

One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini)

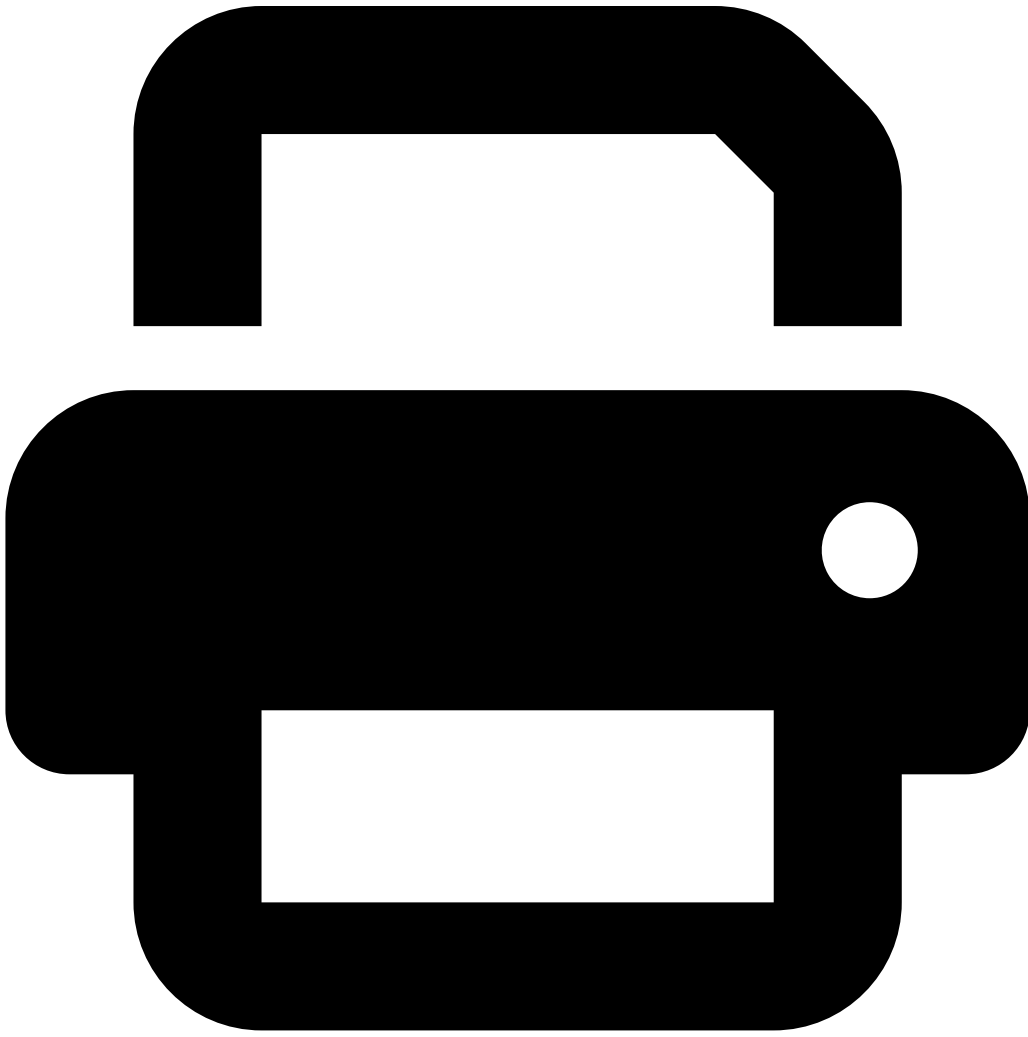
One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini) This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











This creamy zucchini pasta is made the same way many Italian home cooks prepare pasta with peas—everything cooks together in one pot.

The zucchini slowly soften with onion and olive oil, then the pasta cooks directly in the same pot with water or broth. As the pasta releases its starch, the sauce becomes naturally creamy without adding any cream.

It's simple, comforting, and exactly the kind of rustic dish you'll find in Italian kitchens during zucchini season.

With minimal ingredients and just one pot, it's the perfect weeknight pasta.

things to know about this One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini) recipe

Cut the zucchini small

Dicing the zucchini into small cubes helps them soften and melt into the sauce.

The pasta water

The starch from the pasta water is what helps create the creamy texture without adding cream.

Don't rush the zucchini

Letting them cook slowly allows them to soften and develop flavor.

Storage

Store leftover zucchini pasta in an airtight container in the refrigerator for **up to 3 days**.

Reheat gently in a skillet with a splash of water or broth to loosen the sauce.

More Italian Pasta Recipes

If you love simple Italian pasta dishes, you might also enjoy:

- Pasta with Peas (*Pasta e Piselli*)
- Pasta Nerano

- Pasta Alla norma

These recipes use the same philosophy of Italian cooking—**simple ingredients, cooked well.**

Final Thoughts

Creamy zucchini pasta proves that you don't need complicated ingredients to make something delicious. With a few zucchini, olive oil, onion, and pasta, you get a comforting Italian dish that feels both rustic and elegant.

Perfect for busy weeknights or when your garden is overflowing with zucchini.

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.

- 12 Oz. small pasta (ditalini, small shells, or broken spaghetti)

- 3 medium zucchini (small dice)
- 1 small onion (chopped)
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil (extra virgin)
- 3 cups water or light broth
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 1/2 cup Italian parsley (chopped)
- salt and pepper to taste

1. **1. Sauté the base**

In a large pot or deep skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat.

Add the chopped onion and cook until soft and translucent, about **4–5 minutes**.

Add the diced zucchini, season with salt and black pepper, and cook for **5–6 minutes** until they begin to soften.

2. **2. Add the pasta**

Add the dry pasta directly to the pot.

Pour in **about 3½ cups water or broth**, just enough to cover the pasta.

Bring to a gentle simmer.

3. **3. Cook everything together**

Cook the pasta, stirring occasionally so it doesn't stick.

As the pasta cooks, the liquid will reduce and the starch will create a creamy sauce.

If needed, add a little more water as it cooks.

This should take about **10–12 minutes**, depending on the pasta.

4. **4. Finish the pasta**

When the pasta is tender and the sauce is creamy, remove from heat.

Stir in the grated Parmesan cheese until the pasta becomes silky and coated.

Taste and adjust seasoning.

5. **5. Serve**

Serve hot with extra Parmesan and parsley if desired.

Main Course

Italian

pasta Italian zucchini

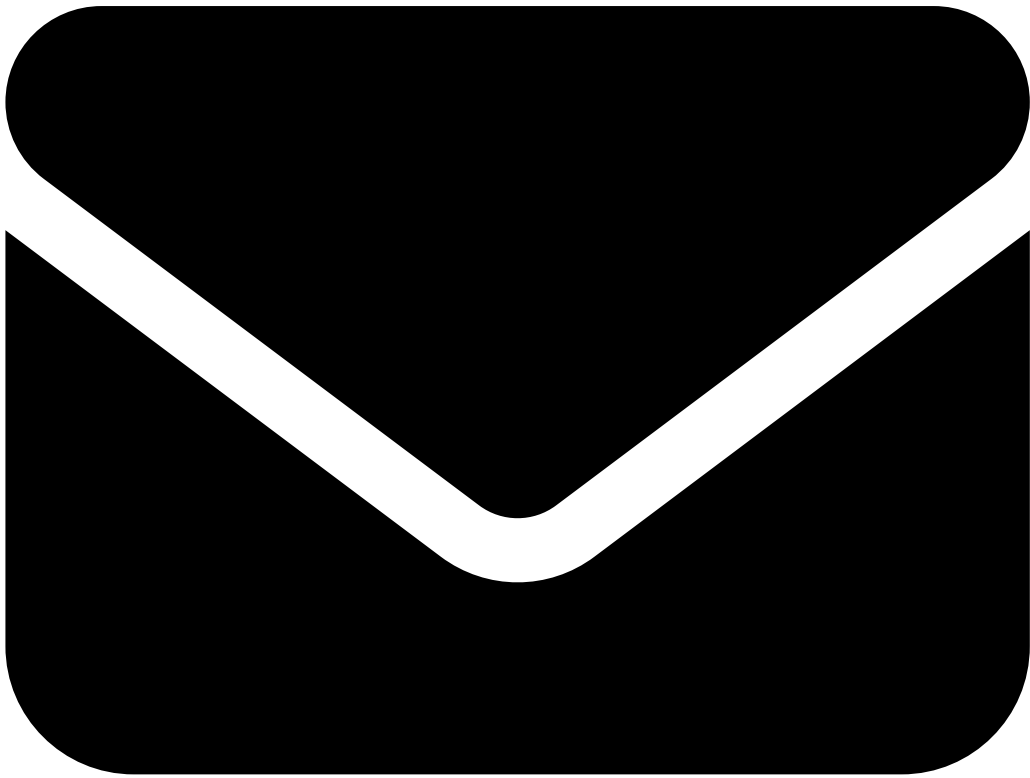
Traditional Southern Italian Cavatelli

Traditional Southern Italian Cavatelli

This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a

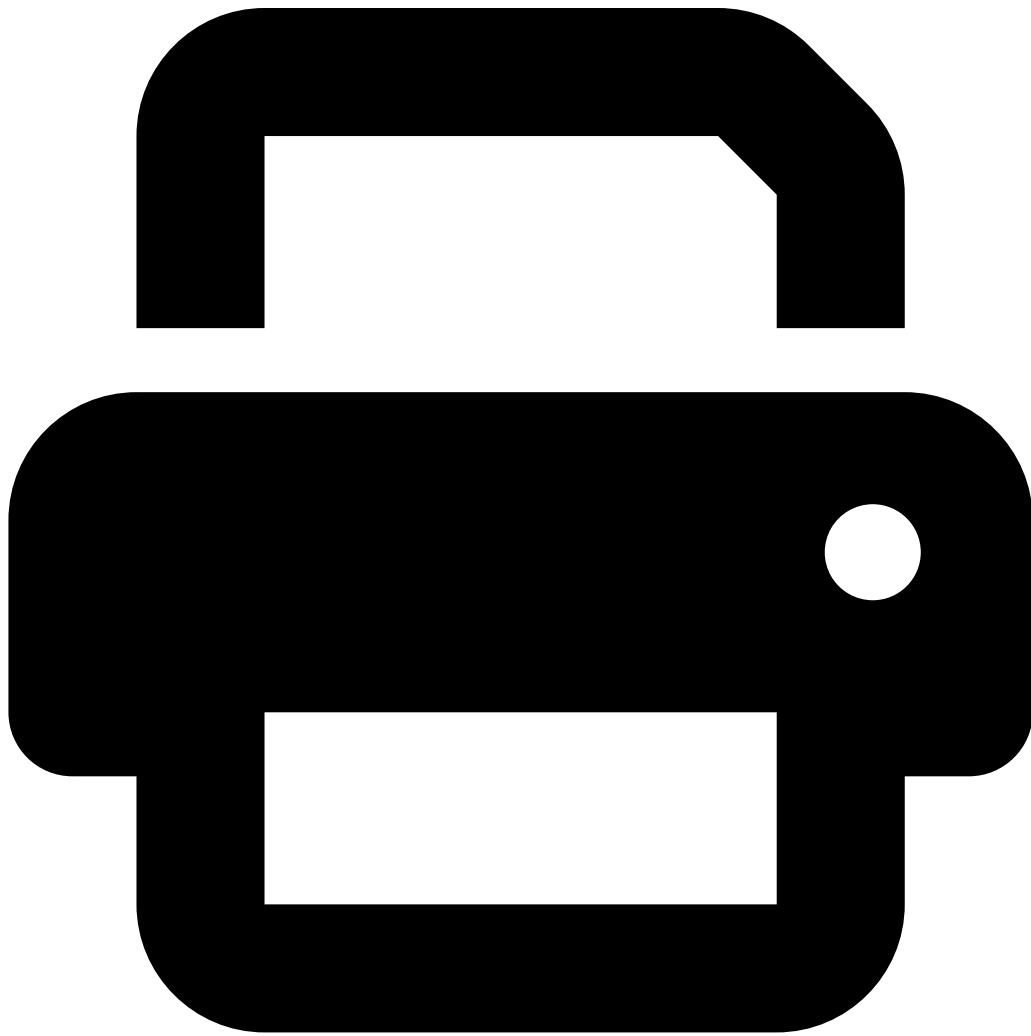
commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











What Are Cavatelli?

Cavatelli are small shell-shaped pasta traditionally made with semolina flour and water. The name comes from the Italian word *cavato*, meaning “hollowed.”

Unlike northern egg pastas, Southern Italian pasta is typically made without eggs because semolina wheat was abundant and durable in warmer climates. That’s why this dough is simple – and perfect.

There’s something sacred about making pasta by hand. before mixers. before attachments. before shortcuts. it was just semolina flour, warm water, and your hands.

Cavatelli are one of the oldest and most beloved pastas from Southern Italy. They’re small, rustic, slightly chewy, and

designed to catch sauce in that beautiful little hollow. In many Southern Italian homes, this wasn't "fancy Sunday pasta." This was everyday pasta – made on a wooden board, shaped with two fingers, and served with whatever was growing or simmering nearby. No eggs. No fuss. Just tradition.

And once you make them once, you'll never be intimidated again.

Things to know about this Traditional Southern Italian Cavatelli recipe

Good to Know

- Fresh cavatelli freeze beautifully. Freeze on a tray first, then transfer to a bag. Cook from frozen – do not thaw.
- This pasta is meant to be slightly chewy (al dente), not soft like egg noodles.
- If your pasta feels too dense, your dough may have been too dry.
- If it falls apart, it may have had too much water.

How to Serve Cavatelli

Cavatelli pair beautifully with:

- Broccoli or broccoli rabe
- Italian sausage
- Simple tomato sauce

- Garlic and olive oil
- Butter and sage

One of the most classic pairings is:

Cavatelli e Broccoli – a Southern Italian staple.

Now that you've mastered homemade cavatelli, it's time to put them to work.

Make a full Southern Italian classic with my **Cavatelli with Broccoli Rabe & Italian Sausage** , or keep it simple with a rustic **cacio and pepe Pasta**

If you love traditional pasta recipes, don't miss my **Lasagna Bolognese** and Authentic fettuccine alfredo (no cream) for more authentic Italian cooking inspiration.

Cook it. Taste it. Make it your own.

And if you make this recipe, leave a comment and tell me how your cavatelli turned out – I read every one.

Store leftover cavatelli with broccoli rabe and Italian sausage in an airtight container in the refrigerator for **up to 3 days**.

For best results, reheat gently in a skillet over medium-low heat with a splash of water or broth to loosen the sauce. Freshly made cavatelli can also be frozen **before cooking** for up to 2 months. Cook directly from frozen, adding a few extra minutes to the cooking time.

How to Freeze Homemade Cavatelli

Arrange the uncooked cavatelli in a **single layer on a lightly semolina-dusted baking sheet**, making sure the pieces aren't touching. Place the baking sheet in the freezer for **1–2 hours**, or until the cavatelli are completely firm.

Transfer the frozen cavatelli to a **freezer-safe bag or airtight container**. Label and date, then freeze for up to **2 months**.

When ready to cook, **do not thaw**. Drop the frozen cavatelli directly into a large pot of salted boiling water. They may take a few minutes longer to cook than fresh cavatelli. Cook until tender and chewy, then drain and toss with your sauce.

Traditional Southern Italian Cavatelli



Traditional Southern Italian cavatelli are small, hand-shaped pasta made with semolina flour and water. Their ridged, slightly chewy texture makes them perfect for holding onto hearty sauces, from simple tomato sauce to sausage and broccoli rabe.

Cavatelli Dough

- 2 cups fine semolina flour (semola rimacinata preferred)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ –1 cup warm water

- Pinch of salt (optional)

Cavatelli with Broccoli rabe & Italian sausage

- 1 lb cavatelli pasta
- 1 large head broccoli (cut into small florets)
- 3-4 cloves garlic, sliced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp red pepper flakes
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup extra virgin olive oil
- salt
- Freshly grated Pecorino Romano
- 2 links Italian sausage (sweet or hot) casings removed

How to Make Cavatelli Dough

1. Form the Dough

Place the semolina flour on a wooden board or in a large bowl. Make a well in the center.

Slowly add warm water while mixing with a fork or your fingers until a shaggy dough forms.

2. Knead

Knead for 8–10 minutes until smooth and firm.

The texture should feel like: Firm play-dough

Smooth but not sticky Elastic but not soft

If too dry → add a few drops of water., If sticky → dust lightly with semolina.

3. Rest

Cover with plastic wrap or a towel and let rest 15 -20 minutes.

Resting relaxes the gluten and makes shaping easier.

How to Shape Cavatelli

1. Cut off a portion of dough. Keep the rest covered.
2. Roll into a rope about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick.
3. Cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces.
4. Using two fingers, press and drag the dough toward you to create the hollow center.
5. You can:

Leave them smooth (very traditional)

Use a gnocchi board for ridges

6. Lightly dust with semolina as you work.

How to Cook Fresh Cavatelli

1. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a boil.
2. Add pasta and cook:

4–6 minutes total

They will float early, but continue cooking until tender

3. Always taste one before draining.
4. An easy, traditional way to serve **cavatelli** is simple, rustic, and full of flavor – just like it's done in Southern Italy. Here's a classic you'll love ☐

Cavatelli with Broccoli rabe and Italian sausage

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the broccoli rabe first and cook 3–4 minutes.

Add the cavatelli to the same pot and cook until al dente. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pasta water before draining.

2. In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium-low. Add the Italian sausage and red pepper flakes. Cook until sausage is browned add the garlic and cook until fragrant .

3. Combine

Add drained pasta and broccoli to the skillet. Toss well. Add a splash of reserved pasta water to help create a light sauce.

4. Finish

Taste for salt. Top with freshly grated Pecorino Romano and a drizzle of olive oil.



Don't worry about making every cavatelli perfectly uniform. The rustic, hand-shaped pieces are part of what makes homemade cavatelli special. Keep them lightly dusted with semolina as

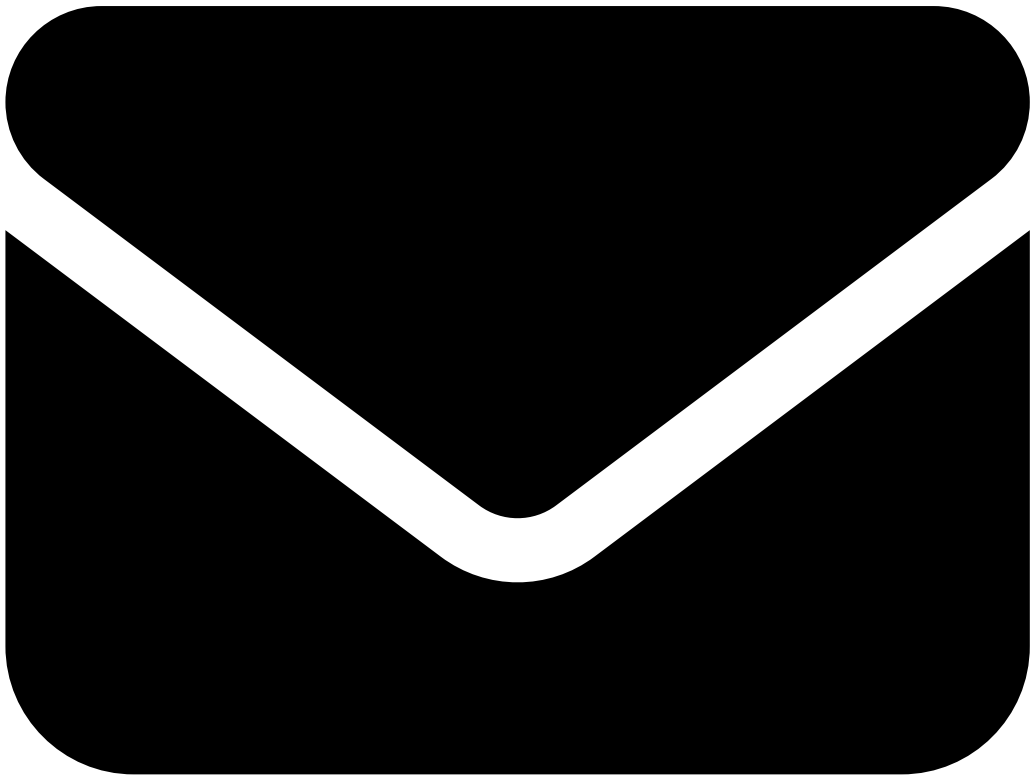
you work so they don't stick together.
Main Course, pasta
Italian
homemade cavatelli,

Authentic Fettuccine Alfredo (No Cream)

Authentic Fettuccine Alfredo (No Cream)

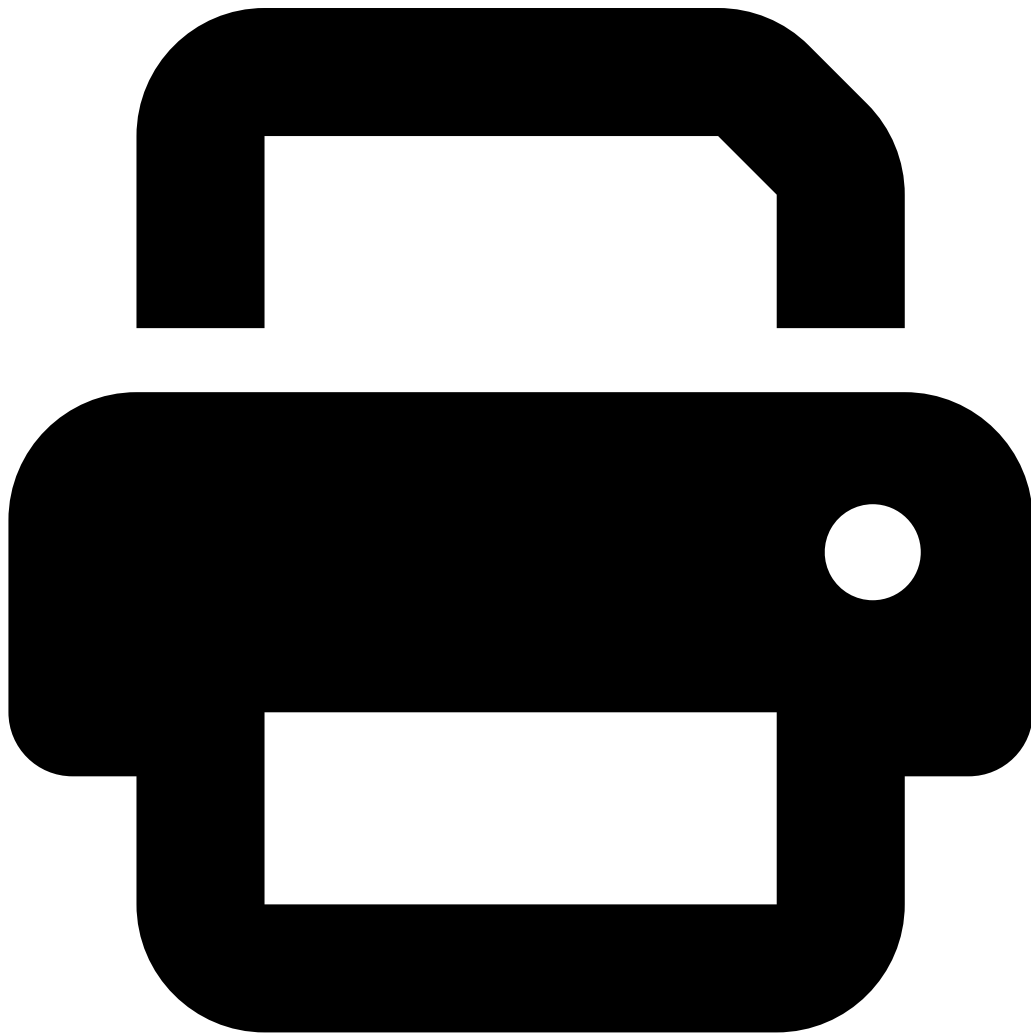
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











If you grew up in America, you probably think Alfredo sauce means heavy cream, garlic, and maybe even chicken. But authentic **Fettuccine Alfredo** is something entirely different.

This iconic Roman pasta was created in the early 1900s by Alfredo di Lelio in Rome. And the original version? Just **butter, Parmigiano Reggiano, fresh fettuccine, and pasta water**. No cream. No flour. No garlic.

When made properly, the Alfredo sauce becomes naturally creamy and glossy from the emulsion of butter, cheese, and starchy pasta water. It's simple—but technique matters.

Let me show you exactly how to make it the authentic way.

Things to know about this Authentic

Fettuccine Alfredo (No Cream)

Pro Tips for Perfect Alfredo

- Use **freshly grated** Parmigiano Reggiano. Pre-shredded cheese will not melt properly.
- Keep heat low to prevent the cheese from clumping.
- Toss constantly—movement creates the emulsion.
- If sauce thickens too much, add another splash of hot pasta water.

What Makes This Different from American Alfredo?

American versions typically include heavy cream and sometimes garlic.

The original Roman version relies entirely on technique and high-quality ingredients. The creaminess comes from the emulsion—not dairy overload.

Simple ingredients. Perfect execution.

Storage

This pasta is best served immediately.

If needed:

- Store leftovers in an airtight container up to 2 days.
- Reheat gently with a splash of water over very low heat.

Freezing is not recommended, as the sauce can separate.

Ready to Make Real Fettuccine Alfredo?

Now you know – authentic Alfredo doesn't need cream. Just quality ingredients, proper technique, and a little confidence.

If you make this recipe, I'd love to hear how it turned out. Leave a comment below and let me know – and don't forget to tag me on Instagram so I can see your pasta creations!

If you loved this recipe, you might also enjoy:

- Homemade Fresh Fettuccine
- Cacio e Pepe
- Sunday Sauce with Meatballs

Be sure to bookmark LorianasheaCooks.com for more authentic Italian recipes made the traditional way.

Buon appetito ☺☺☺

Authentic Fettuccine Alfredo (no cream)



- 1 pound fresh fettuccine (or high-quality dried fettuccine) ((16 oz))
- 8 tbsps unsalted butter, room temperature ((1 stick /

113g))

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano ((150g))
- 2 tsps fine sea salt ((for pasta water, plus more as needed))
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp freshly cracked black pepper ((optional, traditional in Rome))

1. Boil the Pasta

- Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil.
- Add salt – the water should taste like the sea.
- Cook the fettuccine until **al dente** (usually 1–2 minutes less than package instructions if using dried).

REMINDER: Before draining, reserve **1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of pasta water**.

2. Prepare the Butter Base

- Place the room temperature butter in a large serving bowl or wide sauté pan.
- Add a few tablespoons of hot pasta water to the butter.
- Stir gently until the butter melts and forms a creamy base.

TIP: Keep heat very low if using a pan – do not brown the butter.

3. Add the Pasta

- Transfer the hot pasta directly into the butter mixture.
- Toss gently to coat the noodles.

4. **Add the Cheese**

- Sprinkle in the freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano gradually while tossing continuously.
- Add pasta water **a tablespoon at a time** as needed.

This is the key: The starch in the water binds the butter and cheese together, creating a smooth, silky sauce.

Keep tossing until glossy and creamy. The sauce should cling to the pasta—not pool at the bottom.

5. **Finish**

- Add freshly cracked black pepper if desired.
- Taste and adjust salt if needed.
- Serve immediately in warm bowls.

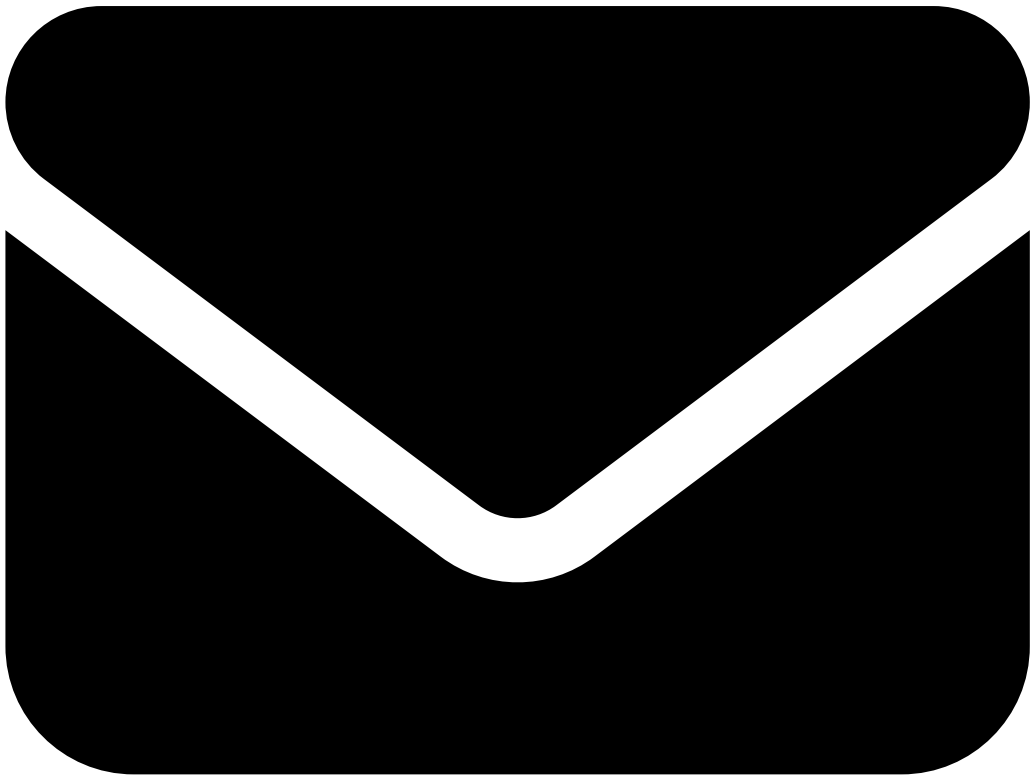
Authentic Alfredo waits for no one.

Homemade Fettuccine
(Authentic Italian Fresh
Pasta)

Homemade Fettuccine (Authentic Italian Fresh Pasta)

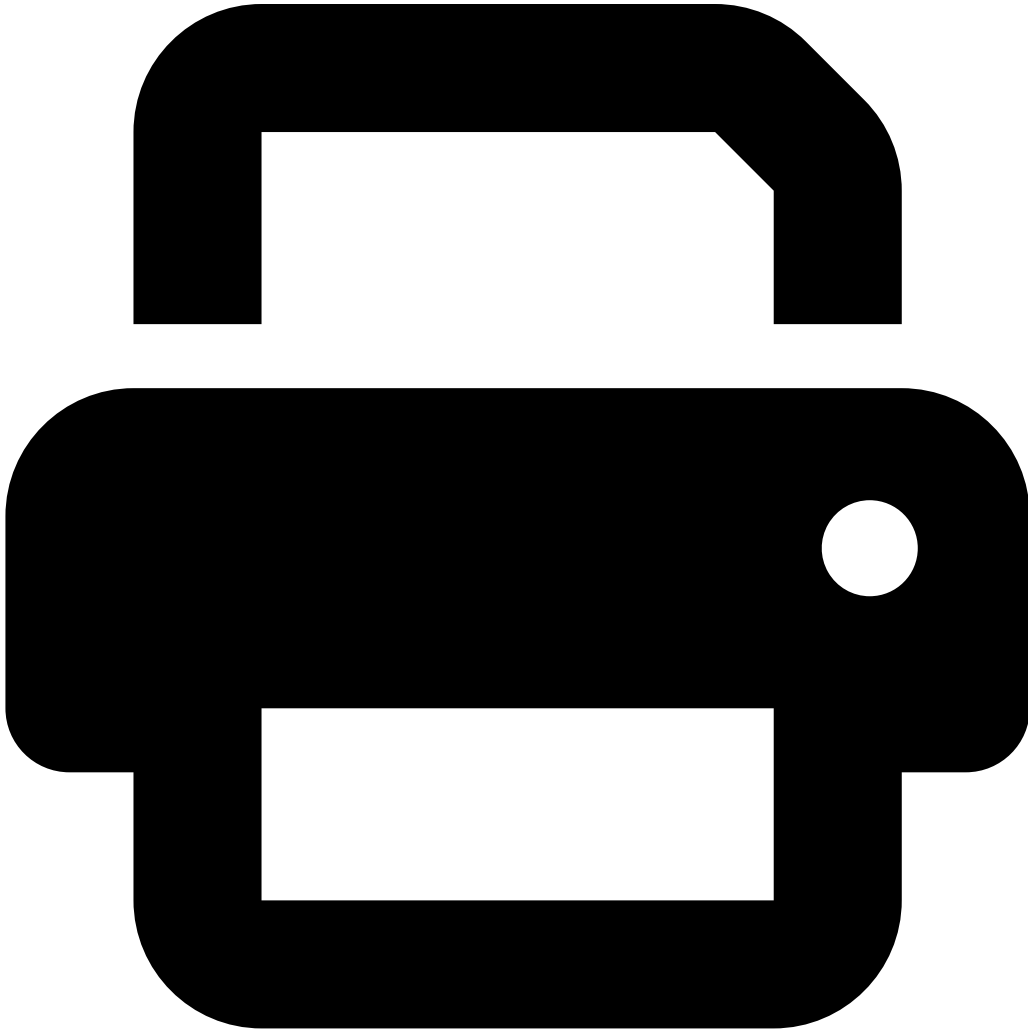
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











There is nothing like fresh pasta made by hand.

Homemade fettuccine has a texture and flavor you simply cannot get from a box. When made with a blend of semolina and white flour, it has the perfect balance – tender, yet structured enough to hold sauce beautifully.

And while we're cutting this dough into fettuccine today, this recipe is not just for fettuccine. This is a foundational fresh pasta dough that can be used to make tagliatelle, pappardelle, linguine, lasagna sheets, ravioli, and more.

It's one dough – endless possibilities.

This is traditional Italian fresh pasta. No oil. No shortcuts. Just flour, eggs, and technique.

Once you make it yourself, you'll understand why Italians treat pasta as something sacred.

Things to know about Homemade Fettuccine (Authentic Italian Fresh Pasta)

- Fresh pasta cooks much faster than dried pasta – usually in 2–3 minutes. Stay close to the pot.
- The dough should feel firm but pliable. If it's too soft, it will stick in the pasta machine. If it's too dry, it will crack when rolled.
- Humidity affects flour. On humid days, you may need slightly more flour. On dry days, the dough may need a tiny bit of moisture.
- Always use freshly grated cheese in your sauces. Pre-shredded cheese won't melt properly with fresh pasta.
- Fresh pasta pairs best with lighter sauces like authentic Alfredo, butter and sage, or a simple pomodoro – it doesn't need heavy sauces to shine.
- If your pasta sticks after cutting, dust lightly with semolina and gently toss – don't pull it apart aggressively.

Why Use Semolina?

Semolina gives fresh pasta:

- Better structure
- Improved sauce grip
- Slight chew
- A more authentic Italian texture

It's especially perfect for dishes like authentic Fettuccine Alfredo.

Storage

Refrigerate: Up to 24 hours, lightly floured and covered.

Freeze: Form into nests and freeze up to 1 month. Cook directly from frozen.

Ready to Make Fresh Pasta at Home?

If you've never made homemade pasta before, let this be your sign. It's simple, rustic, and incredibly satisfying – and once you taste it, there's no going back to boxed.

If you make this recipe, I'd love to see it!

Tag me on Instagram and leave a comment below letting me know how it turned out.

And if you loved this recipe, you might also enjoy:

- My Sunday Sauce with Meatballs
- Italian Beef Stew
- Chicken Piccata

More authentic Italian recipes are coming – so be sure to bookmark this page and check back often. ☐☐

Buon appetito!

Homemade Fettuccine (Authentic Italian Fresh Pasta)



Main Ingredients

- 1 cup semolina flour ((140g))
- 1 cup all-purpose flour or Italian “00” flour ((120g))
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fine sea salt

For Dusting:

- Additional flour for dusting

1. Make the Dough

- On a clean work surface, combine the semolina and white flour.
- Form into a mound and create a well in the center.
- Crack the eggs into the well.
- Add the salt.
- Using a fork, gently beat the eggs, slowly incorporating flour from the inside of the well.
- When the mixture becomes thick, use your hands to bring it together into a shaggy dough.

2. Knead

Knead the dough for 8–10 minutes.

Push it forward with the heel of your hand, fold it over, rotate, and repeat.

The dough should become smooth, firm, and elastic. Semolina makes it slightly firmer than all-white flour dough – this is normal.

If sticky, sprinkle lightly with flour. If dry, dampen

your hands slightly and continue kneading.

3. **Rest**

Wrap the dough tightly in plastic wrap. Let it rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.

This relaxes the gluten and makes rolling much easier.

4. **Roll the Pasta (Hand Pasta Machine Method)**

Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces. Keep unused pieces wrapped.

- Set your hand pasta machine to the widest setting (usually #0 or #1).
- Flatten one piece of dough and feed it through while turning the handle steadily.
- Fold the dough into thirds and pass it through the widest setting again. Repeat 2–3 times.
- Now begin reducing the thickness:
- Pass once through each setting until you reach setting 5 or 6. The sheet should be thin but not tearing.
- Lightly dust with flour as needed to prevent sticking.

5. **Cut the Fettuccine**

- Attach the fettuccine cutter to your pasta machine.
- Lightly dust the pasta sheet with semolina.
- Feed it through the cutter attachment while turning the handle steadily.

- Catch the noodles and gently separate them.
- Lay them in small nests or on a lightly floured surface.
- Let rest for 10–15 minutes before cooking.

6. Cook

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a rolling boil.

Add fresh fettuccine and cook for 2–3 minutes.

Fresh pasta cooks quickly – it should be tender but still slightly firm.

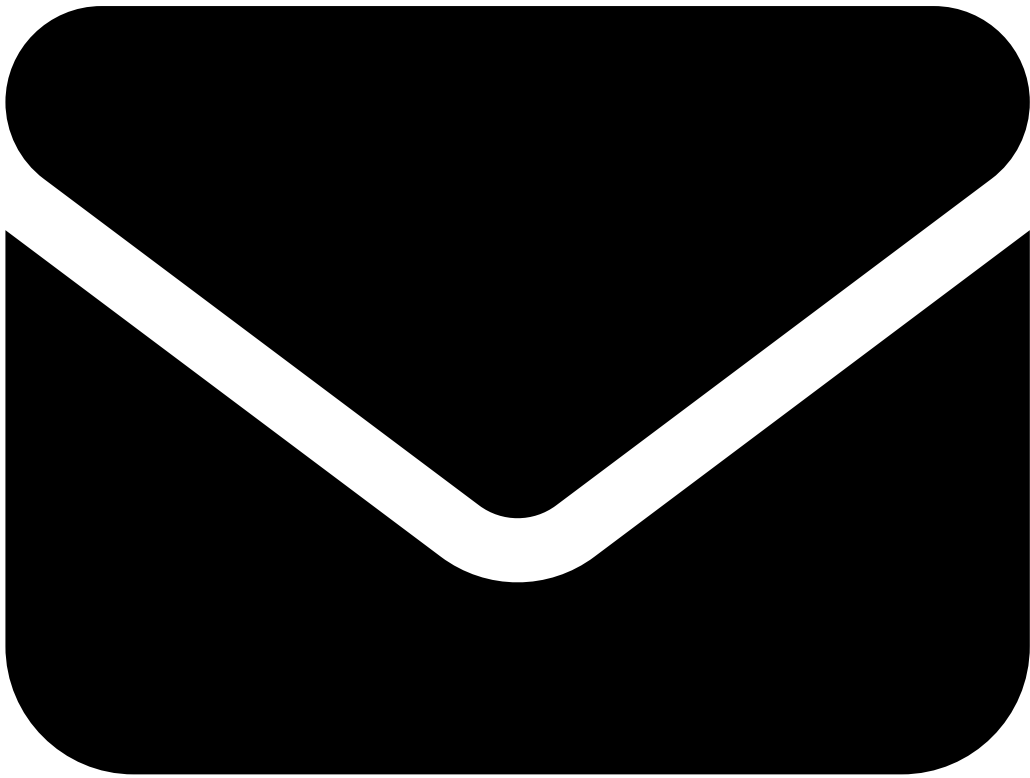
Reserve pasta water for your sauce.

Italian Crespelle with Parmigiano in Beef Broth

Italian Crespelle with Parmigiano in Beef Broth

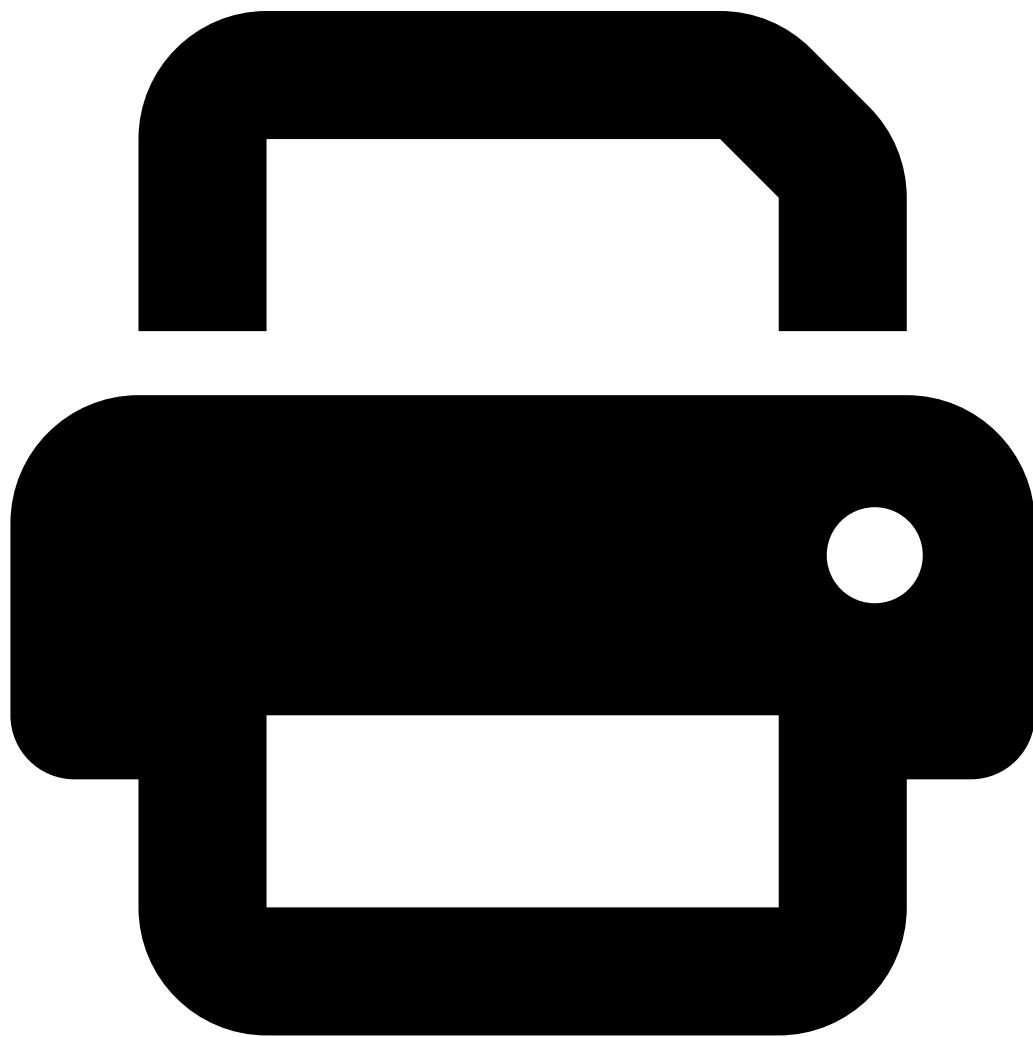
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











This is a traditional primo piatto made with paper-thin crespelle, a light filling of Parmigiano Reggiano, and very hot broth. When done right, it tastes comforting and simple, never heavy.

In older homes, especially in Emilia-Romagna and central Italy, crespelle were treated like fresh pasta sheets. The batter was lean. The filling was minimal. All the richness came from the broth.

For this version, I use homemade beef bone broth made with neck bones and beef shank. It gives the dish body, clarity, and natural gelatin without needing butter or cream.

What Are Crespelle?

Crespelle are Italian crêpes, but they are not sweet. They are thinner and more delicate than breakfast crêpes and are used the same way Italians use fresh pasta.

When served in brodo, crespelle are filled lightly with Parmigiano and placed in a bowl. Hot broth is poured over just before serving so the cheese melts gently.

Things to know when making Italian Crespelle with Parmigiano in Beef Broth

- Crespelle are unsweetened and very thin.
- Butter is not traditional for crespelle served in broth.
- Parmigiano should be used sparingly so the broth stays clear.
- This dish is served as a first course, not a main soup.
- The quality of the broth matters more than anything else.

Tips for Success

- Use finely grated Parmigiano so it melts quickly.
- Do not overfill the crespelle.
- Warm your bowls before serving.
- Add salt to the broth only at the end.

A Dish Built on Broth

Crespelle al Parmigiano in brodo is a reminder that Italian cooking values simplicity over excess. When the broth is good, everything else falls into place.

Serve it hot, eat it slowly, and let the dish be what it is.

Make the Broth First

This dish depends entirely on good broth. If you don't already have some on hand, start there.

□ [Homemade Beef Bone Broth with Neck Bones and Beef Shank] – a slow-simmered, clear broth that gives this dish its depth, body, and natural richness.

Once the broth is ready, these crespelle come together quickly and simply.

Italian Crespelle with Parmigiano in Beef Broth Test



Servings: 3–4 (primo piatto)

Crespelle Batter (No Butter)

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup whole milk ((240 ml))
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour ((95 g))
- Pinch of fine salt
- *For the pan: a lightly oiled paper towel, wiped almost dry*

Filling

- 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano ((90–115 g))

1. Make the Batter

In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs and milk until fully combined. Add the flour and salt and whisk until smooth. Let the batter rest at room temperature for 20–30 minutes.

2. Cook the Crespelle

Heat a 8 inch nonstick pan over medium-low heat. Lightly wipe the surface with oil, then remove any excess.

Pour about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of batter into the pan and swirl immediately to create a very thin crespella. Cook for 30–40 seconds until set, then flip and cook for another 10–15 seconds.

Transfer to a plate and repeat with the remaining batter. Stack the crespelle and keep them covered.

3. Assemble

Lay one crespella flat and sprinkle lightly with Parmigiano Reggiano. Fold into quarters or roll gently. Place 2–3 crespelle into each warmed bowl.

4. Serve in Brodo

Bring the beef bone broth to a gentle boil and taste for salt. Ladle the very hot broth over the crespelle just before serving. Serve immediately.

15 Classic & Italian-Inspired Pasta Recipes

15 Classic & Italian-Inspired Pasta Recipes

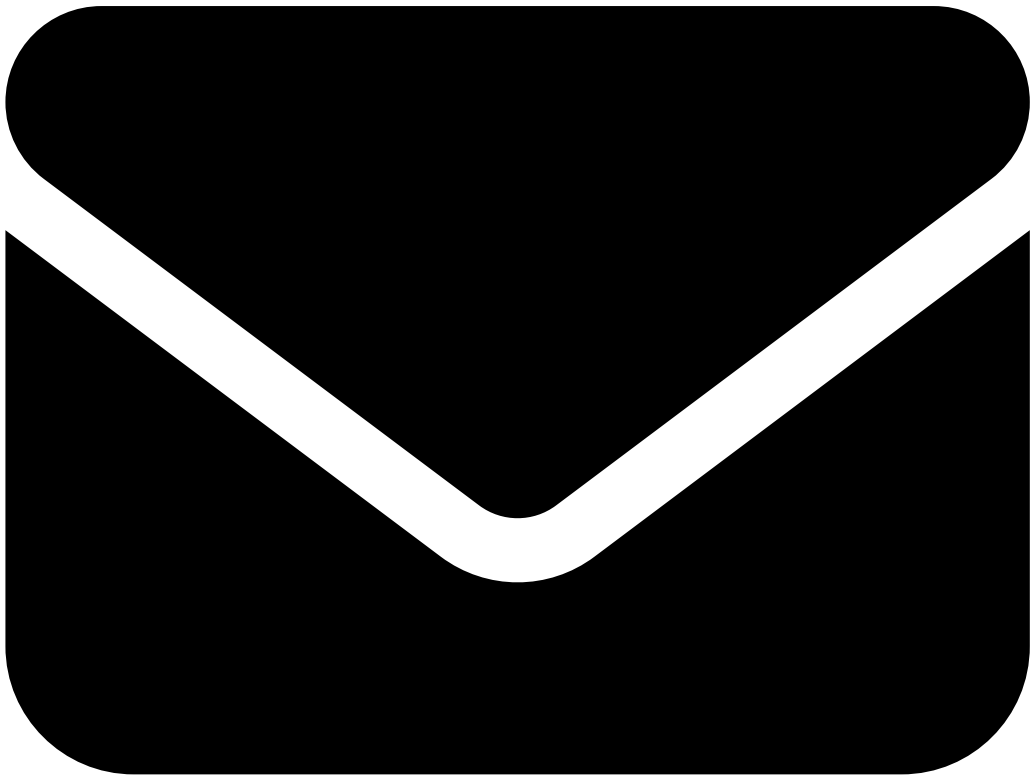
Why This Pasta Collection

Pasta has always been at the heart of Italian cooking and at the heart of my kitchen. From humble pantry pastas like **pasta e piselli** to cozy baked dishes and restaurant-style favorites, this pillar post brings together **15 of my most popular pasta recipes already on the blog**—all in one place for easy browsing.

Use this guide to:

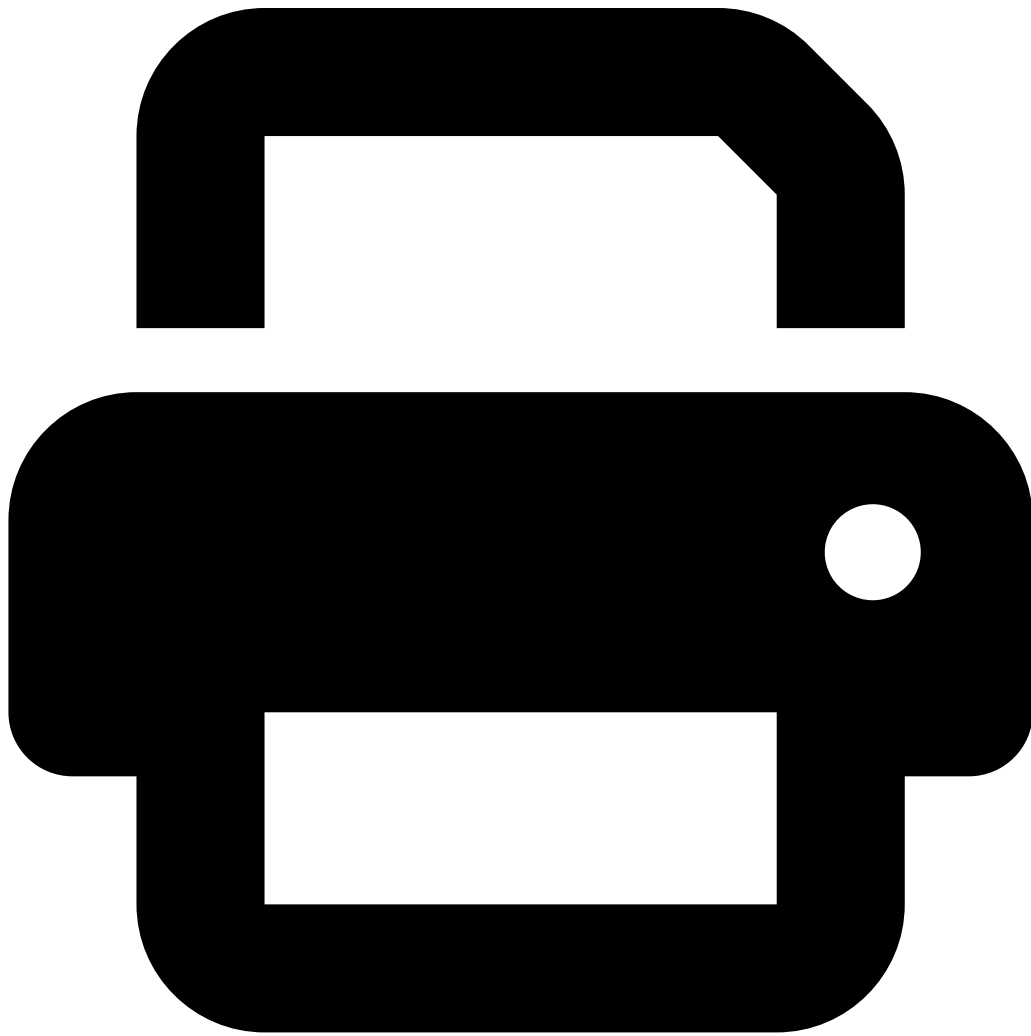
- Find the right pasta for the season
- Discover weeknight vs. Sunday sauces
- Navigate sauces by style (tomato, cream, broth, baked)











1. Pasta e Piselli (Pasta and Peas)

A classic Italian comfort dish made with olive oil, onion, peas, and pasta—simple, nostalgic, and budget-friendly.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

2. Authentic Pasta e Fagioli

A childhood favorite featuring beans, pasta, aromatics, and a rich tomato base—rustic Italian cooking at its best.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

3. Pasta e Ceci (Pasta with Chickpeas)

A humble Roman-style pasta made with chickpeas, garlic, olive oil, and pasta—simple, nourishing, and deeply comforting.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Creamy & Cheesy Pasta Recipes

4. One-Pot Pasta and Potatoes

A classic Italian one-pot dish where pasta and potatoes cook together, creating a naturally creamy, comforting sauce.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

5. Italian Cauliflower Pasta Alfredo

A lighter twist on Alfredo using cauliflower for creaminess without sacrificing flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

6. Mushroom Pasta alla Norcina

A rich pasta made with mushrooms, cream, and Pecorino Romano—[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Sunday Sauces & Hearty Pastas

7. Classic Meatball Sunday Sauce with Pasta

A slow-simmered tomato sauce served with pasta—just like Sundays in an Italian kitchen.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

8. Sausage and Lentil Pasta (New Year's Tradition)

A traditional Italian pasta dish symbolizing luck and prosperity, made with lentils and sausage.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

9. Mushroom and Sausage Pasta

A deeply savory sauce made with mushrooms and Italian sausage, perfect for your favorite pasta shape.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Baked Pasta Favorites

10. Baked Spaghetti Pie

A fun and comforting baked pasta dish with layers of spaghetti, cheese, and sauce.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

11. Easy cheesy stuffed Shells

Large pasta shells filled with cheese and spinach and topped with my easy marinara sauce—perfect for entertaining.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Seafood Pasta Dishes

12. Spaghetti e Gamberi (Shrimp Spaghetti)

A simple, restaurant-style shrimp pasta with garlic, olive oil, and wine.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

13. Seared Scallops with Orzo

A seafood-forward pasta dish with bold flavors and a creamy finish.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Rustic & Regional Pasta Recipes

14. Pasta al Forno (Baked Italian Pasta)

A classic Italian baked pasta layered with sauce, cheese, and pasta—comforting, crowd-pleasing, and perfect for make-ahead

meals.GO TO RECIPE

15. Spaghetti Carbonara

A traditional Roman pasta made with eggs, Pecorino Romano, black pepper, and crispy guanciale—simple, rich, and timeless.GO TO RECIPE

Things to know about 15 Classic & Italian-Inspired Pasta Recipes

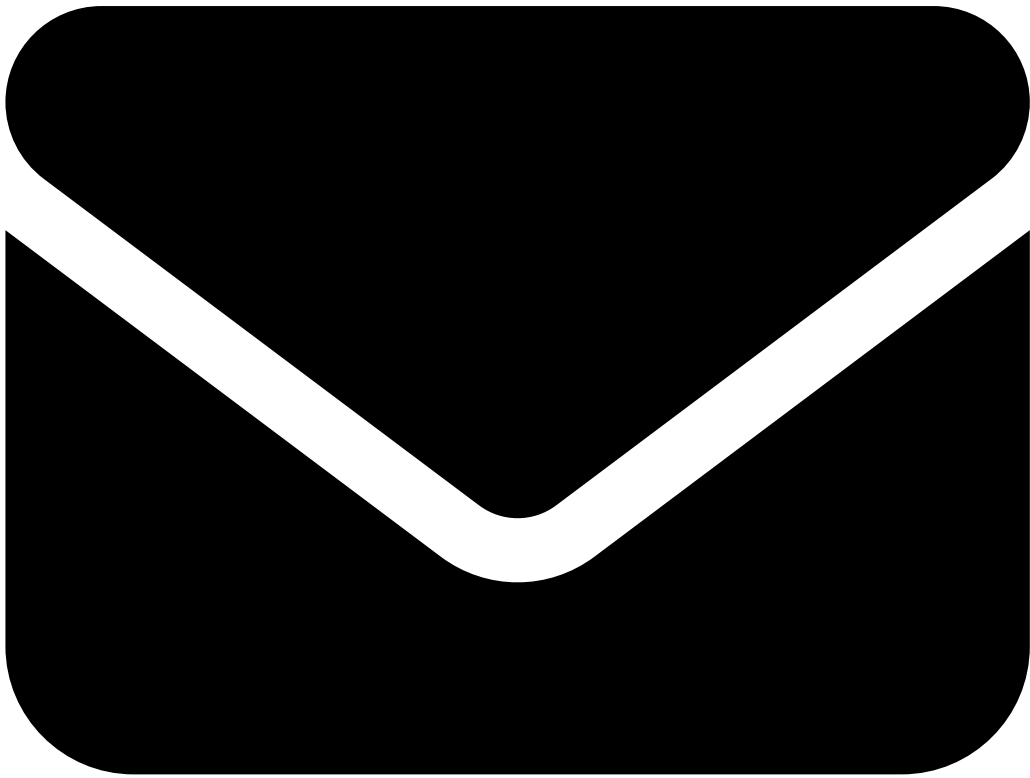
- **Pasta shapes matter:** Short pastas work best for baked dishes and chunky sauces, while long pastas shine with smooth or egg-based sauces like carbonara.
- **Salt your water well:** Properly salted pasta water is essential for authentic Italian flavor—this is where the pasta gets seasoned.
- **Sauce meets pasta, not the plate:** Always finish cooking pasta in the sauce so the flavors marry together.
- **Traditional doesn't mean complicated:** Many classic Italian pastas use just a handful of ingredients—quality matters more than quantity.
- **Make it your own:** These recipes are rooted in tradition but flexible enough for home cooks.

Healthy Italian Recipes to Start the New Year Right

Healthy Italian Recipes to Start the New Year Right

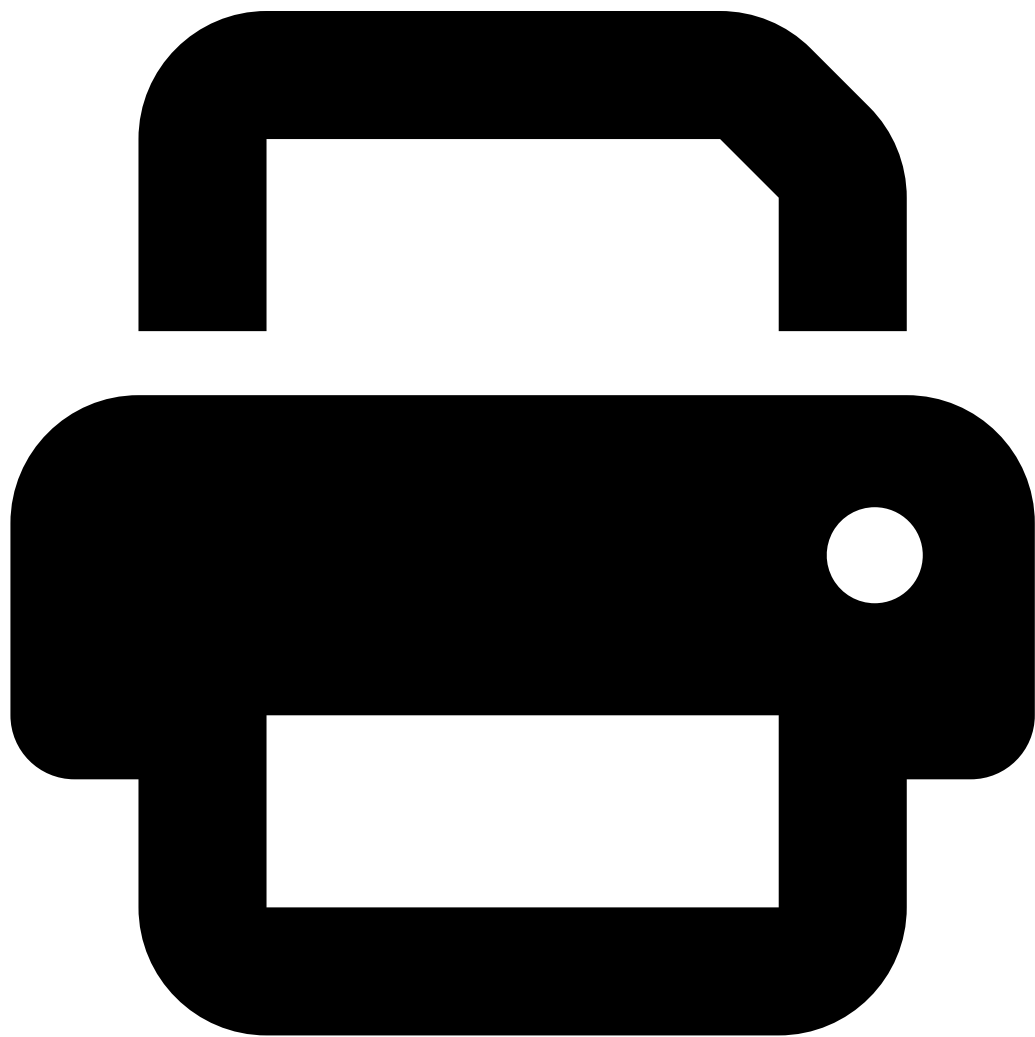
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











The New Year always brings a renewed focus on feeling good—without giving up the foods we love. In Italian cooking, that balance has always existed. It's about fresh ingredients, simple preparations, and letting real food shine.

This year, instead of extremes, I'm leaning into **healthy Italian recipes** that feel nourishing, comforting, and realistic. Dishes built on vegetables, legumes, seafood, olive oil, and simple proteins—the way Italians have cooked for generations.

If you're looking to reset after the holidays while still enjoying flavorful, satisfying meals, these recipes are the perfect place to start.

What “Healthy Italian” Really Means

In my kitchen, healthy doesn’t mean bland or boring. It means:

- Fresh, seasonal ingredients
- Olive oil instead of heavy sauces
- Beans, vegetables, seafood, and lean proteins
- Recipes that leave you satisfied—not deprived

These dishes are proof that Italian food can be both comforting and nourishing.

Fresh & Light Starters

Perfect for lighter meals, lunch, or beginning a balanced dinner.

Rustic Italian Roasted pepper salad

Bright, refreshing, and naturally light, this classic salad is packed with citrus, crunch, and flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Winter Persimmon Walnut Salad

   A beautiful balance of sweetness, crunch, and freshness—perfect during the colder months.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian Escarole and Beans

Simple, rustic, and protein-rich, this is a classic Italian dish that proves healthy food can still be deeply comforting.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Nourishing Soups

Soups are one of the easiest ways to eat well without sacrificing flavor.

Italian Wedding Soup

Light broth, greens, and tender meatballs come together for a soup that's filling yet balanced.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Vegetarian Italian Mushroom Soup

Earthy, satisfying, and naturally wholesome—perfect for a light lunch or dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Tortellini in chicken Brodo

A timeless Italian classic that relies on good broth and simple ingredients rather than heavy additions.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Balanced Pasta & Mains

Italian food has always been about moderation—these dishes are flavorful without being heavy.

Shrimp Oreganata

· Baked shrimp with breadcrumbs, garlic, and lemon—light, protein-rich, and full of flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Tomato piccata Alaskan cod

A fresh, tomato piccata- dish that feels indulgent while staying light and elegant.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian Stuffed Eggplant Bolognese

A perfect example of balance—vegetables, protein, and just enough richness to satisfy.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Pasta with Lentils and Italian Sausage

A balanced pasta dish rooted in tradition, combining lentils, a modest amount of sausage, and pantry staples for a hearty but nourishing meal.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian-Style Roast Chicken and Potatoes

A complete meal made with simple ingredients—olive oil, herbs, and perfectly roasted chicken and potatoes. This is everyday Italian cooking at its best.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Naturally Sweet Endings

Dessert doesn't have to disappear—just shift toward simpler, more traditional treats.

Italian olive oil Almond Cake

Light, not overly sweet, and perfect with coffee or espresso.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian Apple Cake

Made with fresh apples and simple ingredients, this cake is naturally moist and comforting without being heavy.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Baked Gorgonzola Stuffed Pears

Sweet fruit paired with savory cheese makes a satisfying, portion-friendly dessert.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Starting the New Year the Italian Way

Italian cooking has never been about cutting things out—it's about balance, quality ingredients, and enjoying food with intention. These healthy Italian recipes are the ones I turn to when I want meals that feel good, taste great, and still honor tradition.

As you move into the New Year, I hope these dishes inspire you to cook simply, eat well, and gather often. Because the healthiest meals are the ones that bring comfort, nourishment, and a little joy to the table.

□ Let me know in the comments—which recipe will you start with?

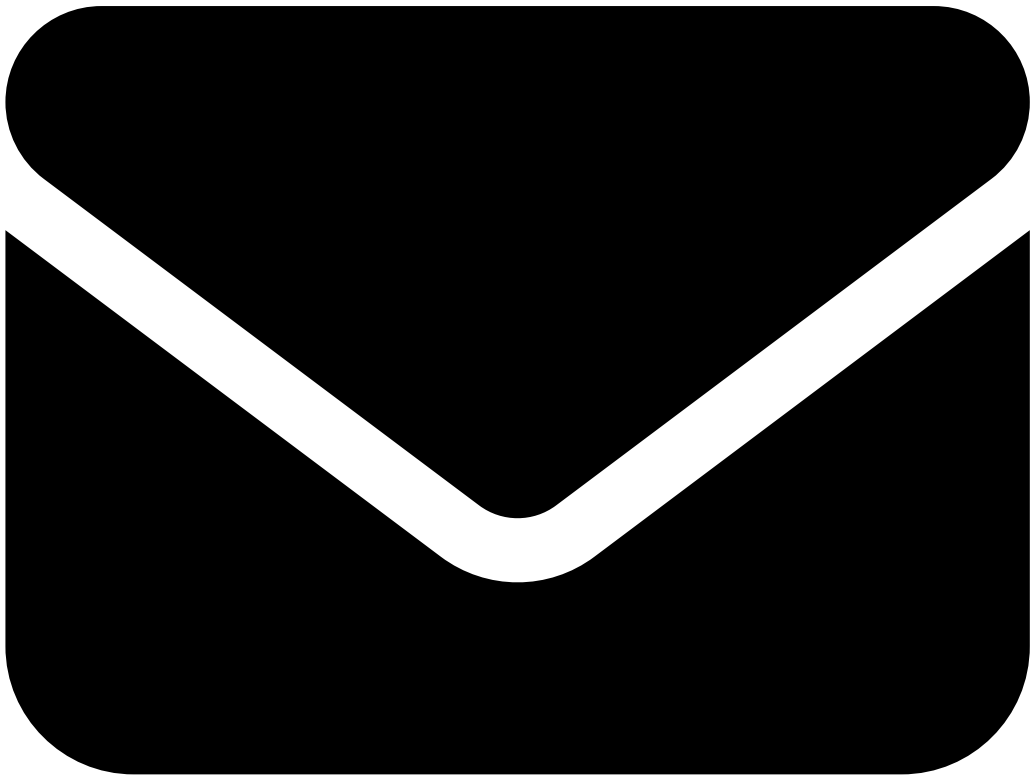
Creamy Italian Mac and Cheese Bake

Creamy Italian Mac and Cheese

Bake

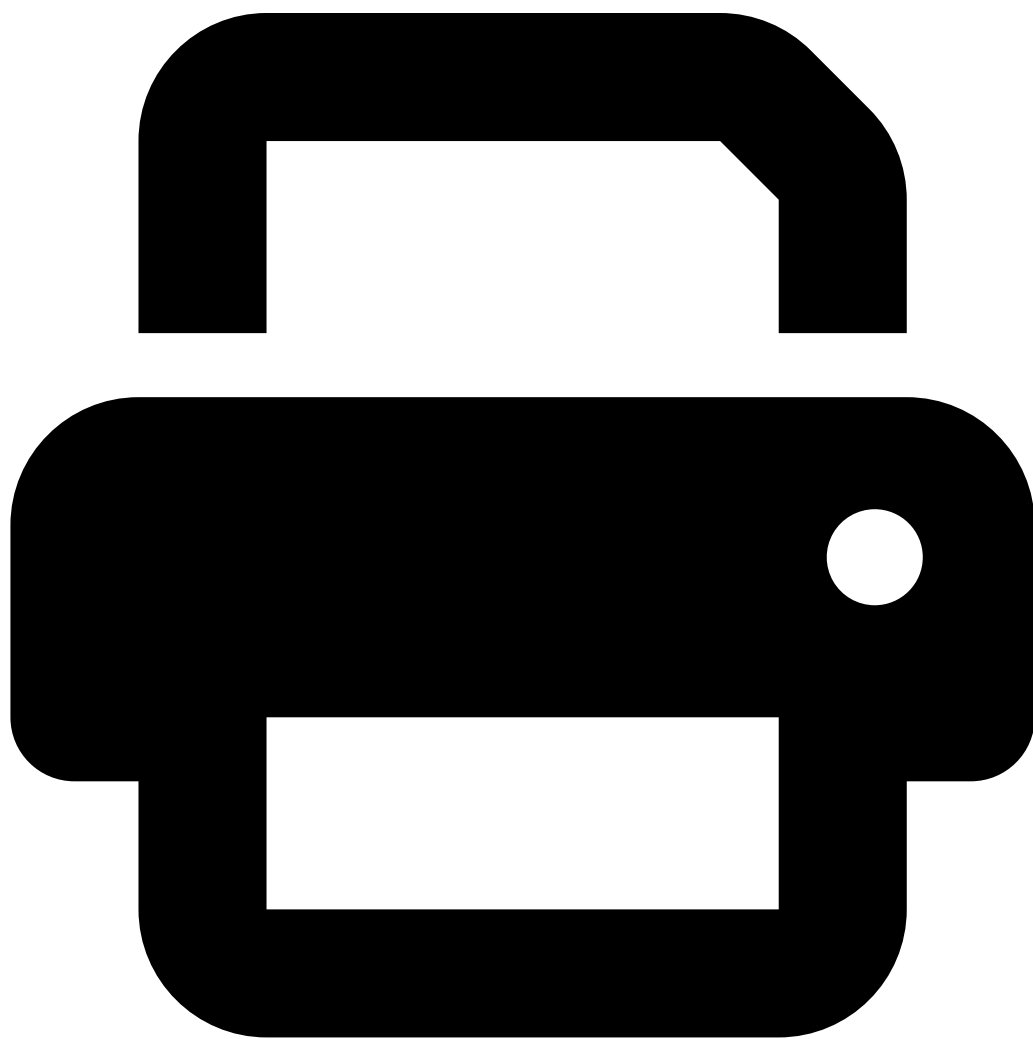
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











There's something so comforting about a bubbling dish of mac and cheese coming out of the oven – golden, creamy, and impossibly cheesy. But in our Italian home, even the most classic dishes tend to take on a Mediterranean twist. This **Creamy Italian Mac and Cheese Bake** is my way of giving a familiar American favorite a little Italian soul – rich with Fontina, sharp cheddar, mozzarella, and plenty of Parmesan. It's a dish that feels right at home on any holiday table, especially Thanksgiving.

Growing up, mac and cheese wasn't something we made often. My mom would serve baked pasta dishes layered with cheese and béchamel, but I didn't truly fall in love with mac and cheese until years later, when I realized how easily it could be made the Italian way. One Thanksgiving, after too many side dishes that felt the same, I wanted something creamy and comforting that still fit our family's table – something with the coziness of pasta al forno and the nostalgia of childhood

comfort food. This recipe was born that day, and now it's a staple every year.

The base starts with a simple roux, but instead of plain butter, I melt it with a bit of diced pancetta or prosciutto – just enough to give the sauce a salty, savory depth. The fat renders into the butter, infusing the whole dish with that unmistakable Italian aroma. Then comes the magic: Fontina for smoothness, sharp cheddar for bite, mozzarella for stretch, and Parmesan for that nutty, salty finish.

When it bakes, the top turns crisp and golden while the inside stays luxuriously creamy. It's comfort food through and through – a little rustic, a little elegant, and completely irresistible. On Thanksgiving, it's the first dish to disappear from our table, and I can promise it'll become one of your family's favorite too!!!

Things to know about this Creamy Italian Mac and Cheese Bake

One of my favorite things about this Creamy Italian Mac and Cheese Bake is how easy it is to customize. I love using Fontina, cheddar, mozzarella, and Parmesan, but Asiago, Provolone, or even a little Gorgonzola are delicious options too.

This recipe is perfect for entertaining because you can assemble it a day ahead and refrigerate it until you're ready to bake. Just pop it in the oven until it's hot, bubbly, and golden.

For a vegetarian version, simply leave out the pancetta and add sautéed mushrooms or roasted butternut squash. Whether it's part of your holiday table or a cozy family dinner, this creamy baked pasta is always a crowd-pleaser.

Craving more comforting Italian classics? Try my Spinach and

Mushroom Lasagna with Béchamel Sauce, Roasted Butternut Squash Gnocchi, or Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto next – each one made to warm your heart and your kitchen.

Italian Mac and Cheese bake



This Italian Mac and Cheese Bake is the ultimate comfort food, combining tender pasta with a rich, creamy blend of Italian cheeses and a golden, bubbly topping. Made with Fontina, mozzarella, cheddar, and Parmesan, every bite is smooth, cheesy, and full of flavor. It's an easy family-friendly casserole that's perfect for weeknight dinners, holidays, or potlucks.

- 1 Lb. pounds **short pasta** (cavatappi, shells, or elbow macaroni)
- 3 Tbsp. **unsalted butter**
- 3 oz. **prosciutto or pancetta**
- 3 **all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups **whole milk**
- 1 cup **heavy cream**
- 1 cup **shredded Fontina cheese**
- 1 cup **shredded sharp cheddar cheese**
- 1 cup **shredded mozzarella cheese**
- 1/2 cup **grated Parmesan cheese**, divided
- 2 cloves **garlic** minced

- 1 tsp. **fresh thyme leaves** (or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried)
- pinch of **nutmeg** (optional)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Crispy topping

- 1 cup Italian seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

1. Cook the pasta:

Boil in a large stock pot in salted water until *just al dente*. Drain and set aside.

2. Cook the pancetta/prosciutto:

In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add diced pancetta or prosciutto and cook until lightly crisp and the fat has rendered, about 3–4 minutes.

3. Build the roux:

Stir in the minced garlic and cook 30 seconds. Sprinkle in the flour and whisk for 1 minute, letting it absorb the butter and drippings.

4. Make the sauce:

Gradually pour in the milk and cream while whisking constantly until smooth and slightly thickened, about 4–5 minutes.

5. Add the cheeses:

Lower the heat and stir in Fontina, cheddar, mozzarella, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan until melted and creamy.

Season with thyme, nutmeg (if using), salt, and pepper.

6. Combine:

Add the cooked pasta to the sauce and stir until well coated.

7. Prepare the topping:

Mix breadcrumbs with Parmesan and olive oil.

8. Bake:

Pour the pasta mixture into a buttered 9×13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle evenly with the breadcrumb topping.

Bake at **375°F (190°C)** for **40–45 minutes**, until bubbly and golden brown.

Main Course

Italian

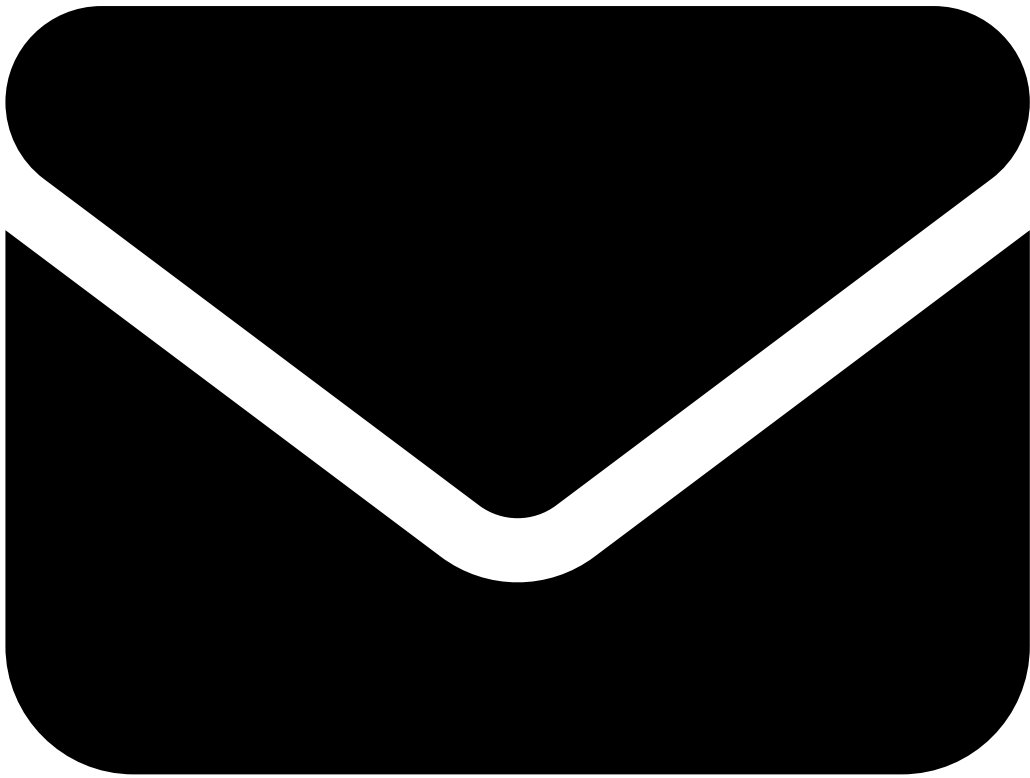
Italian mac and cheese, baked mac and cheese, creamy macaroni and cheese, Italian cheese pasta bake,

Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce

Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce

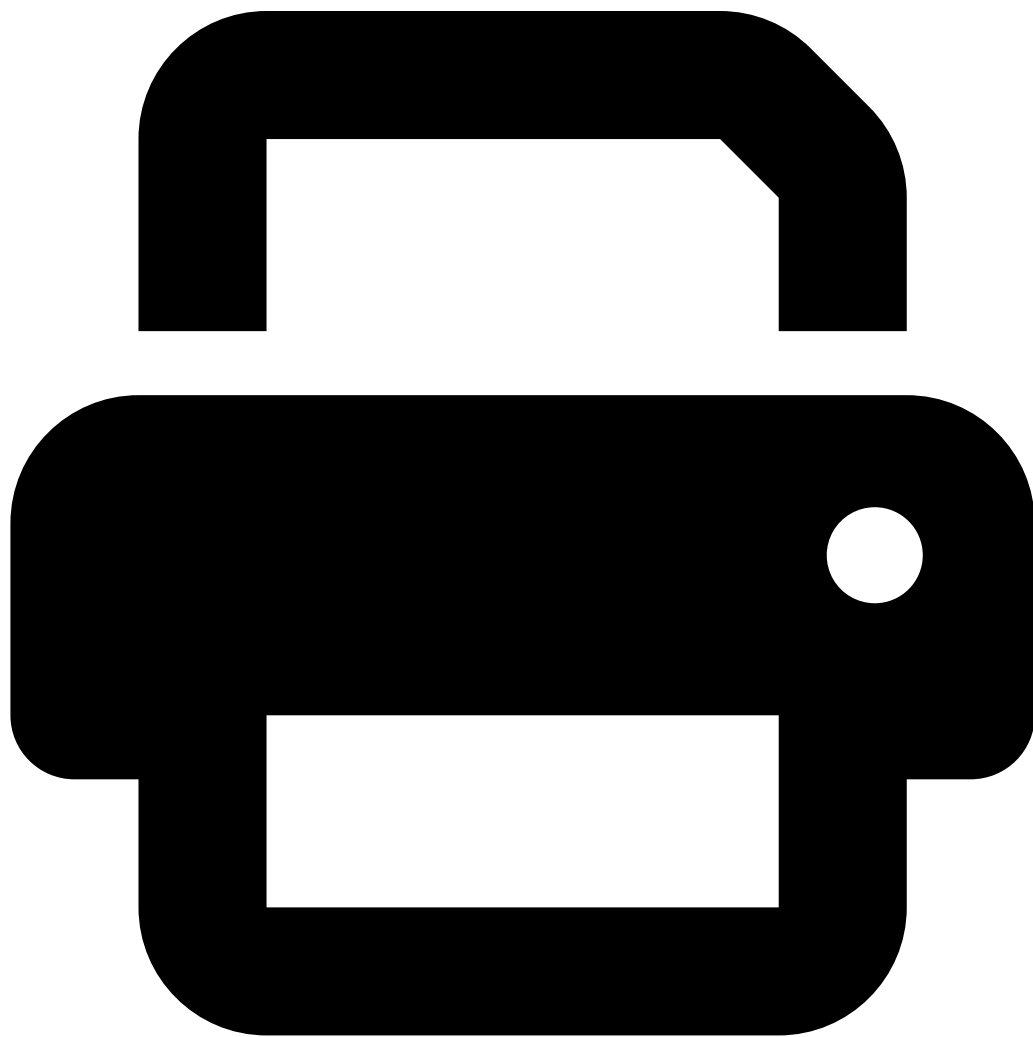
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











Few dishes capture the heart of Italian comfort food quite like Lasagna Bolognese. With its rich layers of meat sauce, creamy béchamel, and perfectly melted cheese, this classic meal is a labor of love that never fails to impress. My version keeps the process simple – using store-bought noodles and homemade Bolognese sauce – while still delivering that authentic, slow-simmered flavor that makes every bite unforgettable. Whether for a cozy family dinner or a Sunday gathering, this lasagna is always a crowd-pleaser.

Things to know about this Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce recipe

- **Make ahead:** You can assemble the lasagna a day in advance and refrigerate it until ready to bake.

- **Freezer-friendly:** Lasagna freezes beautifully – just wrap it tightly and freeze for up to 3 months.
- **Noodles:** No-boil noodles work well here, but if you prefer, parboil traditional lasagna sheets for a softer texture.
- **Sauce matters:** A rich, slow-cooked Bolognese sauce makes all the difference. If you've made extra, freeze it for your next batch.
- **Rest before slicing:** Let the lasagna sit for 15–20 minutes after baking to set the layers and make clean slices.
- **Craving more Italian comfort food?** Try my Meatball Sunday Sauce or cozy up with a bowl of Zuppa Toscana next. And if you love baked pasta, don't miss my hearty Easy cheesy Stuffed Shell – all perfect for your next family meal!

Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce



This **Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce** is a classic Italian masterpiece made with layers of rich slow-simmered meat sauce, silky béchamel, tender pasta sheets, and Parmesan

cheese. Unlike the American-style version made with ricotta, this traditional Northern Italian lasagna from Emilia-Romagna gets its luxurious creaminess from a smooth white sauce that perfectly balances the hearty Bolognese. It's a true labor of love, but every layer is worth the time for a comforting dish perfect for family gatherings, holidays, and special occasions.

For the Bolognese Sauce (You'll need about 4–5 cups of prepared Bolognese sauce.)

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 1/2 lb. lean ground beef
- 1/2 lb. ground pork
- 1 cup each chopped onion+ carrots + celery
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 28 oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 cup whole milk
- pinch of nutmeg
- Grated parmesan and Italian parsley for serving

For the Béchamel Sauce

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 4 cups whole milk, warmed
- 1/3 Tsp. ground nutmeg
- Salt and pepper to taste

Lasagna Noodles

Make the Bolognese sauce

1. **Build the flavor base:**Heat olive oil and butter in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add finely diced onion, carrot, and celery (*soffritto*)

and cook for 5–7 minutes until softened and fragrant

2. **Brown the meat:** Add ground beef and ground pork, breaking it apart with a wooden spoon. Cook until the meat is browned and most of the moisture has evaporated. Season with salt and pepper.
3. **Add the aromatics and wine:** Stir in garlic and cook briefly until fragrant. Add the wine and simmer until it has reduced, allowing the flavor to concentrate.
4. **Simmer the sauce:** Add crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, and herbs. Lower the heat and let the sauce gently simmer, partially covered, for **1½–2 hours**, stirring occasionally. A traditional Bolognese is slow-cooked until rich, thick, and deeply flavorful.
5. **Finish the sauce:** Stir in milk during the final 15–20 minutes of cooking to mellow the acidity of the tomatoes and create the signature silky texture of a Northern Italian Bolognese sauce. Taste and adjust seasoning before assembling the lasagna.
6. **Prepare the Bechamel sauce**
7. In a saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat.
8. Whisk in the flour and cook for 1–2 minutes until slightly golden.
9. Gradually whisk in the warm milk, stirring constantly until smooth and thickened, about 5–7 minutes.
10. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Set aside.

Cook the Lasagna Noodles

1. If using regular noodles, cook in salted boiling water until just al dente.

2. Drain and lay flat on a lightly oiled surface to prevent sticking.
3. If using no-boil noodles, skip this step.

Assemble the Lasagna

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Lightly grease a 9×13-inch baking dish.
3. Spread a thin layer of Bolognese sauce on the bottom.
4. Add a layer of noodles.
5. Spread a layer of béchamel, then a layer of Bolognese, followed by a sprinkle of mozzarella and Parmesan.
6. Repeat the process ending with a layer of béchamel.

Bake

1. Cover with foil (tent it slightly so it doesn't touch the cheese).
2. Bake for 30 minutes.
3. Uncover and bake another 15 minutes, or until bubbly and golden on top.

Rest and Serve

1. Let the lasagna rest 20–30 minutes before cutting , this helps the layers set beautifully.
2. Slice and serve warm with extra Parmesan if desired.
3. Slice and serve warm with extra Parmesan if desired.

Main Course

Italian

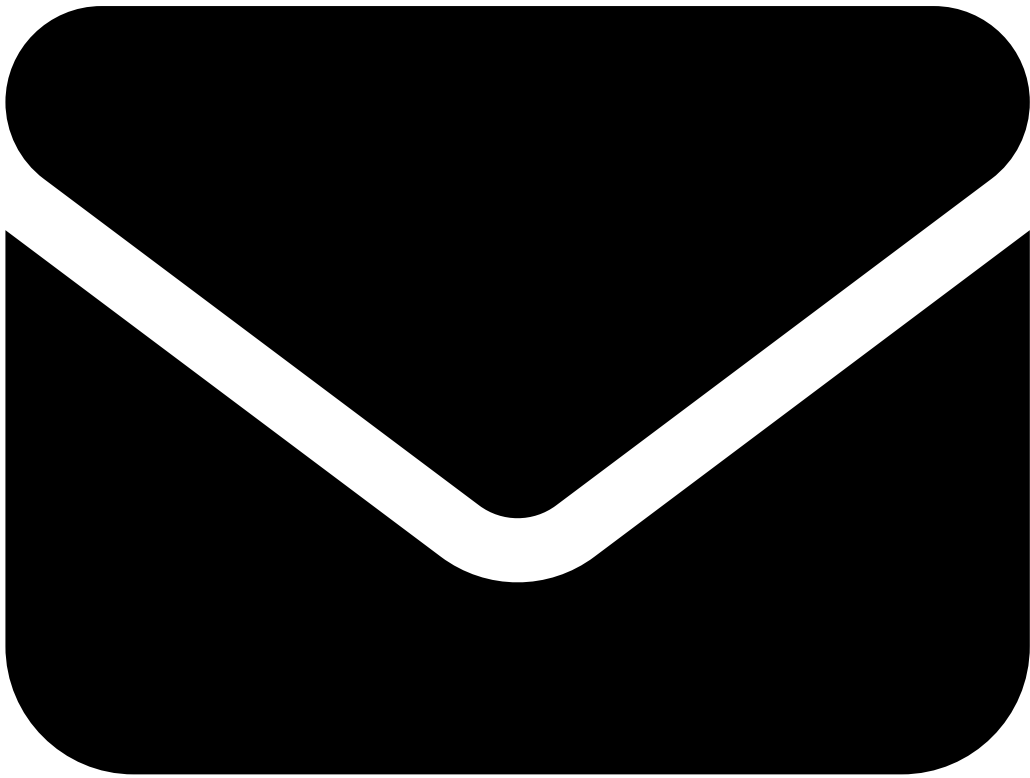
lasagna bolognese with béchamel sauce

Squash Varieties + Easy Cooking Ideas

Squash Varieties + Easy Cooking Ideas

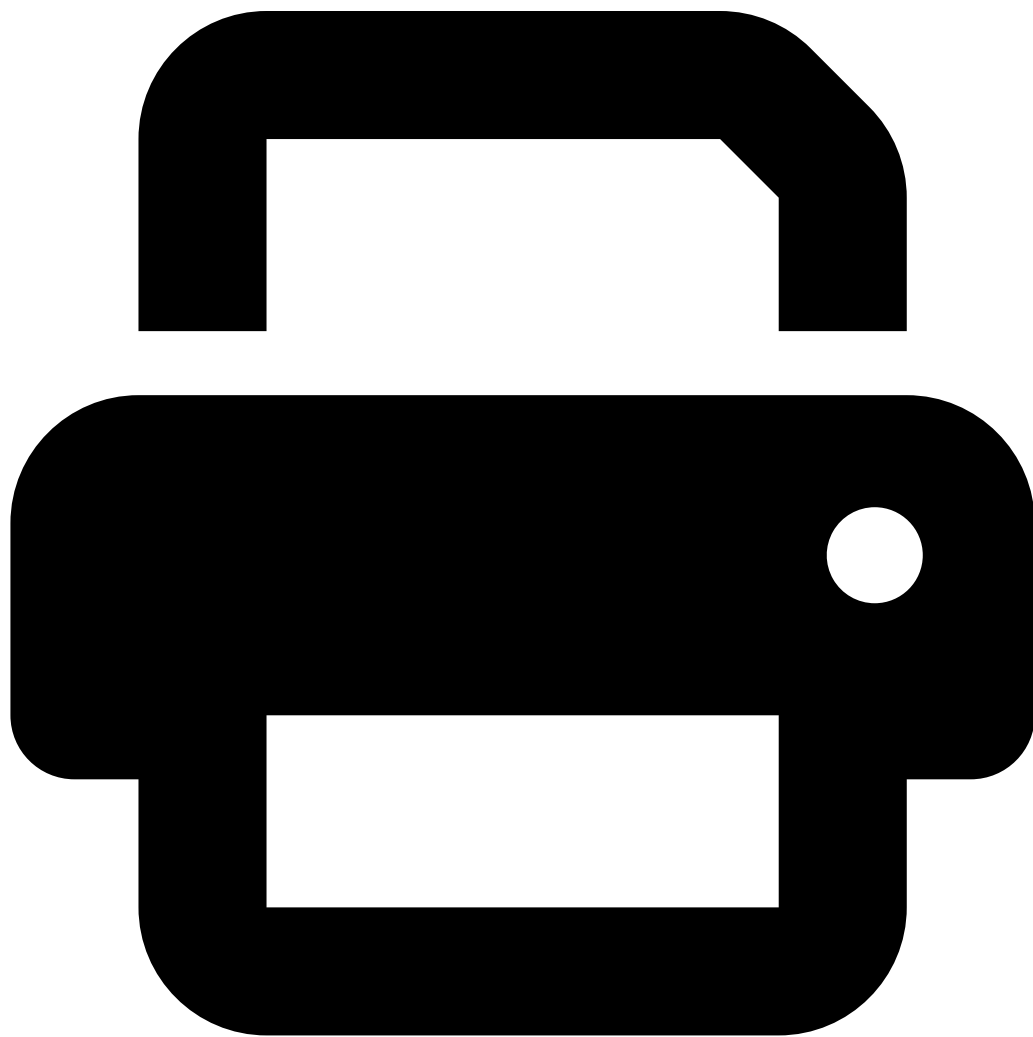
This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.











Every fall, I look forward to squash season. Growing up, it was a staple at the market, and even now I can't resist filling my basket with all the different shapes and colors. Each variety has its own personality—some sweet and creamy, others nutty and hearty—and they all find their way into comforting dishes in my kitchen. From soups and pastas to stuffed squash dinners, these vegetables bring warmth to the table.

Why Squash is So Special

Squash is more than just pretty on the counter—it's wholesome, versatile, and naturally comforting. Packed with fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants, it's a vegetable that feels indulgent while being nourishing. And I love how it works in both savory dishes (like roasted squash with herbs or creamy risottos) and sweet recipes (cakes, muffins, even cookies).

Things to know about Squash Varieties + Easy Cooking Ideas

Common Types of Squash

- **Butternut Squash**

Sweet, creamy, and one of the most popular varieties. Perfect for soups, roasting, or blending into a pasta sauce.

- **Acorn Squash**

Mild and nutty with a tender texture. Its natural “bowl” shape makes it perfect for stuffing with sausage, rice, or grains.

- **Delicata Squash**

Quick-cooking with edible skin, slightly sweet flavor, and beautiful striped skin. Great roasted in slices or tossed into salads.

- **Spaghetti Squash**

Once baked, its flesh turns into golden strands that mimic pasta. A fun and lighter way to serve saucy dishes.

Easy Ways to Cook Squash

- Roast with olive oil, garlic, and fresh herbs.
- Stuff with sausage, rice, or seasonal vegetables.
- Puree into soups, sauces, or risottos.
- Toss into pasta or gnocchi.
- Bake into breads, muffins, or cakes.

How to pick: Look for squash that feels heavy for its size, with firm skin and no soft spots.

Storage: Whole squash keeps well on the counter for 1–2 months. Once cut, store in the fridge and use within a week. Cooked squash can be frozen for up to 3 months.

Peeling tip: Microwave a whole squash for 2–3 minutes before peeling—it softens the skin and makes it easier to handle.

A Cozy Recipe to Try: Creamy Butternut Squash Pasta with Italian Sausage

Now that we've explored the different types of squash and how versatile they can be, I wanted to share one of my favorite ways to enjoy butternut squash in the fall. It turns into the creamiest pasta sauce, and when paired with Italian sausage, it becomes the kind of hearty, comforting meal everyone loves.

If you're ready to start cooking with squash, I've got a few more cozy recipes to get you inspired. My Italian sausage & spinach butternut squash stuffed Roasted Butternut Squash Gnocch

Creamy Butternut Squash Pasta with Italian sausage



- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 lbs), peeled,

- seeded, and cubed
- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 lb Italian sausage (mild or spicy), casings removed
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 12 oz short pasta (rigatoni, penne, or orecchiette work well)
- Fresh sage or parsley, for garnish

1. Roast the Squash.

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Toss cubed butternut squash with 2 tbsp olive oil, salt, pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes. Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 25–30 minutes, until tender and caramelized.

2. Cook the Pasta.

While the squash roasts, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta according to package directions until al dente. Reserve 1 cup pasta water, then drain.

3. Cook the Sausage.

In a large skillet, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add Italian sausage, breaking it apart with a spoon, and cook until browned and cooked through. Remove sausage from the pan and set aside.

4. Make the Sauce.

In the same skillet, add onion and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute more.

Add roasted squash and broth. Simmer for 3–4 minutes, then blend (with an immersion blender or carefully in a regular blender) until smooth and creamy. Stir in the heavy cream and Parmesan.

5. Combine Everything.

Return the sausage to the skillet. Add cooked pasta and toss, adding reserved pasta water as needed for a silky sauce.

6. Serve.

Garnish with fresh sage or parsley, extra Parmesan, and a drizzle of good olive oil. Serve warm.

7. Storage

Leftovers keep well in the fridge for 3 days. Reheat gently with a splash of broth or cream to loosen the sauce.