silky, glossy sauce, it's an easy and comforting weeknight dinner.

- 12 oz. orecchiette pasta
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 lb. Italian sausage, casing removed
- 3 cups cherry tomatoes cut in half
- 2 cloves garlic minced

- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup reserved pasta water, plus more if needed (always save more than the recipe calls for)
- 1/2 cup grated Pecorino Romano
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, torn
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Cook the Pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the orecchiette until al dente. Reserve about 1 cup of pasta water before draining.

2. Brown the Sausage

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the Italian sausage and cook until browned, breaking it apart with a wooden spoon.

3. Add Garlic and Tomatoes

Stir in the sliced garlic and cook for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Add the cherry tomatoes and cook until they begin to burst and release their juices.

4. Deglaze with White Wine

Pour in the white wine and simmer for 2–3 minutes until slightly reduced.

5. Toss Everything Together

Add the drained pasta directly to the skillet along with the reserved pasta water. Toss until the sauce becomes glossy and coats the pasta.

6. Finish the Dish

Turn off the heat and stir in the Pecorino Romano and fresh basil. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

Main Course

Italian

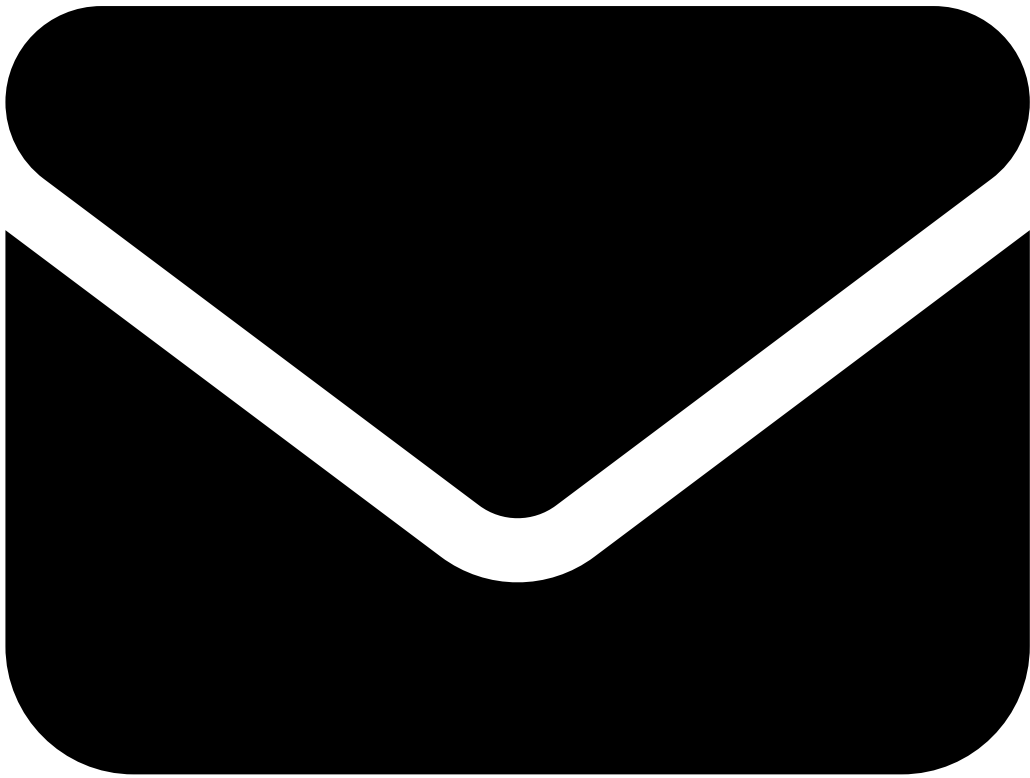
Italian Orecchiette with Sausage and Cherry Tomatoes

Tubettini Pasta Salad
(Italian pasta fredda)

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(Italian pasta fredda)

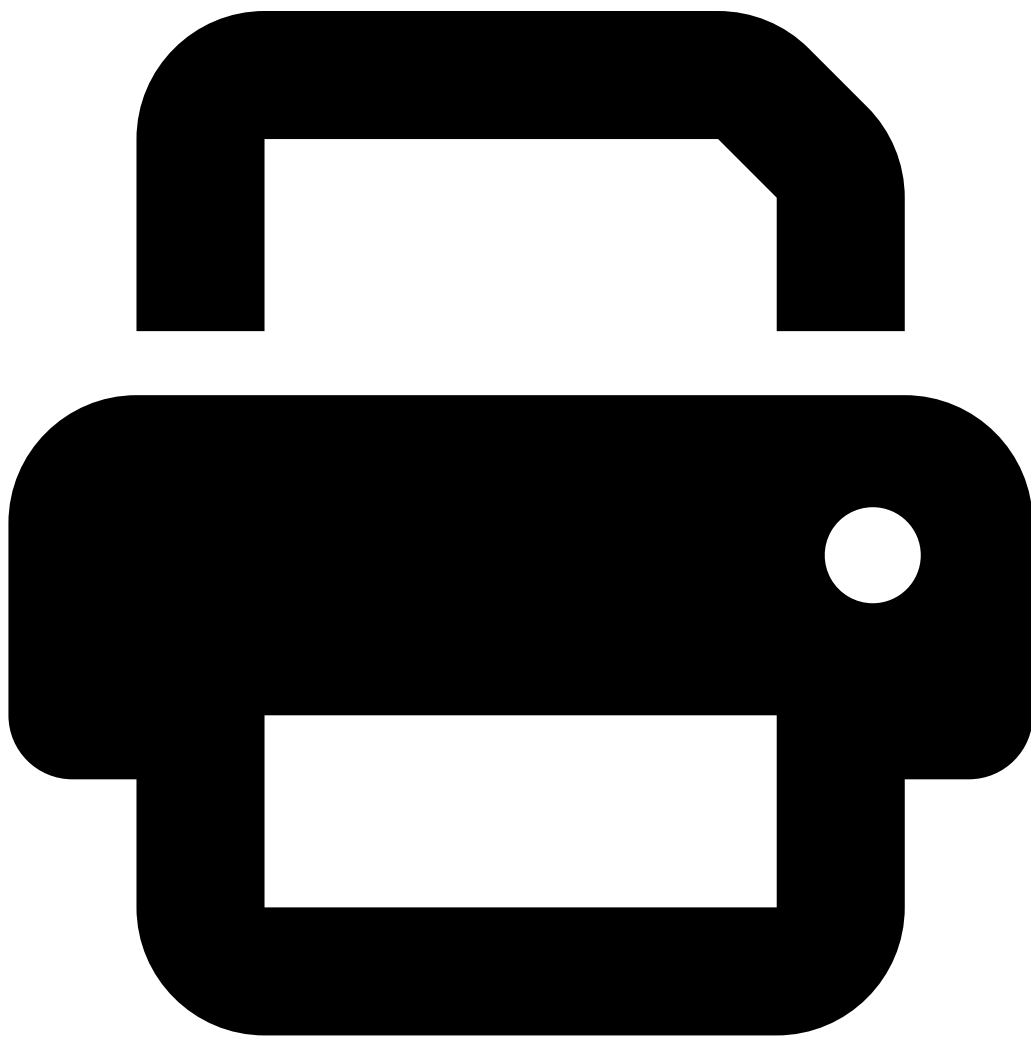
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This is the kind of pasta salad I always come back to once the weather warms up—simple, fresh, and made with whatever I have in the fridge. I like using tubettini because it catches all the little bits of salumi, cheese, and dressing in every bite, and it reminds me of the easy summer meals we'd throw together without overthinking it. It's the kind of dish that gets better as it sits, perfect for making ahead and putting out for a relaxed lunch or casual get-together.

Things to know about this Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

- The meats are cut small, about the size of the

pasta—nothing chunky

- It's **olive oil based**, never creamy
- It should feel **balanced, not heavy or overloaded**
- Served at **room temp or slightly chilled**, not ice cold
- This is the kind of dish you'd see packed for a beach day or put out for a casual summer lunch. It's flexible—everyone kind of makes their own version based on what they have.

Optional Add-Ins

- Cubed provolone for a sharper bite
- Marinated artichokes
- Roasted red peppers
- A handful of arugula right before serving

Storage

Store any leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Before serving, let it sit at room temperature for about 15–20 minutes and give it a quick toss with a drizzle of olive oil to refresh the flavors, as the pasta will absorb some of the dressing.

If you love simple, authentic Italian summer recipes like this, you'll want to try a few more of my favorites. Check out my Italian lemon **pasta al limone**, or classic **Italian pasta Portofino** on the blog for more fresh, seasonal inspiration. And if you make this Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda) please leave me a comment I love hearing from you . It's my favorite part!!!!

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian

Pasta Fredda)



This authentic Italian tubettini pasta salad is loaded with fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and savory Italian meats, all tossed in a simple olive oil dressing. The perfect light and flavorful summer pasta fredda for gatherings, picnics, or easy weeknight meals.

- 12 oz, Tubettini (You can use any small shaped pasta)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
- 1 cup fresh mozzarella (cubed or pearls)
- 1 cup each mixed Italian meats, diced: (salami mortadella prosciutto)
- 1/2 cup pitted kalamata olives
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup torn fresh basil leaves

EASY Italian vinaigrette

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 Tsp lemon juice
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. dried oregano
- 1 Tbsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tsp. honey
- salt and pepper to taste

1. Cook the tubettini in salted water until al dente.

2. Drain and spread it out so it cools completely.
3. In a large bowl, combine tomatoes, mozzarella, meats, olives, and onion.
4. Add the cooled pasta.
5. Toss with the Italian vinaigrette
6. Fold in basil at the end.
7. Let it sit about 30 minutes before serving.

Instructions for the Vinaigrette

1. Add all of the ingredients to a glass jar with a lid shake variously until dressing is emulsified

Main Course, Salad, Side Dish
Italian
pasta, Italian, Salad

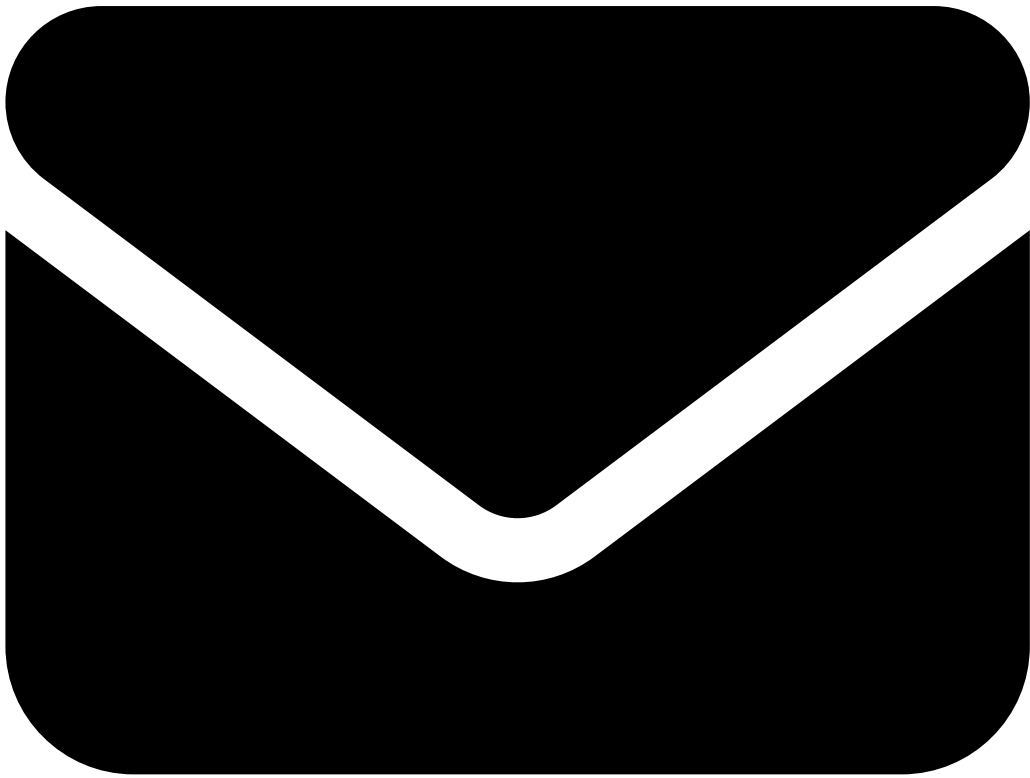
Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon Pasta)

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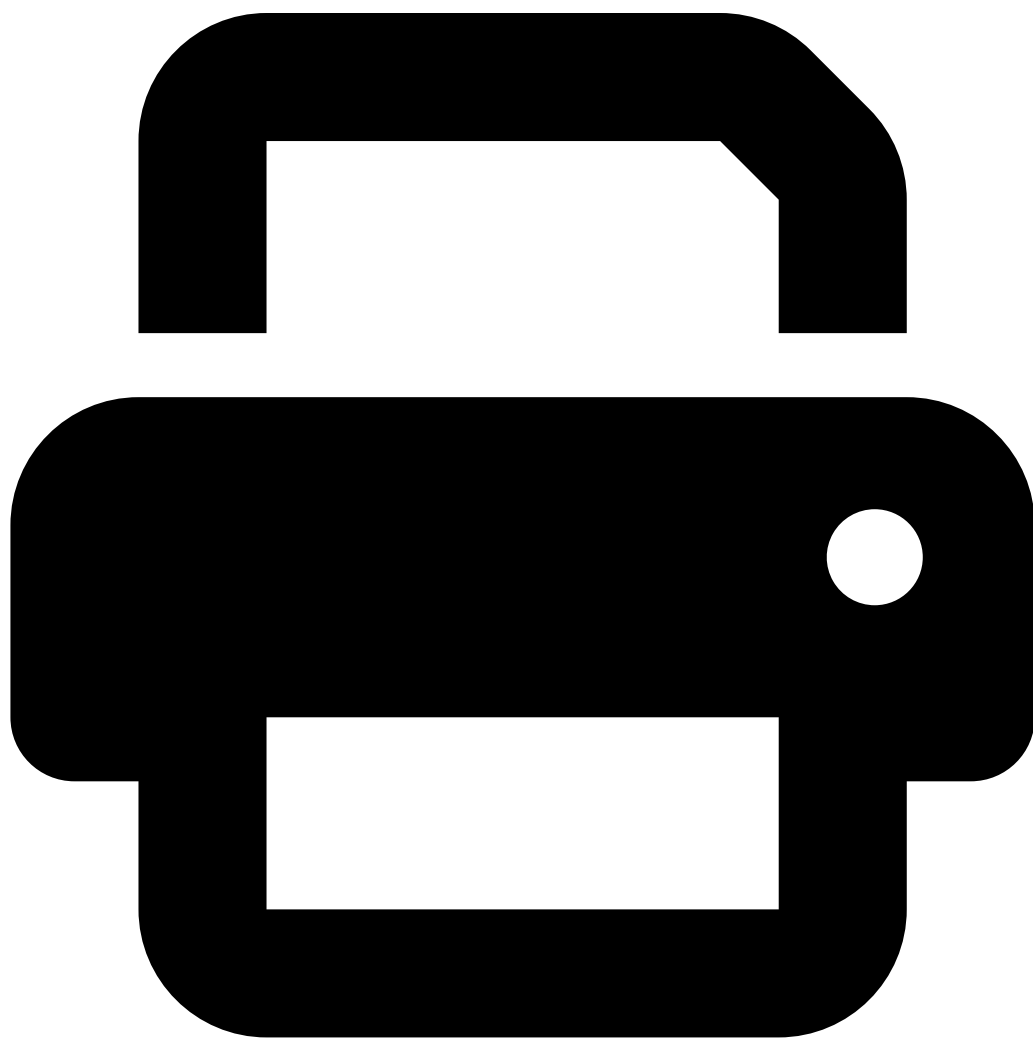
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There's a reason Pasta al Limone is so closely tied to the Amalfi Coast—this stretch of southern Italy is famous for its incredibly fragrant lemons, grown right along the cliffs overlooking the sea. Those lemons are the heart of this dish, and once you taste it made the right way, you understand why.

I've always been drawn to recipes like this—simple, ingredient-driven, and rooted in tradition. And living in California, it feels even closer to home—we have a Meyer lemon tree in our garden, and when it's full, this is one of the first dishes I reach for. The flavor is a little softer and slightly sweeter than traditional Italian lemons, but it works beautifully here.

No garlic, no cream—just the classic balance that makes this dish feel light, silky, and full of bright lemon flavor.

Things to know about this Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon pasta)

Authentic Pasta al Limone is all about balance. The biggest mistake is adding too much lemon juice—this isn't meant to be sharp or sour. The zest is where most of the flavor and aroma come from, while the juice should stay in the background.

Also, the “creaminess” in this dish doesn't come from cream—it comes from properly emulsifying the pasta water with the butter or olive oil and cheese. If your sauce ever feels too tight or dry, just add a splash of pasta water and toss again. It should look glossy, not heavy.

And if you're using Meyer lemons from your garden, keep in mind they're naturally sweeter and less acidic than traditional Italian lemons, so you may need slightly less juice to keep everything balanced.

If you love simple, ingredient-driven Italian recipes like this Pasta al Limone, you might also enjoy a few other favorites from the blog:

- A cozy bowl of creamy zucchini pasta for an easy weeknight dinner
- Or bright and easy Tomato Pesto classic Portofino pasta that comes together in minutes
- Or a classic Sunday-style sauce loaded with flavor, inspired by traditional Italian cooking

You can find all of these recipes (and more) on the blog—perfect for building a collection of simple, authentic meals you'll come back to again and again.

Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon Pasta)



Authentic Pasta al Limone made the Italian way—no cream, just lemon, butter, cheese, and pasta water for a silky, bright, and easy lemon pasta recipe.

- 12 oz, pasta (Use your favorite shape,)
- 2 large lemons (juice and zest)
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 cup pasta water (make a habit to reserve more than the recipe calls for)
- salt and fresh black pepper to taste
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- fresh basil (for serving)

1. Boil the Pasta

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until al dente. Before draining, reserve at least 1 cup of pasta water.

2. . Build the Base

In a large skillet over low heat, melt the butter (or warm the olive oil). Add lemon zest red pepper flakes if using and gently heat—don't let it brown.

3. **Create the Sauce**

Add a splash (about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of reserved pasta water to the skillet. Stir to combine and create a light emulsion.

4. **Add the Pasta**

Transfer the drained pasta directly into the skillet. Toss well to coat.

5. **Finish with Lemon & Cheese**

Remove from heat. Add lemon juice and grated cheese, tossing continuously. Add more pasta water as needed until the sauce becomes glossy and creamy.

6. **Season & Serve**

Taste and adjust salt and pepper. Serve immediately with extra cheese and a little more lemon zest on top.

Main Course

Italian

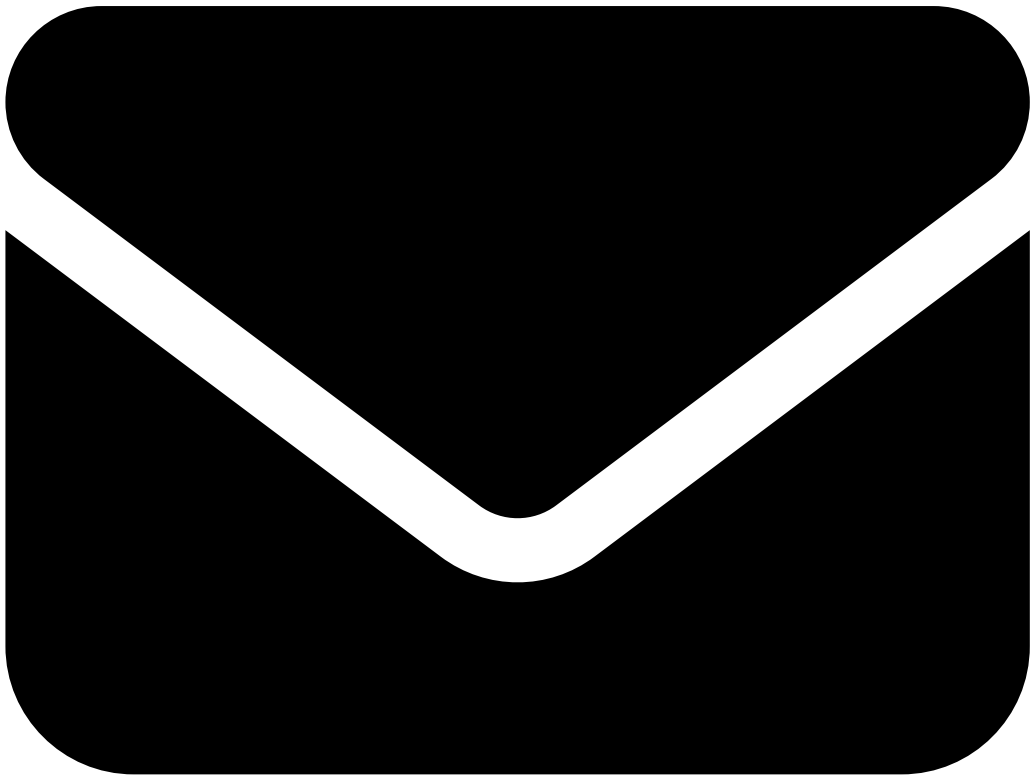
pasta, Italian, lemon

Authentic Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

Authentic Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

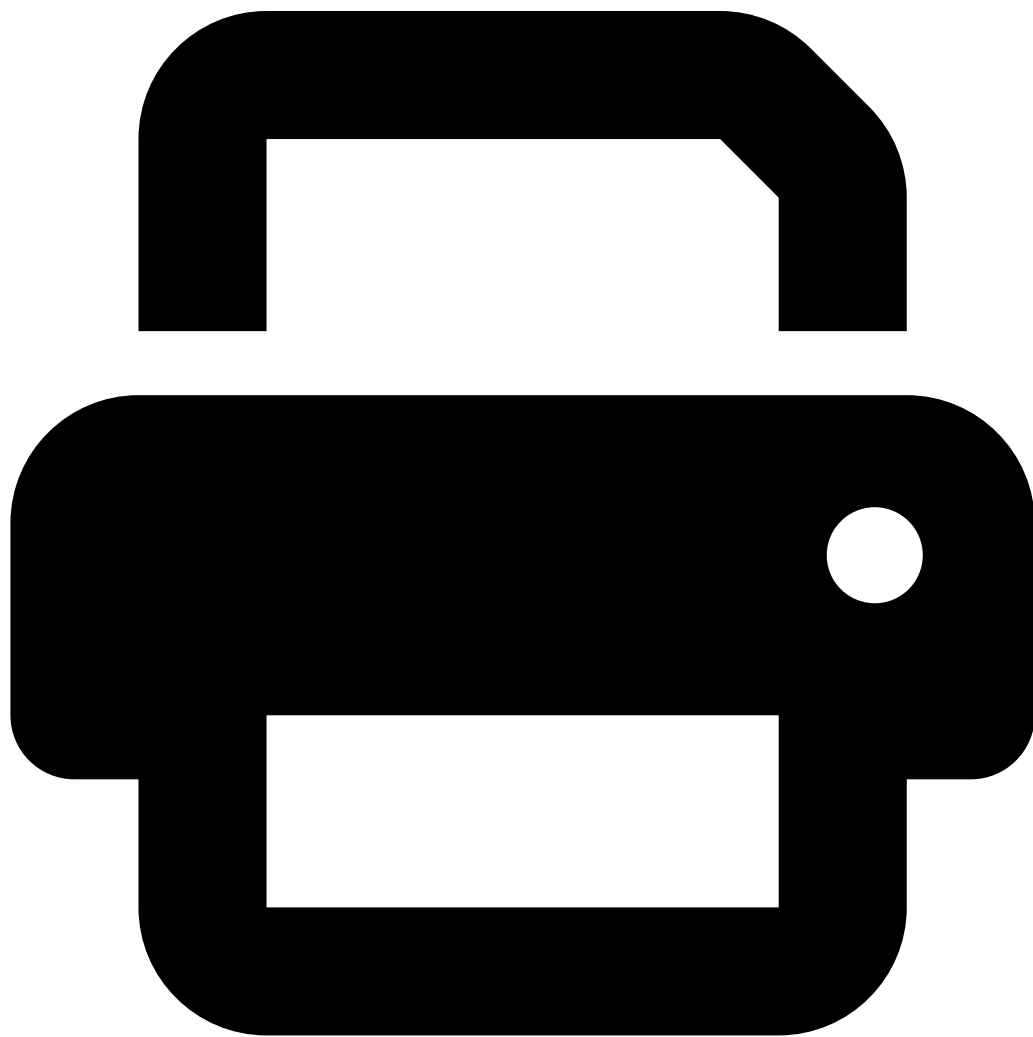
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There's something about the Italian Riviera that changes the way you cook. The food is lighter, brighter, and built on ingredients that don't need much help. This Pasta Portofino is exactly that.

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
-

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.

Authentic Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta



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

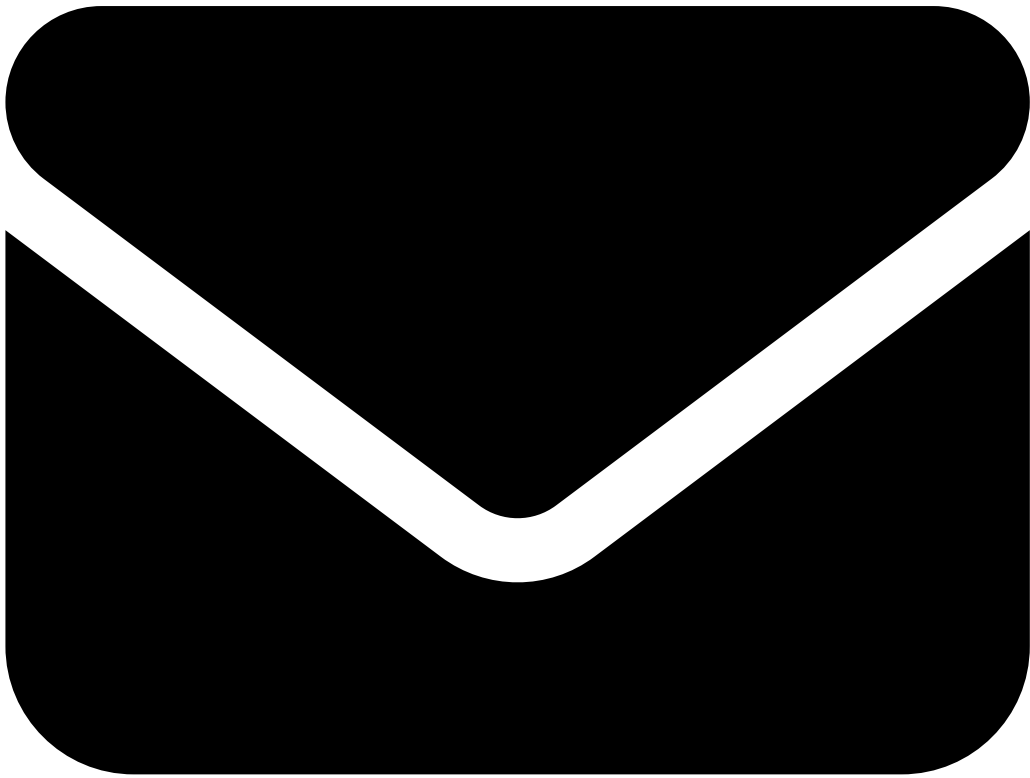
pasta, tomato, Portofino, Italian

15 Weeknight Italian Meals: Easy Recipes in Under 45 Minutes

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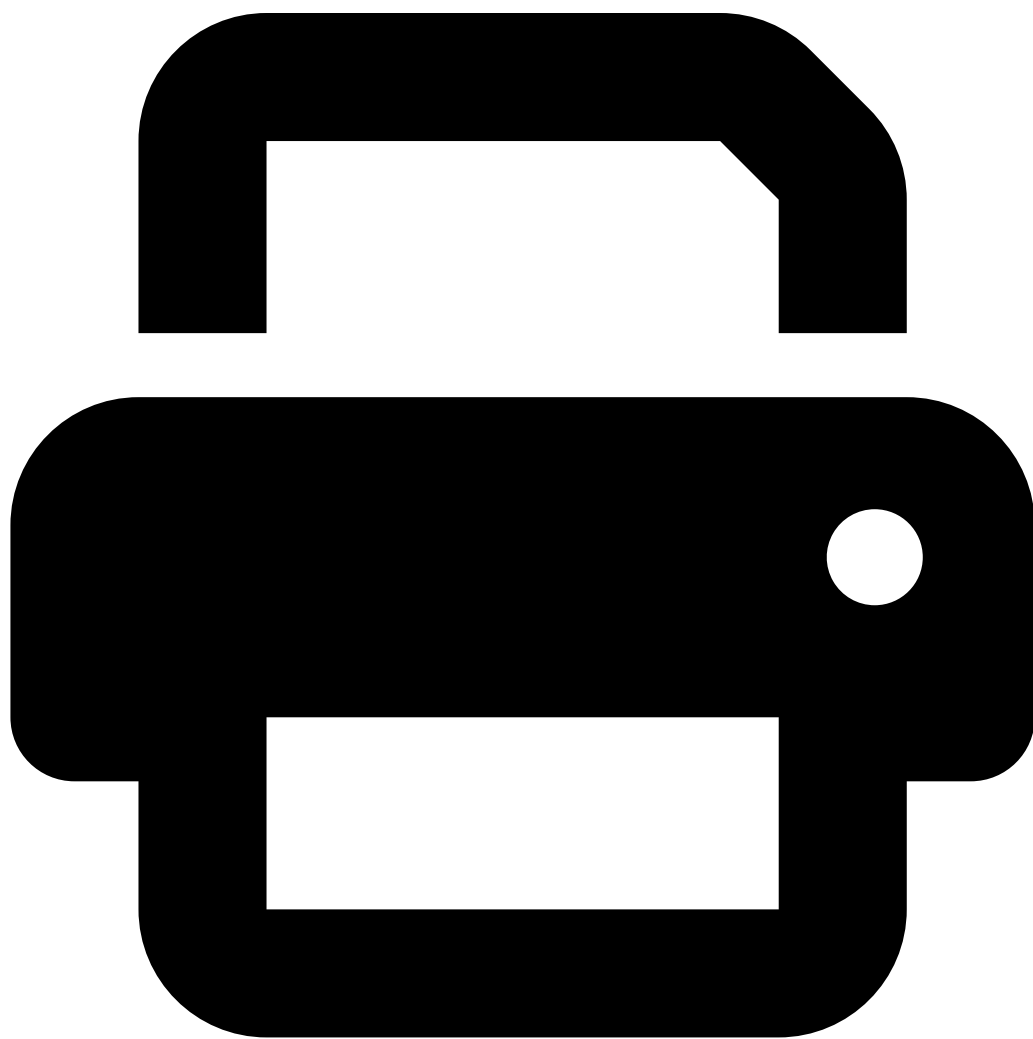
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Weeknight cooking doesn't need to be complicated to be good. Some of the best Italian meals are built on simple ingredients, cooked well, and brought to the table without overthinking it.

This is the kind of food you make when you want something real—pasta that comes together in one pan, sauces that don't take all day, and meals that feel comforting without being heavy. It's not about perfection, it's about flavor, timing, and knowing a few go-to recipes you can rely on.

Inside this 15 weeknight Italian meals guide, you'll find a collection of easy weeknight Italian meals—from quick pastas and skillet dinners to cozy baked dishes and fresh, seasonal sides. Everything here is designed to work in real life, with recipes you can make in under 45 minutes and come back to again and again.

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

Light, fresh, and full of spring flavors! This **Lemon Asparagus Pasta** features tender sautéed asparagus, bright lemon sauce, and Parmesan, perfect for an easy weeknight dinner or elegant spring meal.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini)

This one-pot creamy zucchini pasta is a traditional Italian recipe where pasta cooks directly with zucchini, onion, and olive oil, creating a naturally creamy sauce with Parmesan and pasta starch.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Spicy pasta Norcina Spicy Italian sausage pasta

Spicy pasta alla norcina is an Italian pasta dish made with sausage in a creamy cheese sauce. There are different variations, some have mushrooms or different cured meats. The recipe is easy to make and takes about as much time to make as it takes the pasta to cook[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pesto tortellini pasta salad

If you're looking for the perfect summer pasta salad, this pesto tortellini pasta **Salad** is one of my favorites. Full of Mediterranean flavors and hearty enough to be a meal on its

own, it's one of those dishes that always disappears quickly when ever I bring it to potlucks, or Sunday lunches.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Authentic Italian Pasta e Fagioli

Authentic Pasta e fagioli is a humble, hearty and soul-warming Italian pasta dish that brings back vivid childhood memories of the smell of simmering beans, tomatoes, and garlic. for many Italian families, pasta e fagioli was the meal that could feed everyone on a tight budget. It's the ultimate "cucina povera" dish- poor kitchen.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Air Fryer Parmesan chicken Spiedini

Air fryer parmesan chicken spiedini are Italy's version of skewers or kabobs. In this spiedini recipe boneless, skinless chicken thighs are marinated in a blend of Italian spices, cooked in the air fryer, and basted with a delicious garlic, parmesan butter sauce.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Chicken Meatballs with marry me orzo

Tender chicken meatballs are always a hit at the dinner table, and when you pair them with creamy *Marry Me Orzo*, you've got the ultimate comfort meal. This dish brings together juicy baked chicken meatballs and orzo pasta simmered in a rich Parmesan and sun-dried tomato cream sauce. It's the kind of meal that feels special enough for date night yet easy enough for a weeknight family dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pollo al Limone Italian lemon

chicken

Lemons are in peak season right now, and there's no better way to celebrate their bright, zesty flavor than with this Italian Lemon Chicken. Known as *Pollo al Limone*, this dish is simple, rustic, and full of Southern Italian charm. With a golden sear, a light pan sauce, and a fresh lemon-parsley drizzle, it's the kind of meal that tastes like summer.GO TO RECIPE

Best cod Francese Recipe- in 30 minutes

Best Cod Francese Recipe – in 30 Minutes is a lightly battered, pan-fried cod fillet in an elegant lemon, butter and white wine sauce. It's similar to chicken piccata—but without the capers and with a velvety, lemon-butter sauce that clings to the golden crust. Cod Francese is a classic restaurant-style dish that's surprisingly simple to make at home. The hallmark is the light coating of flour and egg that gives the fish a delicate, crisp texture—perfect for soaking up that tangy, buttery sauce.GO TO RECIPE

Shrimp spaghetti with basil tomato sauce

This Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce is a simple, fresh pasta dish made with sautéed shrimp, juicy summer tomatoes, garlic, and plenty of fragrant basil. The sauce is created right in the pan by combining the tomato juices with starchy pasta water and a generous handful of grated parmesan, giving you a light flavorful coating that clings to the pasta.GO TO RECIPE

<https://lorianasheacooks.com/shrimp-tomato-basil-spaghetti/>

Authentic Italian shrimp oreganata

Crispy, garlicky, and straight out of an Italian kitchen.

This shrimp oreganata is all about simple ingredients—olive oil, lemon, breadcrumbs, and a heavy hand with oregano—baked until golden and perfect for scooping with bread.

It's fast, it's bold, and it tastes like something you'd order at your favorite spot... but better at home.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Crispy pan fried chicken cutlets

These crispy breaded chicken cutlet recipe are pan fried and they were a staple in my childhood growing up and in many Italian kitchens. They are juicy, crispy delicious and so easy to make. Serve the cutlets along side a salad for a light lunch or dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

The Best Italian-Style Fried Calamari

Golden, crispy, and impossible to stop eating.

This Italian-style fried calamari is light, crunchy, and finished with lemon and a pinch of salt—just the way it should be. No heavy batter, no fuss—just fresh squid, a quick fry, and that perfect crisp.

Serve it hot with marinara or straight up with lemon... either way, it's gone in minutes.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Braised Fennel Oreganata with Pancetta

Braised fennel oreganata with pancetta is one of those simple Italian side dishes that feels both rustic and elegant – the kind of recipe that tastes like it came out of a cozy countryside kitchen. Fennel is one of my favorite seasonal ingredients to cook with this time of year. When it's in season, it's sweet, aromatic, and incredibly versatile, and I love finding ways to let its natural flavor shine.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

One pan orzo with summer vegetables

Some meals just feel easy—especially when they come together in one pan. This one-pan orzo with summer vegetables is one of those simple, feel-good recipes that checks all the boxes: quick to make, minimal cleanup, and full of fresh summer flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

At the end of the day, weeknight cooking should feel manageable—not like a project. These are the kinds of Italian meals you can lean on when you want something good without spending hours in the kitchen. Simple ingredients, a few solid techniques, and recipes that actually work on a busy night.

Whether it's a quick pasta, a one-pan skillet, or something baked and cozy, this is the kind of cooking that becomes part of your routine—the meals you make without thinking twice, and the ones everyone looks forward to.

Save this guide so you always have a go-to list of easy weeknight Italian meals.

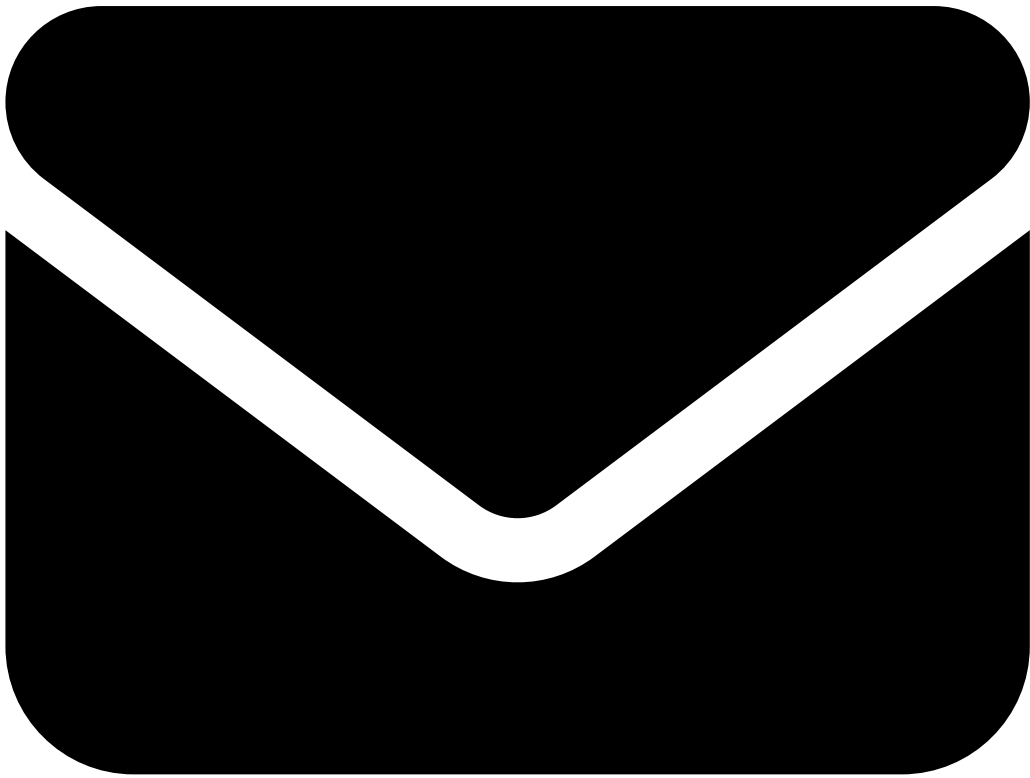
Pick a recipe to try this week, and come back when you need something new. For more simple, flavorful Italian recipes, explore the blog and find your next favorite.

Anelletti al Forno: Authentic Sicilian Baked Pasta Recipe

Anelletti al Forno: Authentic Sicilian Baked Pasta Recipe

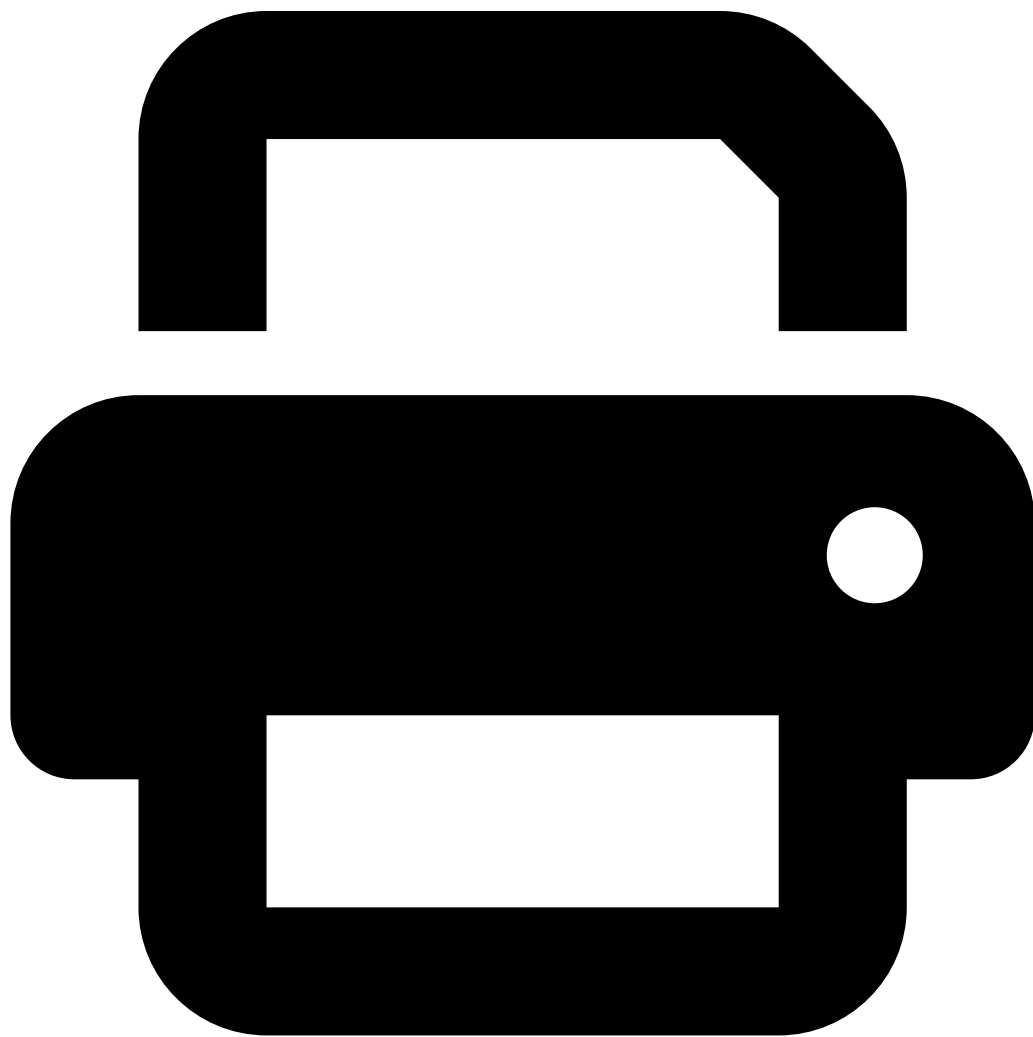
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If there's one dish that captures the heart of Sicilian home cooking, it's Anelletti al Forno. Made with tiny ring-shaped pasta, a rich ragù, sweet peas, and melty cheese, this baked pasta is as nostalgic as it is satisfying.

Unlike your typical baked ziti, this dish is layered and compact—almost like a pasta pie—meant to be sliced and served. It's the kind of recipe that shows up at holidays, Sunday dinners, and special occasions, bringing everyone to the table.

What makes it truly special is the balance of flavors and textures: tender pasta, savory meat sauce, pops of sweetness from peas, and that golden, breadcrumb topping. It's rustic, it's hearty, and it's pure Italian comfort.

Things to know about this Anelletti al Forno: Authentic Sicilian Baked Pasta Recipe

- **Undercook your pasta** slightly—this keeps it from getting mushy as it bakes.
- **Let it rest before slicing**—this is key for that signature “pasta cake” structure.
- **Breadcrumbs matter**—they give you that classic crisp Sicilian top layer.
- You can swap in **caciocavallo** or **pecorino** for a more traditional flavor.
- This dish is even better **the next day**, making it perfect for prepping ahead.

▪ Storage

- **Refrigerator:** 3–4 days in airtight container
- **Freezer:** 2–3 months; slice before freezing for easy portions. Reheat in oven at 350°F

For **Anelletti al forno**, the ideal pan is:

- **9×13-inch (23×33 cm) rectangular baking dish** – classic size, works well for layering and slicing.
- **Optional:** For a more “pasta cake” presentation, you can use a **round 9-inch (23 cm) springform pan**. This makes it easier to unmold and slice into wedges.
- Loved this Sicilian classic? You might also enjoy some of my other comforting Italian favorites:
 - My rich and simple **Sunday marinara sauce** (perfect base for this dish)
 - Creamy **crespelle parmigiano al brodo** for another baked classic
 - Or my bright **lemon asparagus pasta** for a lighter, spring-inspired option

□ Head to the blog for the full recipe and step-by-step instructions, and don't forget to save this one—it's a crowd-pleaser every time.

Anelletti al Forno: Authentic Sicilian Baked Pasta Recipe



A traditional Sicilian baked pasta made with anelletti, rich meat sauce, peas, and cheese—this Anelletti al Forno is the ultimate comforting, sliceable pasta dish perfect for gatherings.

- 1 Lbs. Anelletti (small ring pasta)
- 3 Tbsp Olive oil
- 1 cup onion (chopped)
- 1/2 Lb. Ground beef
- 1/2 Lb. Ground pork (or Italian sausage)
- 2 cups peas
- 2 cups sauce
- 2 Tbsp. Tomato paste
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup red wine

- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 2 cups Diced mozzarella
- 1 cup grated breadcrumbs

1. **Cook pasta** until just shy of al dente. Drain.
2. **Make sauce:** sauté onion in olive oil → add meat, brown → deglaze with wine → stir in tomato paste + marinara → simmer 30 minutes
3. Stir in peas, season to taste.
4. **Mix** pasta with sauce, grated cheese, and mozzarella.
5. **Assemble:**

Grease a **9×13-inch (23×33 cm) rectangular baking dish** *or* a **9-inch (23 cm) round springform pan** for a sliceable “pasta cake. Sprinkle a layer of breadcrumbs, add pasta mixture, top with more breadcrumbs + cheese.
6. **Bake** at 375°F for **50–60 minutes** until golden and bubbling.
7. **Rest** 10–15 min before slicing to hold shape.

9×13-inch (23×33 cm) rectangular baking dish

Main Course

Italian

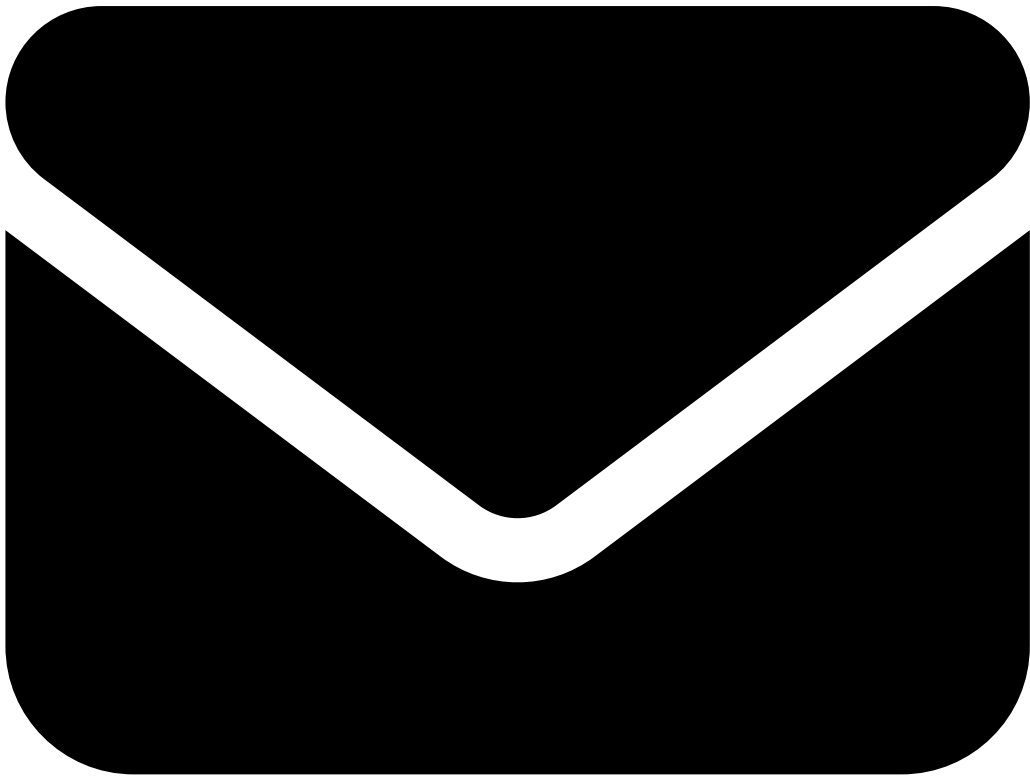
Anelletti, baked, Silician

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

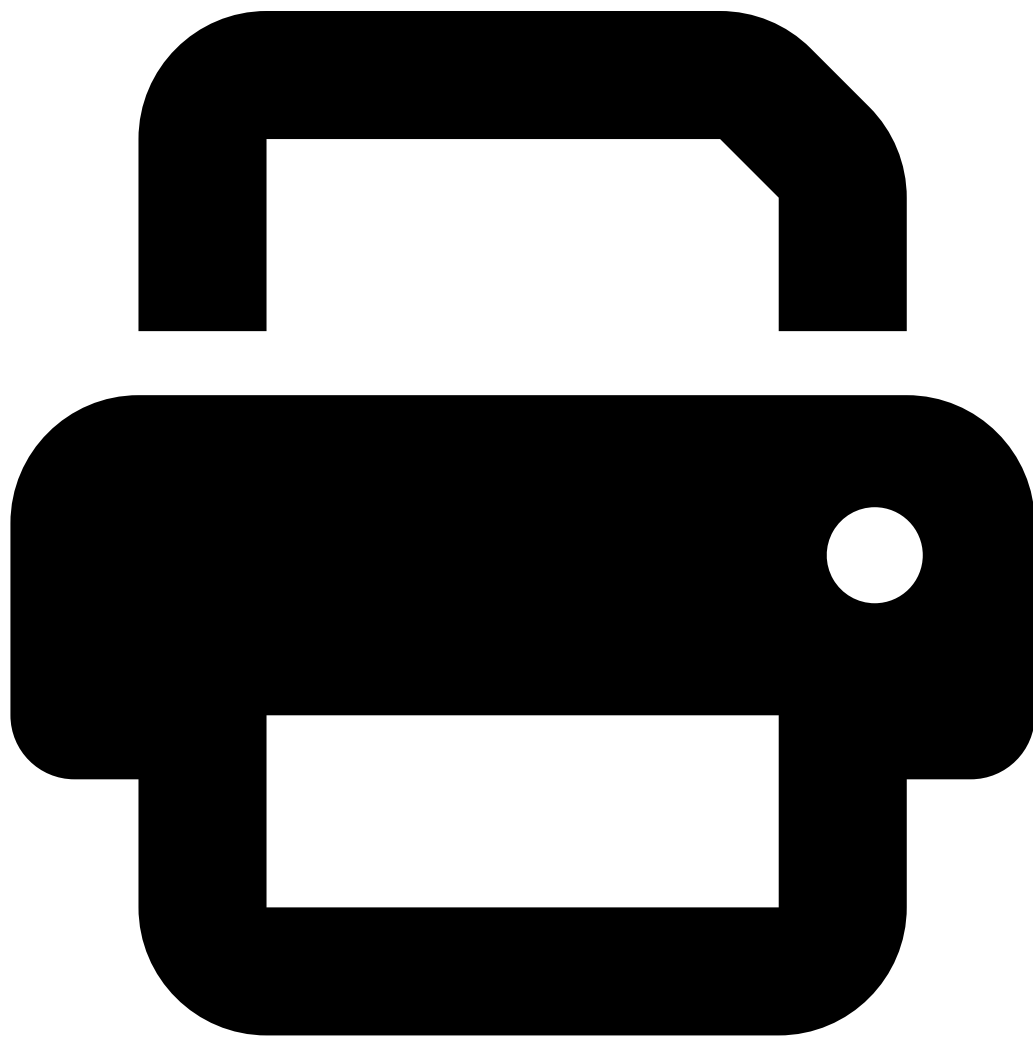
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Spring is all about fresh, vibrant flavors, and nothing says “springtime on a plate” quite like this **Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta**. The curly, ribbon-like ricciarelle pasta holds onto every bit of the zesty lemon sauce, while the sautéed asparagus adds tender-crisp bites.

To elevate the dish, we puree **half of the asparagus** to create a silky sauce that clings to the pasta, giving each bite a luxurious texture without adding cream. It’s simple, bright, and elegant—perfect for a weeknight dinner or a light spring gathering.

Whether cooking for your family, hosting friends, or craving something fresh for yourself, this pasta is a seasonal star. Pair it with a crisp white wine or a simple green salad, and you’ve got a meal that feels indulgent yet effortless.

Things to know about this Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

- **Pureeing half the asparagus:** This creates a silky, smooth sauce that coats the pasta while still giving you tender asparagus bites.
- **Cream optional:** Pureeing the asparagus gives a creamy texture naturally; cream is only needed if you want it extra rich.
- **Leftovers:** Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 days. Reheat gently with a splash of olive oil or water.
- **Pasta variations:** While ricciarelle is ideal for holding the sauce, you can experiment with other short, ridged, or twisted pasta like cavatelli, fusilli, or campanelle. Each shape will change how the sauce clings and the overall bite of the dish.
- **Flavor variations:** Add a pinch of red pepper flakes for heat, or mix in toasted pine nuts for crunch.

Love this recipe? Explore more **spring-inspired pasta dishes** on the blog! Try my Asparagus, pancetta and lemon lasagna for another light and vibrant spring time meal, or check out my one pot creamy zucchini pasta for a delicious quick meal that uses few ingredients.

Sign up for my newsletter to get seasonal recipes, kitchen tips, and cooking inspiration delivered straight to your inbox!

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta



Light, fresh, and full of spring flavors! This **Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta** features tender sautéed asparagus, bright lemon sauce, and Parmesan, perfect for an easy weeknight dinner or elegant spring meal.

- 12 Oz. Ricciarelle pasta (Use any shape pasta)
- 1 Lb. Asparagus (trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces)
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 gloves garlic (minced)
- 1 Tbsp. lemon rind
- 1/3 cup lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
- 1/2 cup **Parmesan cheese** (grated)
- 1 cup pasta water (reserve before draining, always same more than recipe calls for)
- 1/3 cup Italian parsley (chopped)
- salt and pepper (to taste)

1. **Cook the pasta:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the ricciarelle pasta according to package instructions. Drain, reserving 2 cups of pasta water.
2. **Sauté the asparagus:** Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add asparagus and sauté for 4–5 minutes until tender-crisp. Add garlic during the last minute.
3. **Puree half the asparagus:** Transfer half of the sautéed asparagus to a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Return the puree to the skillet with the remaining whole asparagus.

4. **Make the sauce:** Lower the heat, then add lemon zest, lemon juice, and Parmesan to the skillet. Stir in the cooked pasta. If using cream, add now. Toss everything together, adding reserved pasta water a little at a time until the sauce reaches your desired consistency.
5. **Season and serve:** Taste and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately, garnished with fresh parsley and extra Parmesan if desired.

Main Course

Italian

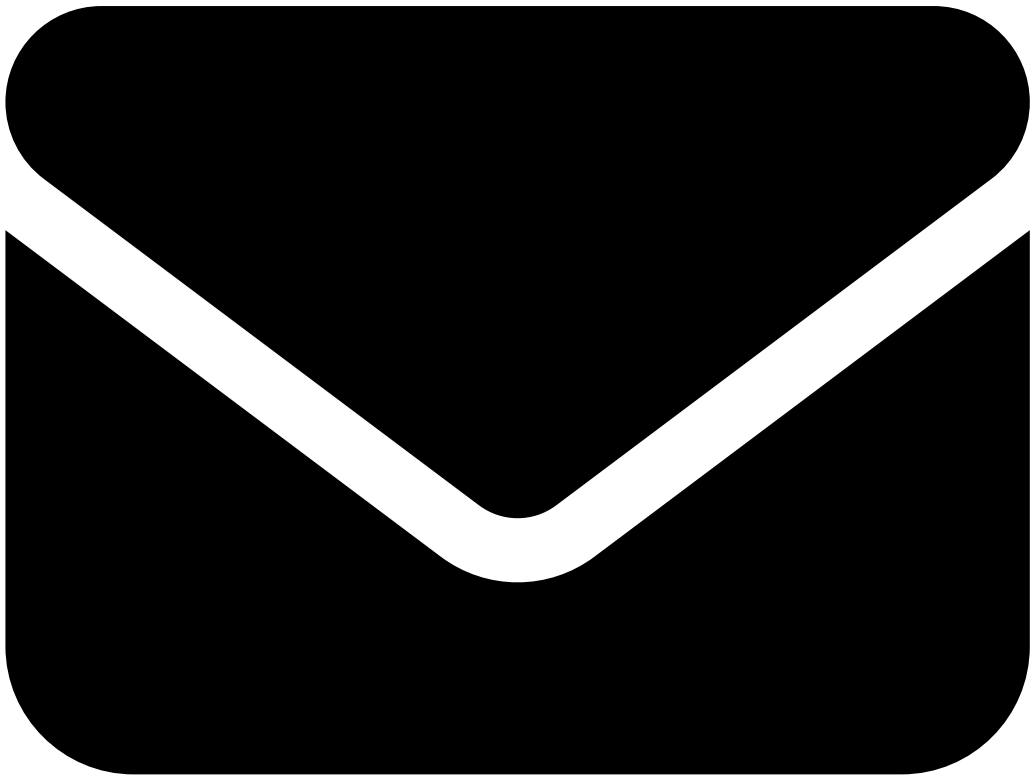
Asparagus Italian, pasta

Asparagus, Prosciutto & Lemon Béchamel Lasagna

Asparagus, Prosciutto & Lemon Béchamel Lasagna

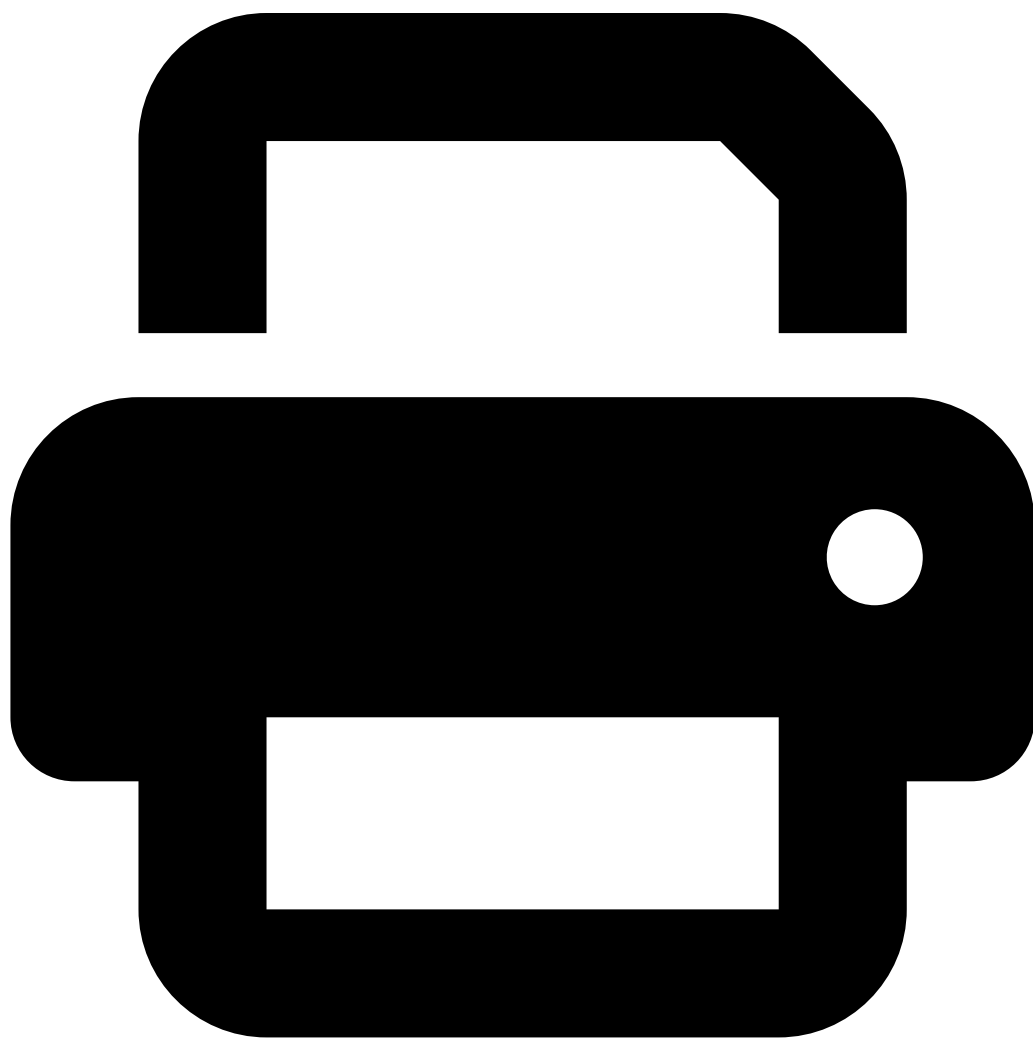
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There's something about spring that makes me want to put away the heavy red sauce and cook a little lighter—but not boring. This asparagus lasagna is exactly that. Layers of tender pasta, a silky lemon béchamel, and a ricotta filling that actually holds its shape when you slice into it.

I used store-bought lasagna noodles that needed to be boiled first, and honestly, it's worth the extra step. You get better texture, cleaner layers, and a more traditional feel than the no-boil kind.

It's the kind of dish that feels like it came out of a small kitchen somewhere in Northern Italy—simple, seasonal, and just indulgent enough. And yes, it's a showstopper, but it's also one of those recipes you'll realize is way easier than it looks.

Things to know about this Asparagus, Prosciutto & Lemon Béchamel Lasagna

- **Use the right noodles**

I used classic store-bought lasagna sheets that require boiling. Cook them just to al dente—they'll finish in the oven and give you the best texture. And the right size pan

- **Blanch your asparagus**

This keeps it bright green and prevents excess water from ruining your layers.

- **Dry everything well**

Moisture is the enemy of a clean slice.

- **Your béchamel matters**

It should be smooth and pourable—not thick like paste.

- **The ricotta mixture is key**

Adding egg + Parmigiano-Reggiano + parsley gives you structure and that bakery-style finish.

- **Don't over-layer**

Thin, even layers = better texture and cleaner cuts.

- **Let it rest**

15–20 minutes makes all the difference between messy and perfect.

- **If you love recipes like this that feel a little elevated but are still completely doable at home, you'll want to try my Italian Sunday Sauce with meatballs and my Italian Meatloaf with roasted potatoes—both are staples that instantly upgrade simple ingredients.**

Asparagus, Prosciutto, & Lemon Béchamel Lasagna



Creamy asparagus lasagna made with silky lemon béchamel, pancetta, and layers of tender pasta—no red sauce, just a rich, spring-inspired twist on classic comfort food.

- 4 Tbsp. butter (for the Béchamel sauce)
- 4 Tbsp. flour (for the Béchamel sauce)
- 3 cups milk (warmed for the Béchamel sauce)
- 1 Tbsp. lemon zest (for the Béchamel sauce)
- Salt and pepper (to taste)
- 9 lasagna Sheets (Store bought or homemade)
- 1 bunch asparagus (For the filling)
- 4 oz. prosciutto (For the filling)
- 2 cups ricotta (For the filling)
- 1 egg (For the filling)
- 1/2 cup Grated parmesan cheese (For the filling)
- 2 Tbsp. chopped Italian parsley (For the filling)

1. 1. Par boil the lasagna noodles . Let dry on tea towels
2. 2. **Prep the asparagus** Blanch in salted water for 2–3 minutes → transfer to ice water → drain very well and pat dry. Cut into 2-inch pieces.
3. 3. **Cook the prosciutto** Render in a pan until crispy. Remove and set aside.

4. 3. Make the béchamel

□ Should be silky and pourable—not thick and heavy

Melt butter, whisk in flour (1–2 minutes, no browning) Slowly whisk in warm milk. Simmer until smooth and coats the back of a spoon Stir in salt, pepper, and lemon zest.

5. 4. Make the ricotta layer In a bowl, mix:

Ricotta 1 egg Grated Parmigiano-Chopped parsley Pinch of salt + pepper

6. 5. Assemble

Layer in this order:

Thin layer of béchamel

Lasagna sheets

Béchamel

Ricotta mixture (spread lightly)

Asparagus + pancetta

Repeat layers 2–3 times.

Finish with Lasagna noodle béchamel + extra parmesan cheese

7. 6. Bake 375°F for 1 hour or until golden on top and bubbling at the edges

8. 7. Rest (don't skip) Let sit 15–20 minutes before slicing

□ This is the difference between:

messy scoop to clean, *perfect* slices

Main Course

Italian

Italian asapargus, lasagna