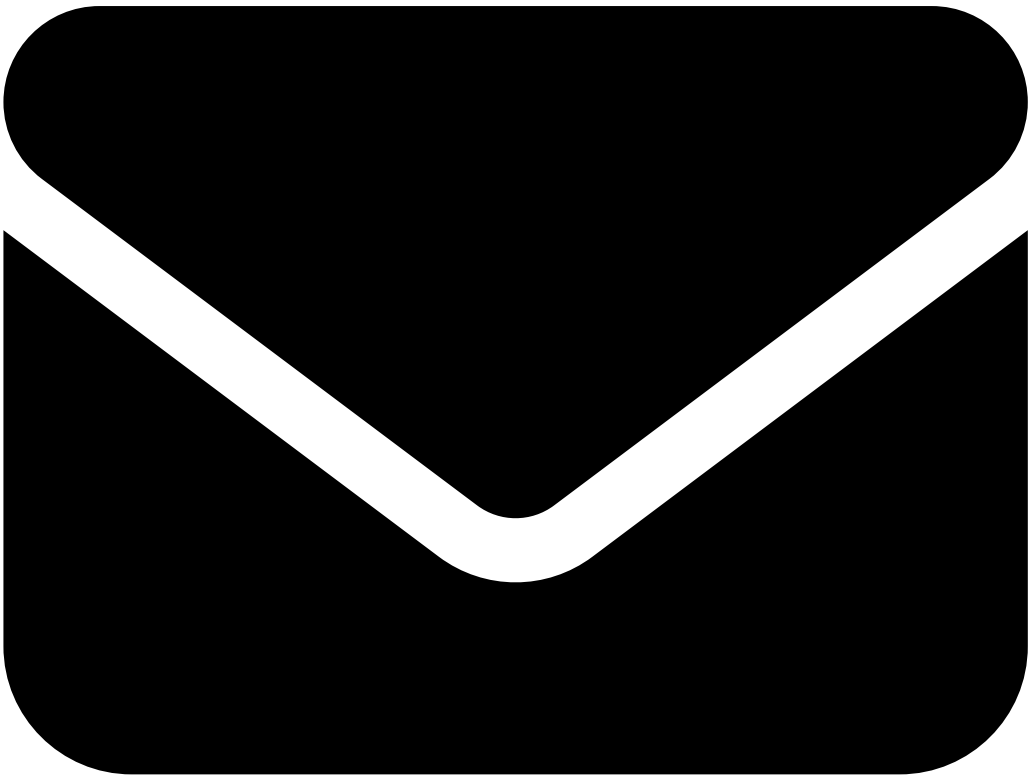
Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

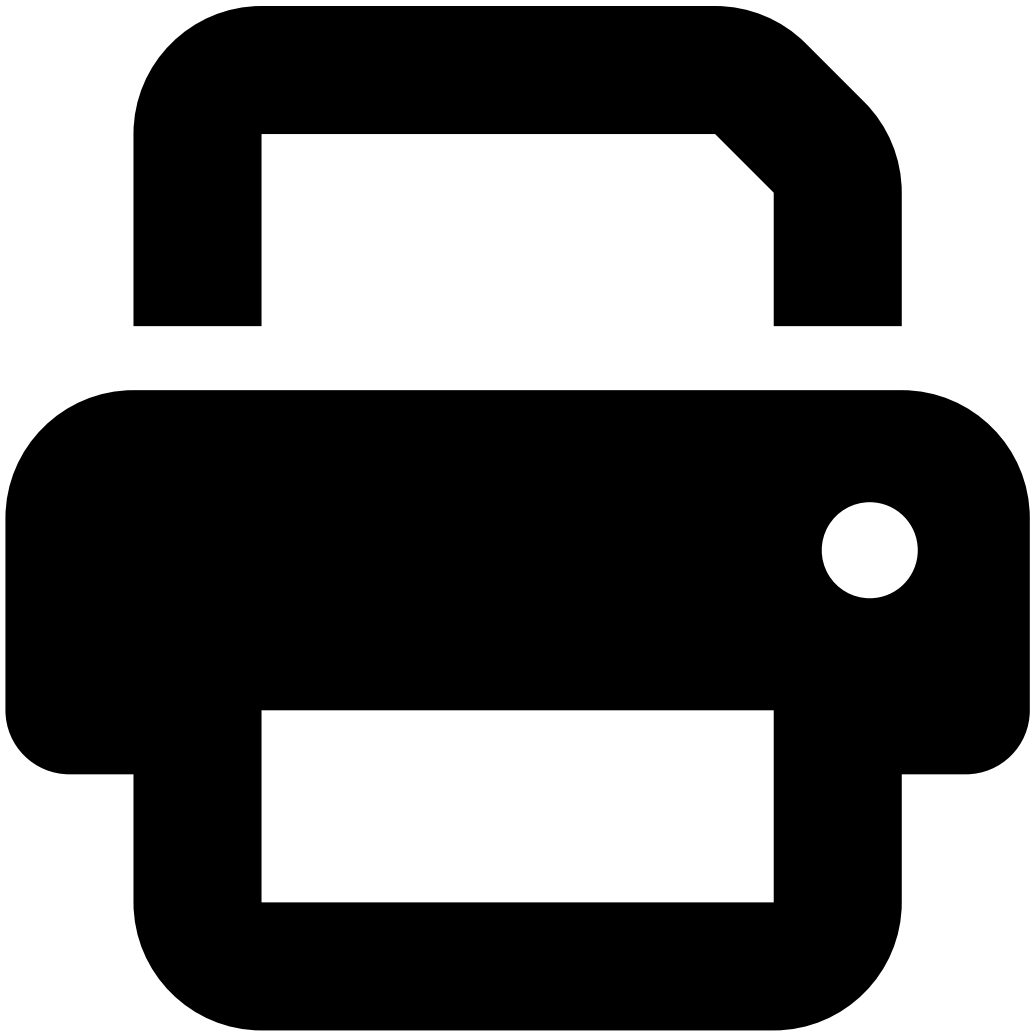
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SMS



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

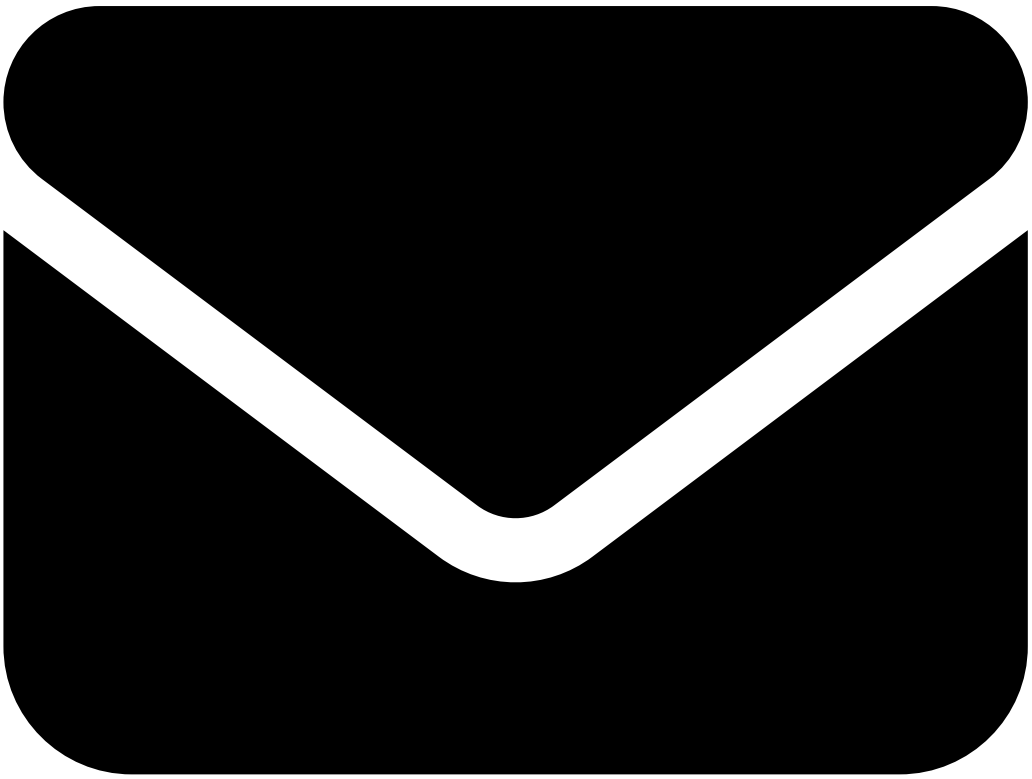
Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon Pasta)

Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon Pasta)

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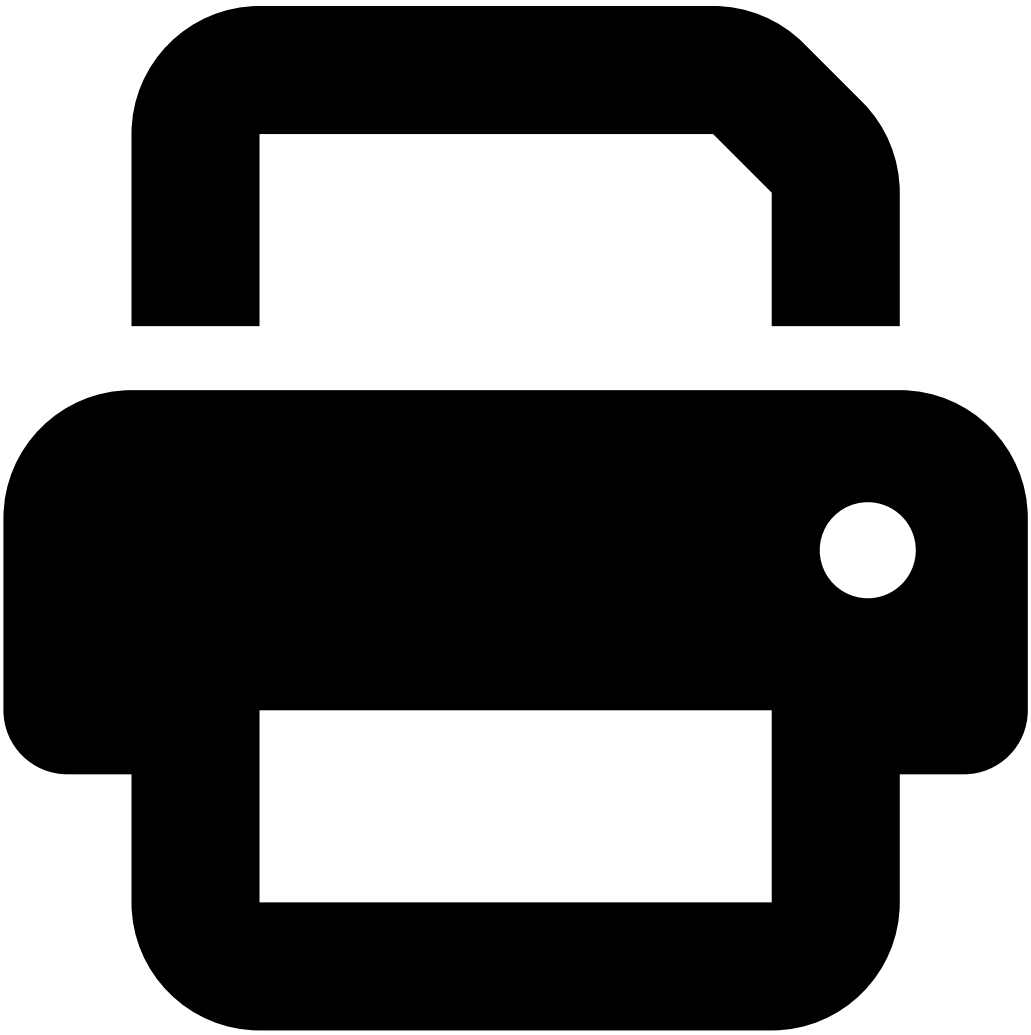
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There’s a reason Pasta al Limone is so closely tied to the Amalfi Coast—this stretch of southern Italy is famous for its incredibly fragrant lemons, grown right along the cliffs overlooking the sea. Those lemons are the heart of this dish, and once 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 flacks (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 ¼ 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

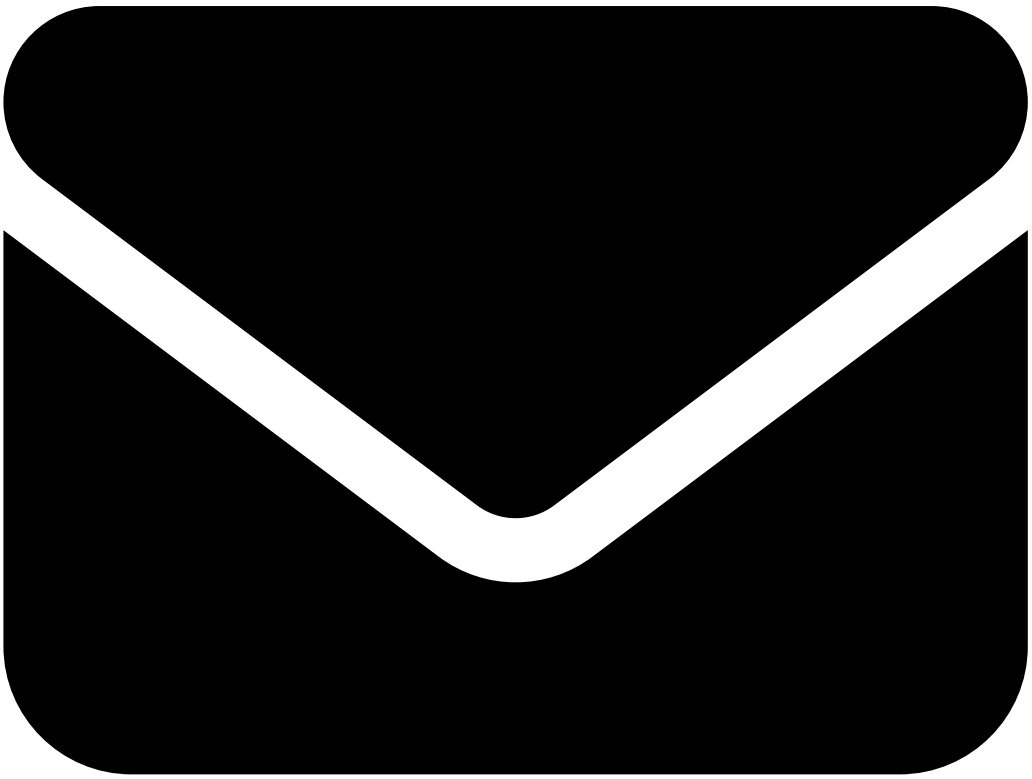
Authentic Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

Authentic Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

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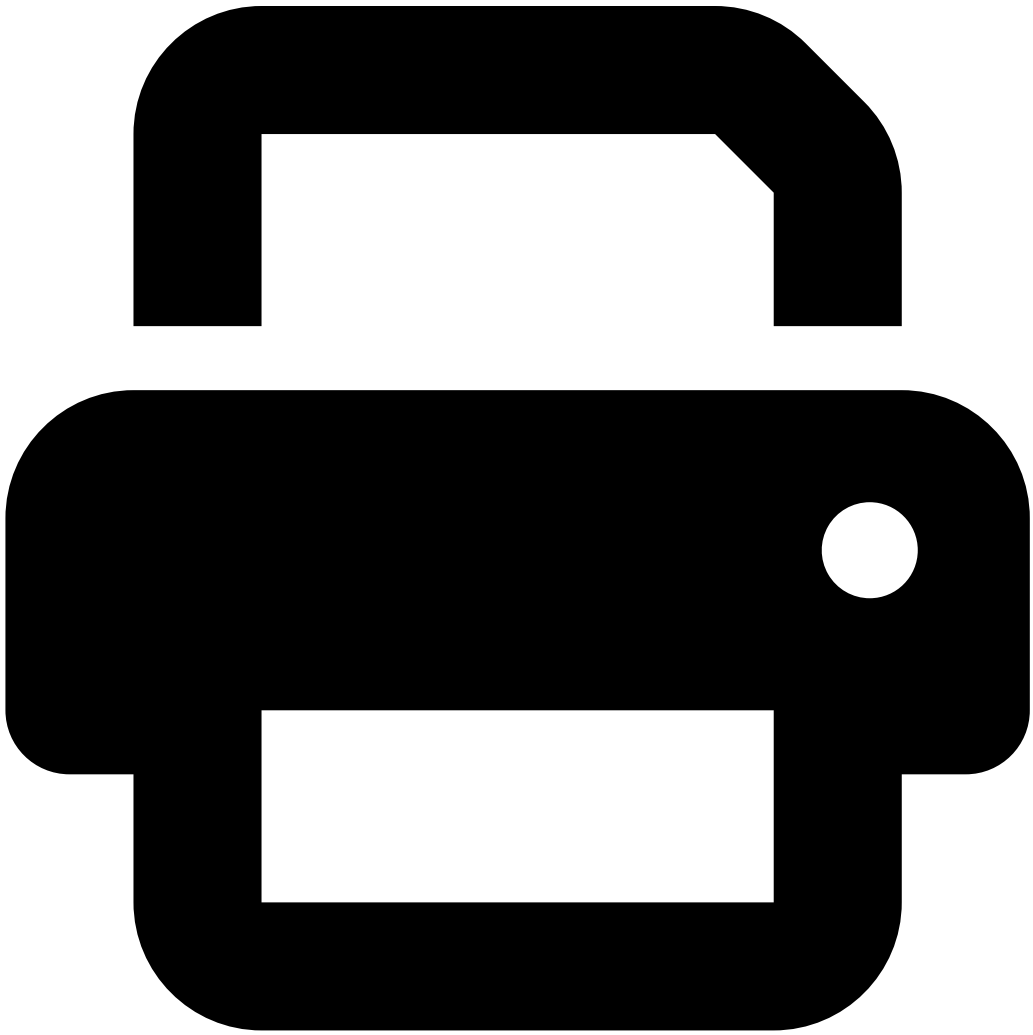









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There’s something about the Italian Riviera that changes the way you cook. The food is lighter, brighter, and built on ingredients that don’t need much help. This Pasta Portofino is exactly that.

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

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

Things to know about this Authentic

Pasta Portofino – Simple Pesto Tomato Pasta

What Makes This Dish Authentic

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

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

Tips for the Best Flavor

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

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Serving

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

Final Note

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

Craving More Simple Italian Recipes?

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

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

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

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.

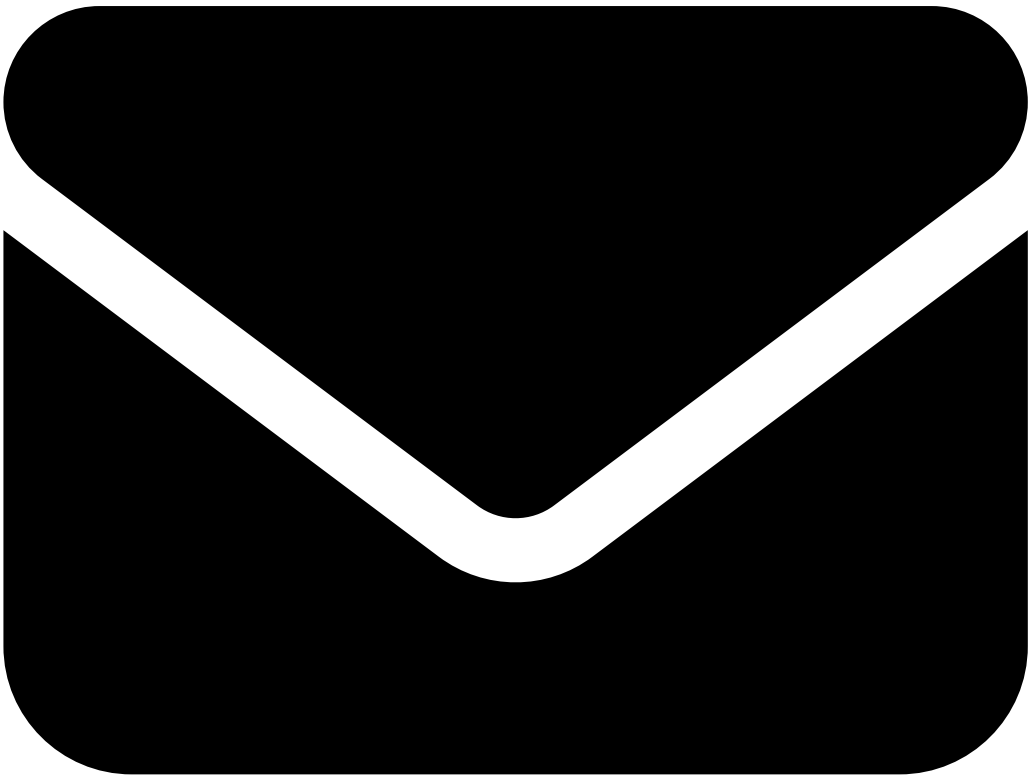
Main Course
Italian
pasta, tomato, Portofino, Italian

15 Weeknight Italian Meals: Easy Recipes in Under 45 Minutes

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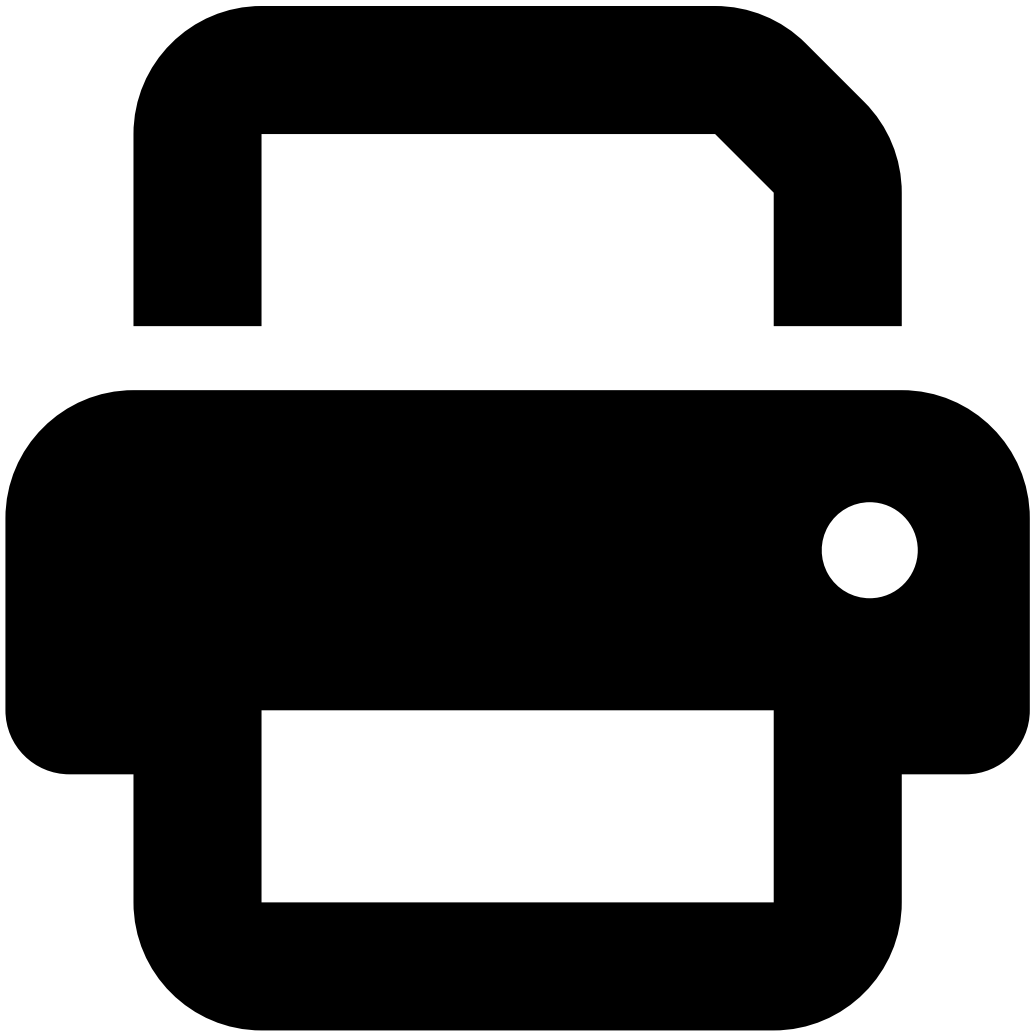
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Weeknight cooking doesn’t need to be complicated to be good. Some of the best Italian meals are built on simple ingredients, cooked well, and brought to the table without overthinking it.

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 cookGO 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 ae 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.

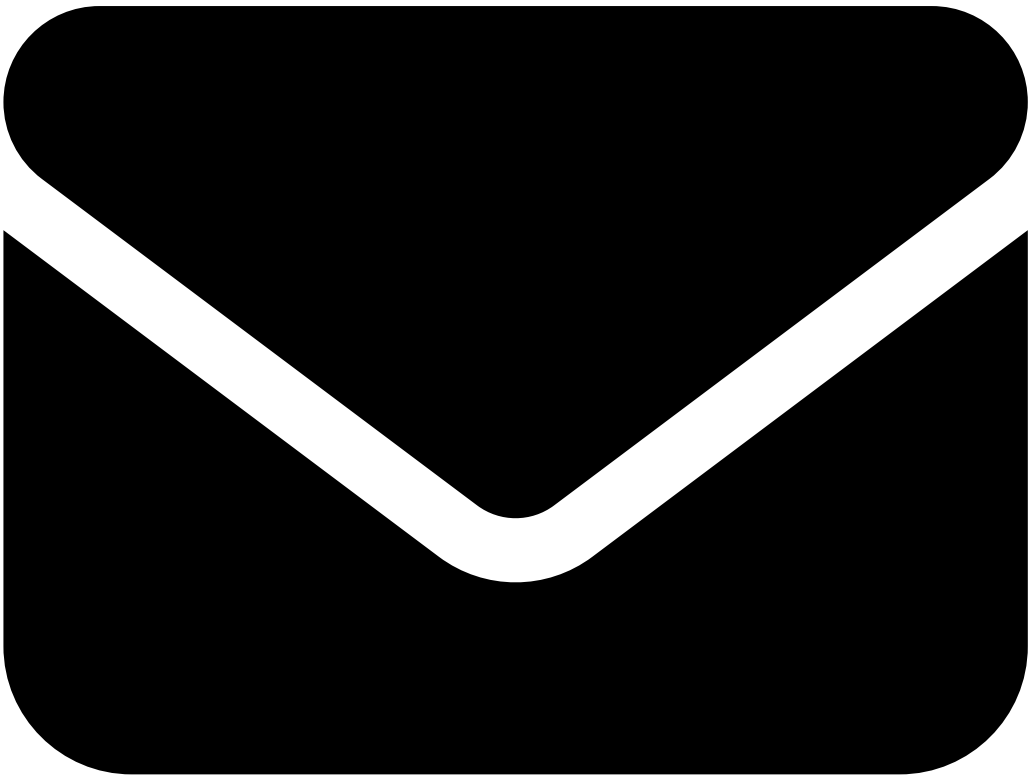
Pick a recipe to try this week, and come back when you need something new. For more simple, flavorful Italian recipes, explore the blog and find your next favorite.

Anelletti al Forno: Authentic Sicilian Baked Pasta Recipe

Anelletti al Forno: Authentic Sicilian Baked Pasta Recipe

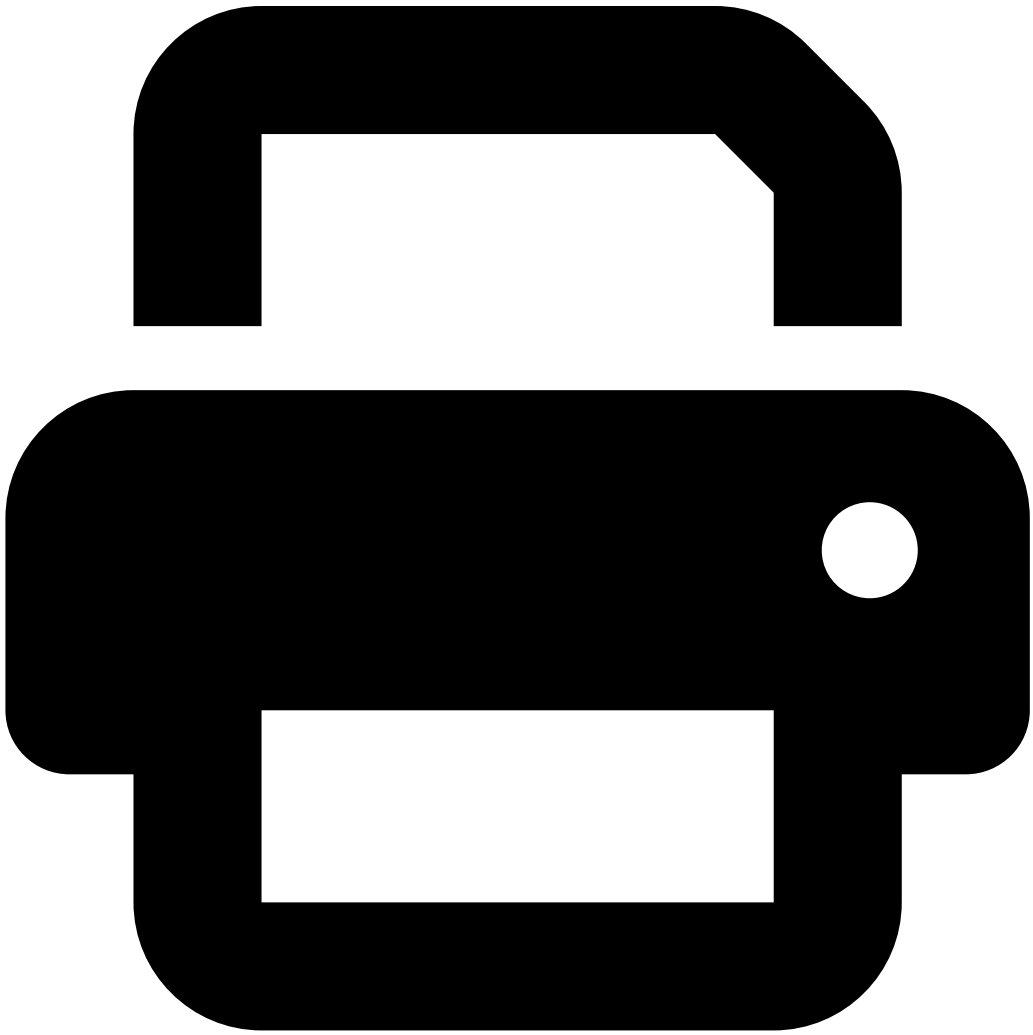
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If there’s one dish that captures the heart of Sicilian home cooking, it’s Anelletti al Forno. Made with tiny ring-shaped pasta, a rich ragù, sweet peas, and melty cheese, this baked pasta is as nostalgic as it is satisfying.

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 0live 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

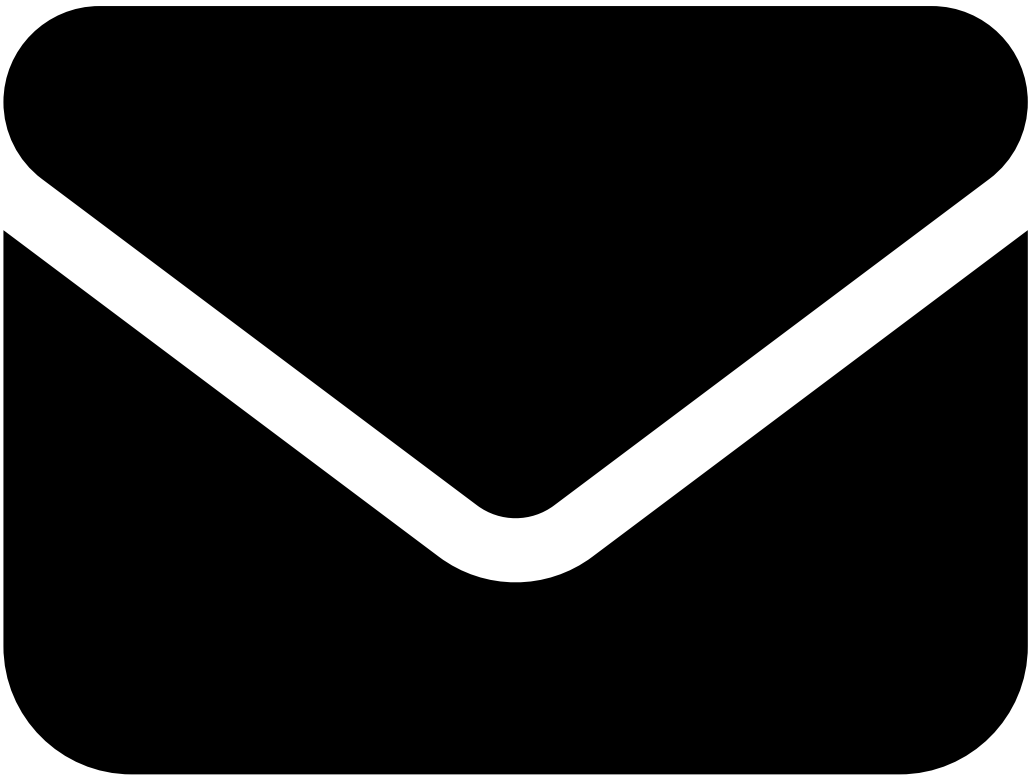
Main Course
Italian
Anelletti, baked, Silician

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta

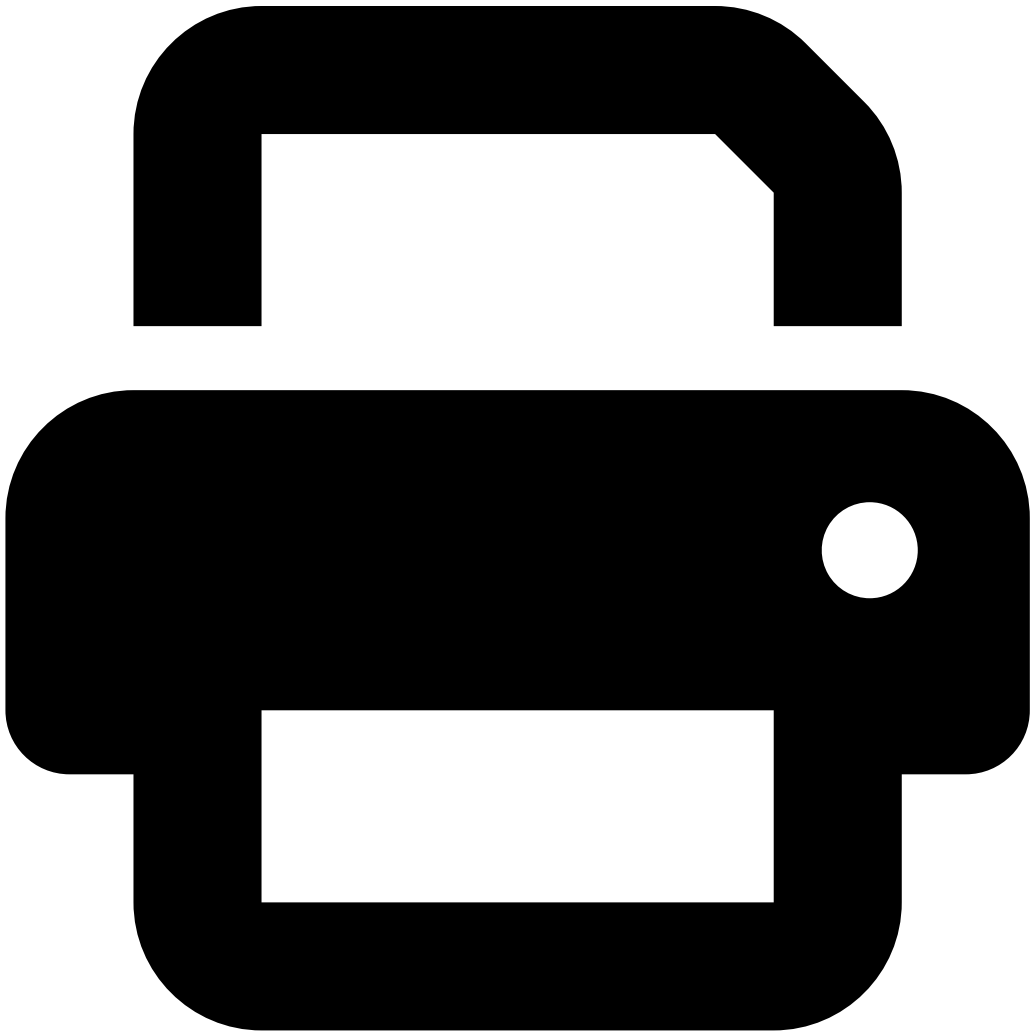
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Spring is all about fresh, vibrant flavors, and nothing says “springtime on a plate” quite like this **Lemon Asparagus Ricciarelle Pasta**. The curly, ribbon-like ricciarelle pasta holds onto every bit of the zesty lemon sauce, while the sautéed asparagus 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 0z. 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.

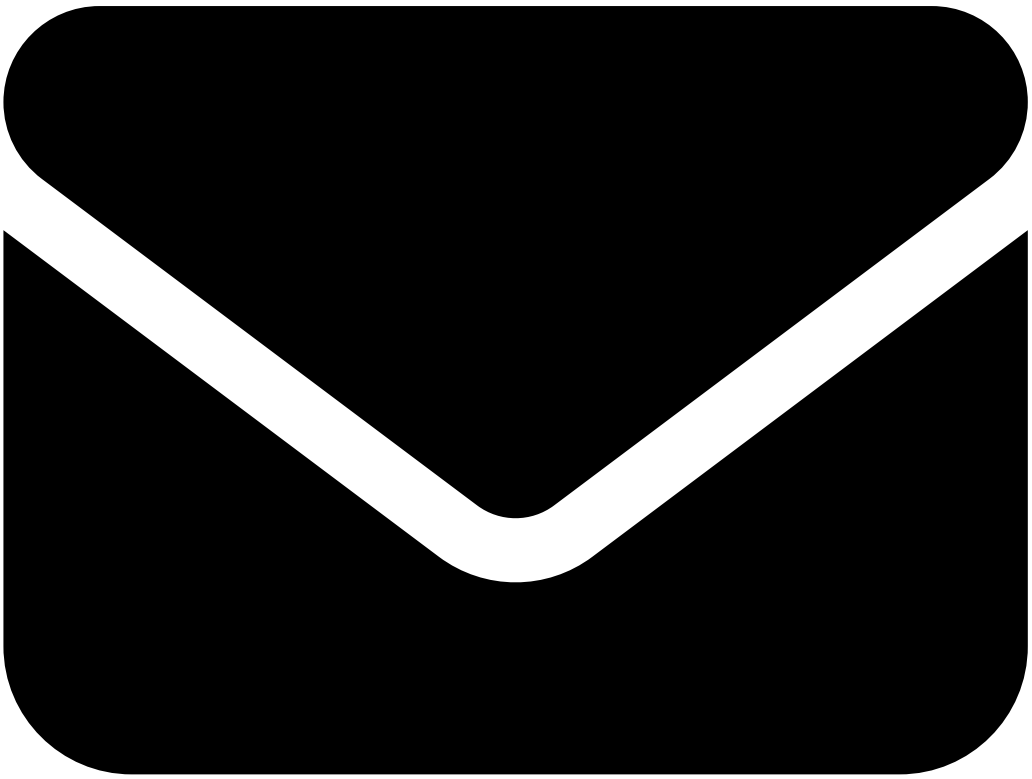
Main Course
Italian
Asparagus Italian, pasta

Asparagus, Prosciutto & Lemon Béchamel Lasagna

Asparagus, Proscuitto & Lemon Béchamel Lasagna

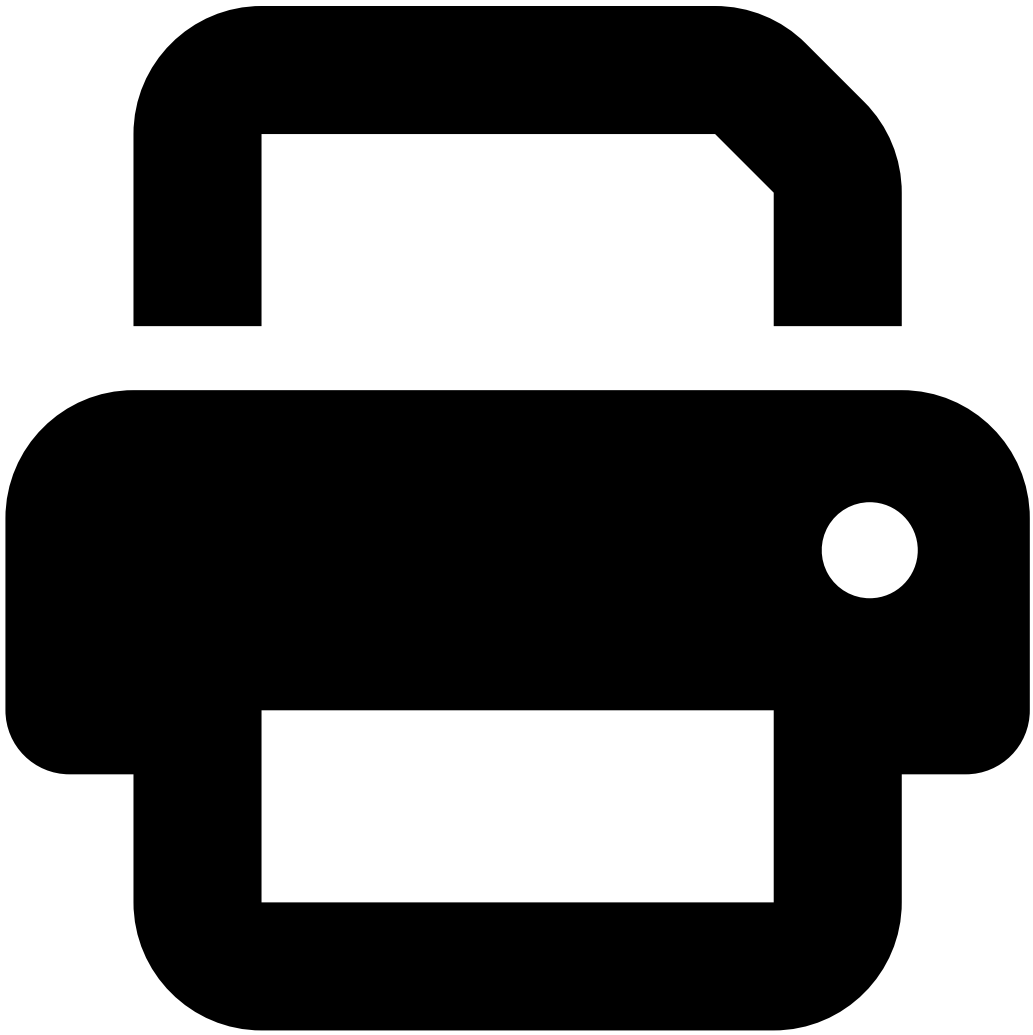
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There’s something about spring that makes me want to put away the heavy red sauce and cook a little lighter—but not boring. This asparagus lasagna is exactly that. Layers of tender pasta, a silky lemon béchamel, and a ricotta filling that actually 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 proscuitto** 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:

   Ricotta1 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:

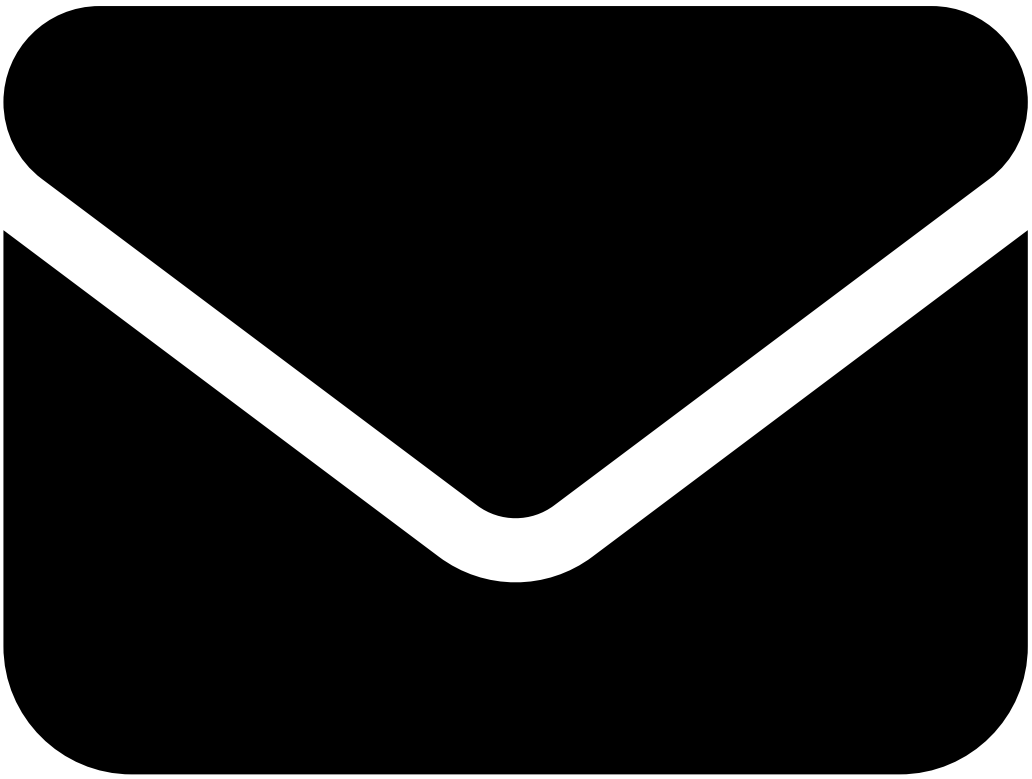
   messy scoop to clean, *perfect* slices

Main Course
Italian
Italian asapargus, lasagna

One-Pot Creamy Zucchini Pasta (Pasta e Zucchini)

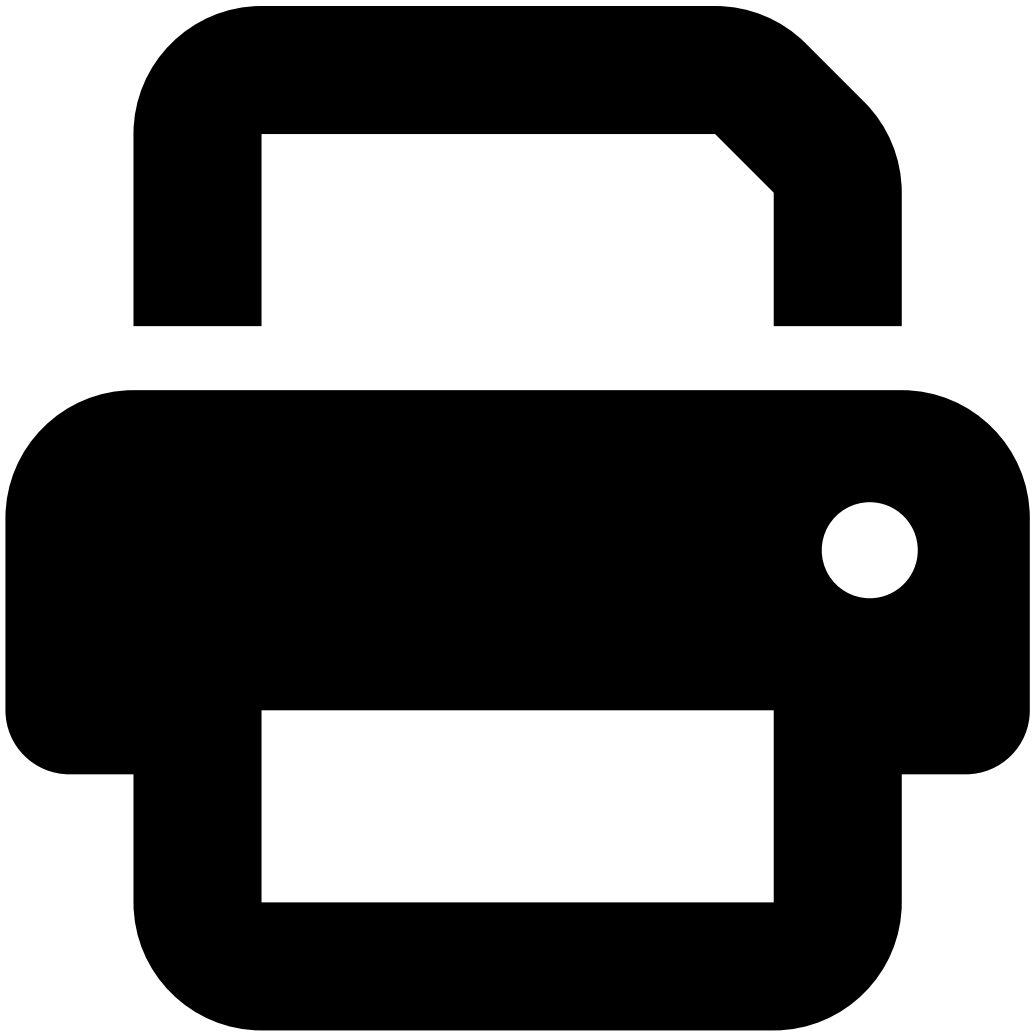
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This creamy zucchini pasta is made the same way many Italian home cooks prepare pasta with peas—everything cooks together in one pot.

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 0z. 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

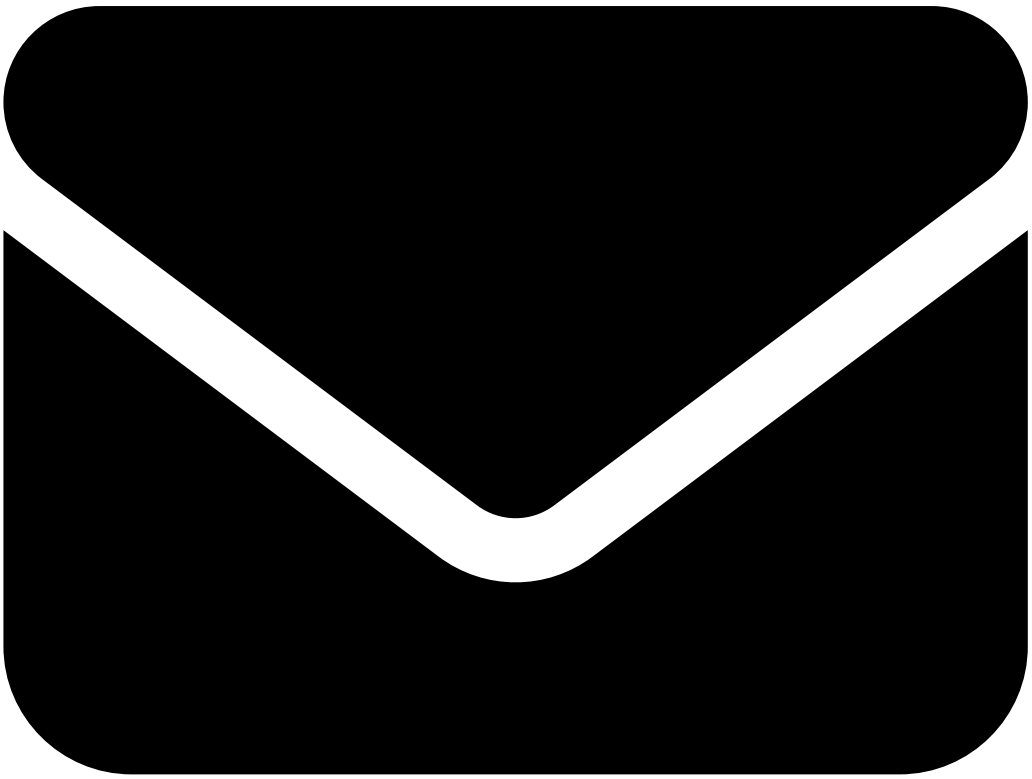
Traditional Southern Italian Cavatelli

Traditional Southern Italian Cavatelli

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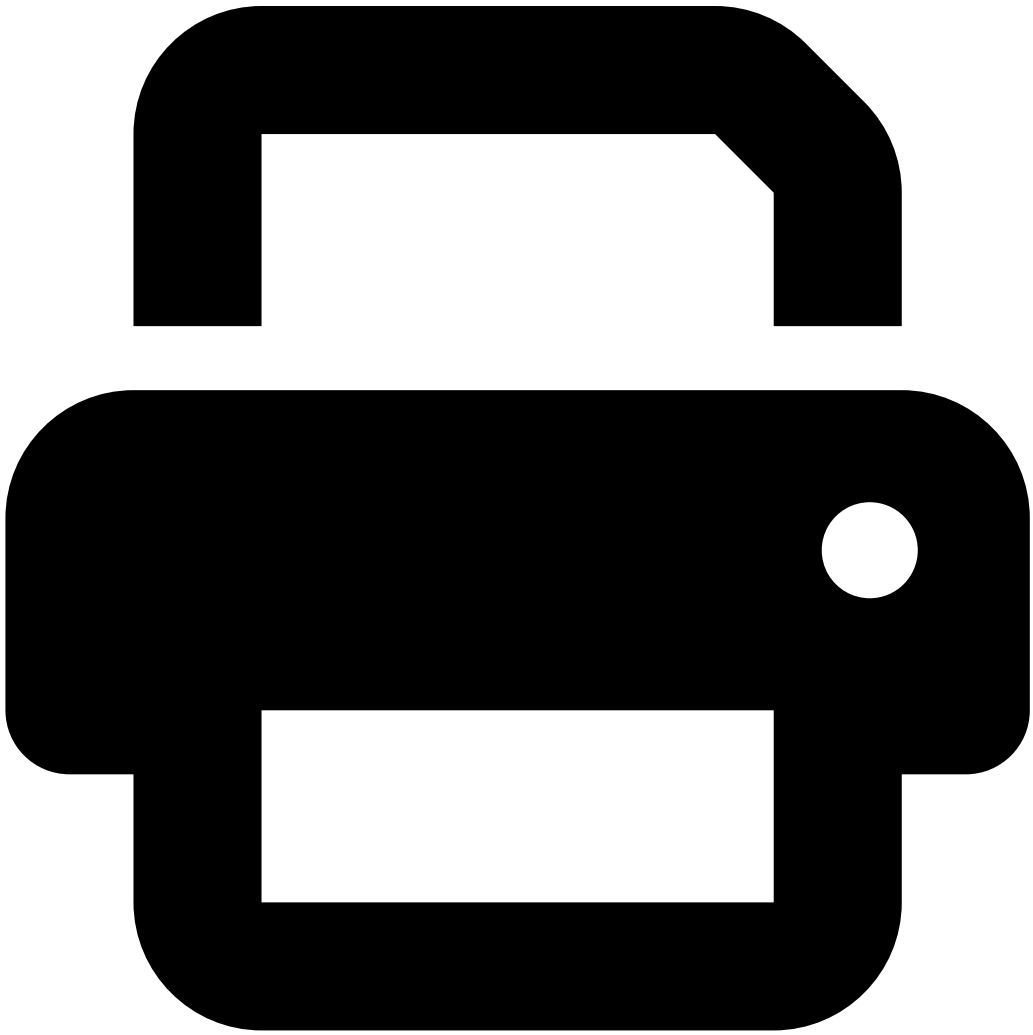
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What Are Cavatelli?

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)
- ¾–1 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
- ¼–½ tbsp red pepper flakes
- ⅓ 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 ½-inch thick.
3. Cut into ½-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 ½ 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

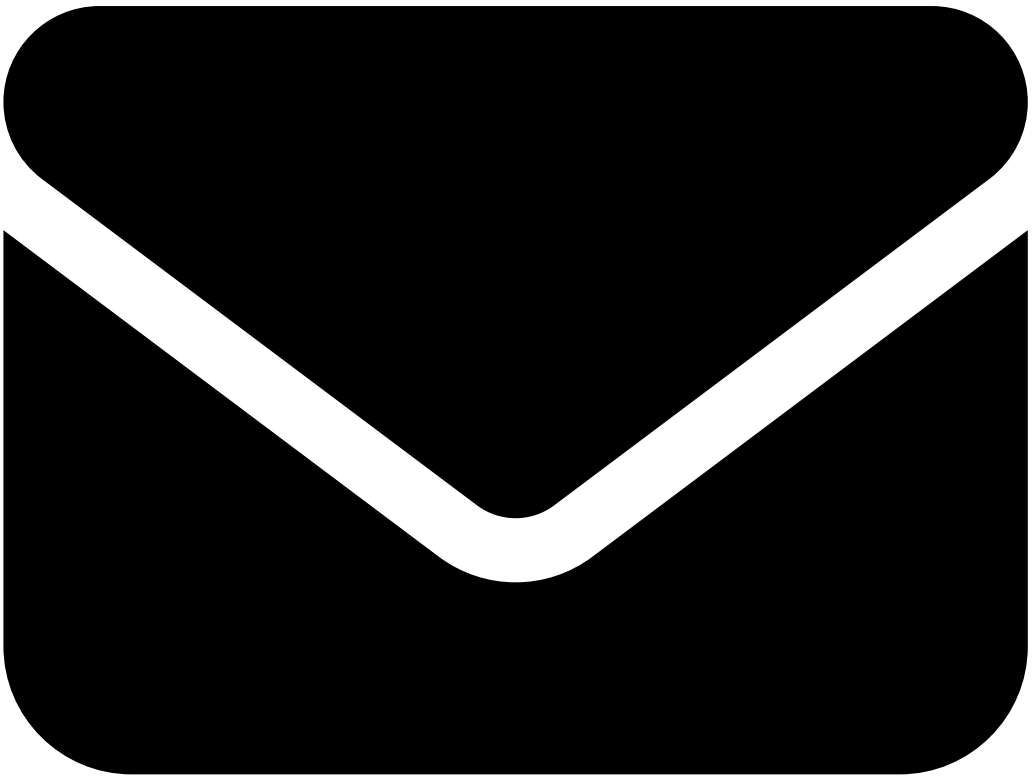
you work so they don’t stick together.
Main Course, pasta
Italian
homemade cavatelli,

Authentic Fettuccine Alfredo (No Cream)

Authentic Fettuccine Alfredo (No Cream)

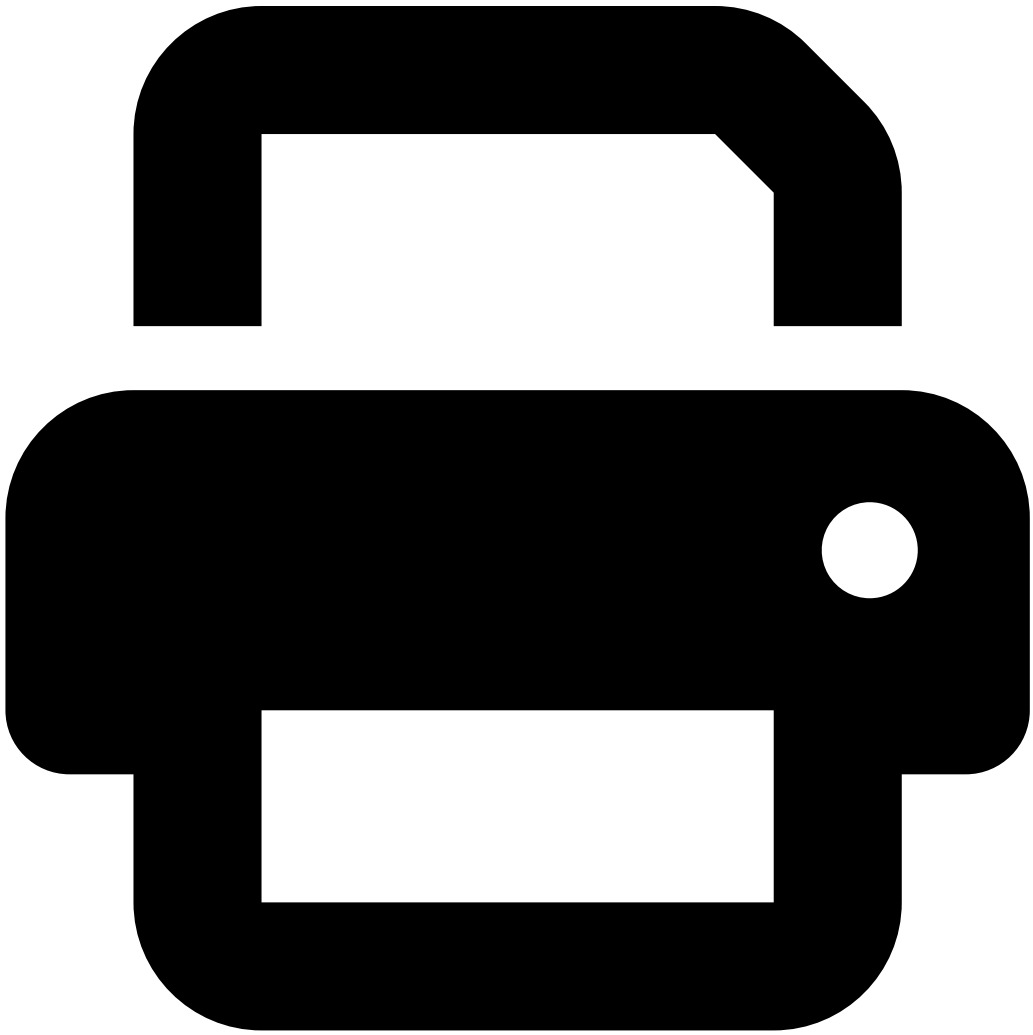
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If you grew up in America, you probably think Alfredo sauce means heavy cream, garlic, and maybe even chicken. But authentic **Fettuccine Alfredo** is something entirely different.

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 ½ cups freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano ((150g))
- 2 tsps fine sea salt ((for pasta water, plus more as needed))
- ½ 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 **1½ 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.