

NATIONAL



January 4

IT'S NATIONAL SPAGHETTI DAY!

National Spaghetti Day on January 4th offers an opportunity to pick your sauce and add it to that long, thin cylindrical pasta of Italian and Sicilian origin. Usually made from semolina flour, this pasta has been a worldwide favorite for ages and loved by millions.

There are a variety of different pasta dishes based on spaghetti, and the sauce determines most of them. Some examples include spaghetti ala Carbonara, garlic and oil, tomato sauce, meat sauce, bolognese, Alfredo sauce, clam sauce or other sauces. We traditionally serve spaghetti dishes topped with grated hard cheeses such as Pecorino Romano, Parmesan and Grana Padano.

The word spaghetti is plural for the Italian word spaghetti, which is a diminutive of spago, meaning “thin string” or “twine.”

American restaurants offered Spaghetti around the end of the 19th century as Spaghetti Italiane (which is believed to have consisted of noodles cooked past al dente and a mild tomato sauce flavored with easily found spices and vegetables such as cloves, bay leaves, and garlic). Decades later, cooks added oregano and basil to many recipes.



SPAGHETTI ORIGINS

Many people don't know that the first historical reference to boiled noodles suggests that the Arabs invented the dish thousands of years ago, long before it became a staple of Italian cuisine.

What's especially remarkable about this is that historical records actually refer to dried noodles being purchased from a street vendor, which means that pasta has been sold in stores since at least the 5th century A.D.! Of course, today we associate pasta with the Italians, who revolutionized the dish and invented a wide variety of pasta shapes.

The first Western pasta was likely long, thin forms made in Sicily around the 12th century; till this day, spaghetti is the most common round-rod type of pasta and in Italian, “spaghetti” means “little lines.” However, the popularity of pasta only spread across the whole country of Italy after the establishment of pasta factories in the 19th century, substantially shortening the time needed for making dishes like spaghetti and enabling the mass production of pasta for the Italian market.

The steady flow of Italian immigrants to the United States brought traditional Italian dishes with it, and spaghetti was offered in restaurants as early as the 19th century. Spaghetti then gained popularity all over the world.

ITALIAN FOOD QUIZ

1. What was the most influential crop incorporated into Italian cuisine after Columbus returned from the New World?

- a) olives b) basil c) tomatoes

2. When were tomatoes introduced to Italian cooking?

- a) 1800s b) 1700s c) 1600s

3. What is a key factor that distinguishes Italian cooking from that of other countries?

- a) The variety of ingredients b) The spices c) Stirring just enough

4. What's the most popular type of eatery in Italy?

- a) dessert shops b) Pizzarias c) delis

5. Which people are frequently credited with first delivering dried pasta as we know it today to the Italian countryside?

- a) French b) Spaniards c) Arabs

6. How many pounds of pasta do Italians eat on average each year?

- a) About 60 pounds b) 30 pounds c) 45 pounds

7. How many different varieties of dried pasta are made in Italy?

- a) 350 b) 280 c) 400

8. Why does pasta sometimes come in such complex shapes?

- a) To make different names of pasta dishes
b) To have different pasta sauces cling correctly
c) Because pasta came from all over the world

9. What is the primary ingredient of pesto?

- a) garlic b) rosemary c) basil

10. Which oil is most common in Italian cuisine?

- a) Canola oil b) olive oil c) avocado oil



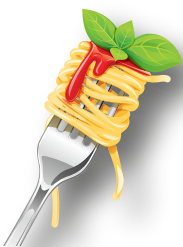
ON TOP OF SPAGHETTI

In March of 2009, the world record for the largest bowl of spaghetti was set and then reset in March of 2010 when a Garden Grove California Buca di Beppo restaurant successfully filled a swimming pool with more than 13,780 pounds of pasta.

Sung to the tune of “On Top of Old Smoky,” the fun children’s song, “On Top of Spaghetti,” was written and originally sung by folk singer Tom Glazer with the Do-Re-Mi Children’s Chorus in 1963.

*“On top of spaghetti,
All covered with cheese,
I lost my poor meatball,
When somebody sneezed.*

*It rolled off the table,
And on to the floor,
And then my poor meatball,
Rolled out of the door.”*

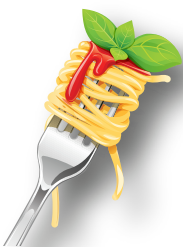


SPAGHETTI DAY WORD SEARCH



LASAGNE
SPAGHETTI
RAVIOLI
MACARONI
RIGATONI
FETTUCCINE
LINGUINE
PENNE

ANGEL HAIR
PAPPARDELLE
TAGLIATELLE
VERMICELLI
CAVATAPPI
CASARECCE
CAMPANELLE
ROTINI



FOOD QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Tomatoes
2. The 1800s
3. The variety of ingredients Italian cuisine is renowned for the wide range of ingredients that could end up included in any given dish. Those ingredients are frequently chosen based on what's fresh at the market. Personal culinary creativity is also warmly embraced.
4. Pizzerias, Pizzerias are probably the most common type of eatery in Italy. Originally pioneered in Naples, the popularity of pizza swept northward across the country and the world in the years since.
5. The Arabs, The initial introduction of pasta into Italian cuisine isn't established for certain, but many think it was first brought to Italy by Arab invaders.
6. About 60 pounds (27 Kilograms) That beats out Americans who only eat about 20 pounds (9 kilograms) annually.
7. About 350, Pasta comes in about 350 different shapes and sizes in Italy, although incorporating regional variations would probably push the number higher.
8. The wrinkles and ridges are better at clinging to different sauces. Pasta is often highly textured and intricately shaped because that makes it better at holding onto sauces.
9. Basil Although Rosemary and thyme are used frequently in Italian cooking, pesto sauce is traditionally made from fresh basil.
10. Olive oil is by far the most commonly used oil in Italian cuisine, especially in the form of extra virgin olive oil. The quality of extra virgin olive oil varies depending on a number of factors, including the point when the olives are harvested to the method used for processing them.

SPAGHETTI DAY WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

