

ASK CHEF

fairfaxmeadow

A Taste of... **Pasta**

WHY PASTA?



Pasta has become a staple part of our food culture. A fast food which is quick to make, it can be low budget or high end, it can have a great food story attached with provenance or simply serve as a snack on the go. Pasta will never go out of fashion but recently we have seen chefs opening new sites focusing on this Italian staple.

There are possibly more Italian restaurants in the UK than any other form of cuisine, not even taking into account the many thousands of chains offering Italian cuisine as part of their offer.

BIG HITTERS IN PASTA

Ones to Watch



This unique dining experience at Pop Brixton is established by two Italians, who seek to present their culinary heritage in an innovative way such as BBQ Arrosticini Skewers, succulent mutton skewers which are cooked over a BBQ and accompanied by sourdough bread soaked in extra-virgin olive and Beef bolognese Lasagna



200 sites. The first Prezzo restaurant was opened in central London by Jonathan Kaye, the company's chief executive, in 2000.



Opened 140 restaurants since 1999. Currently offering beef brisket and venison tagliatelle.



120 sites. Introduced a novel expert friends approach in 2010, Theo started working with ASK Italian restaurants to develop menus and conceive new dishes; and food travel writer Carla Capalbo educates staff on all things Italy. Currently offering beef brisket bolognese, a slow cooked beef brisket and chianti ragu.



90+ sites. Part of the Casual Dining Group offering inexpensive Italian cuisine for families on a budget. Currently promoting 17 new dishes including warm dough swirls, frutti di mare and the ultimate seafood pizza and sicilian pollo rosso pasta, featuring red pesto from the Contino family in Liguria, Italy.



70+ sites. Originally opened in London in 1999 and celebrating 20 years in 2019. Still making focaccia by hand, daily. Currently offering lamb ragu rigatoni as part of the winter menu.



Passo is Italian food done with just enough cool to make it worthy of its prime East London address with former head chef of Shoreditch House, Massimiliano laquinoto. Alongside chef Joe Hill.

WHAT'S HOT IN PASTA

Top Birmingham chef Aktar Islam opened, Legna, his second restaurant at the end of 2018. It is just doors away from his existing restaurant in Summer Row, Opheem.

Legna occupies the site of the former FSK restaurant, which was operated by Aktar as Mi Amore while his long-term plans for Legna were being developed. Legna - which is Italian for 'firewood' - has 70 covers and will "blaze a trail for Italian cooking"



Pasta Factory Manchester

The Pasta Factory on Shudehill Manchester is a no-frills pasta restaurant, opened by Italian friends Elisa Cavigliasso, Alberto Umoret, Enrico Princi and Paolo Gaudino, who grew up together in Turin.



Menu at the Pasta Factory

Pipe Al Ragu' di 'Nduja: Short shell-shaped pasta in a rich slow braised beef cheek ragu' & spicy Calabrian 'nduja. Topped with crumbled Gorgonzola DOP.

Ravioli di Prosciutto di Praga con Fonduta di Formaggi: Ravioli stuffed with ham sauteed in brown butter & served with a very rich & tasty fondue of traditional cheeses. Topped with crushed hazelnuts.

Gnocchi al Ragu' di Cervo: Handmade potato gnocchi served in a hearty slow cooked venison ragu' & topped with grated parmesan & parmesan crisp. Definitely worth a visit!



Padella which means Pan is run by Tim Siadatan, one of the first people to graduate from the Jamie Oliver Fifteen scheme and Jordan Frieda, son of Lulu and John Frieda, of Highbury's successful Trullo.

On the menu at Padella

Pappardelle with eight-hour Dexter shin beef ragu.

Fettucine with Cobble Lane cured 'Nduja, marscarpone and lemon.



Altrincham. co-owners Alex De Martiis and Jonny Marcogliese came up with the idea of opening a pasta kitchen with much the same ethos: simple, seasonal, honest food. The chalkboard changes daily with a selection of five or six southern Italian specialities, mainly from Puglia, cavatelli con gamberoni e 'nduja (shell-shaped short pasta with king prawns and spicy Calabrian sausage).



Nonna Tonda offers fresh pasta dishes made using the best of Italian and British produce, Chef James French trained up at the Michelin-starred l'Erba del Re in Modena and put in a much-lauded residency under the name Fat Tony's at Bar Termini. Specialties include Pappardelle with Longhorn shin ragu.

ITALIAN AMERICAN INFLUENCE

Mister Lasagne has three sites in central London, with an impressive and creative meat based menu.

"Mister Lasagne offers traditional Italian cooking just like my grandmother would serve, many people think of the well known bolognese recipe, but with our 21 varieties we hope to change London's perception on this classic dish." Mister Lasagne founder, Alessandro Limone.

Lasagne recipes include the very best traditional options plus some refreshing twists including truffle, mushroom, sausage and parmesan, sausage and broccoli.



Lasagne Restaurants of New York City also boasts 17 different lasagnas including Ground Sirloin Lasagne, Braised Short Rib Lasagne, Veal Lasagne, Meatball Lasagne, Ground Sausage Lasagne and Turkey & Kale Lasagne.

Which would you choose?



33% of all Italian starters and appetisers within all venues are pasta based. (TFP, 2018)

PASTA - THE PERFECT COMFORT FOOD!

In tumultuous times, we crave comfort foods, and that means once-demonised carbs are back on the menu in many forms. Fresh pasta restaurants and bakeries are popping up everywhere. Food writer Laura Goodman's new book *Carbs* is a collection of recipes dedicated to dishes that help readers 'rediscover the joy of the carbohydrate'.



CRICKET FLOUR PASTA

The taste is not much different from wholewheat pasta but extremely high in protein and rich in non-dairy calcium, vitamin B12, Omega 3, iron and all 9 of the essential Amino Acids.

It contains 12 g, which is 24% of DRV (Daily Reference Values), thus this product can be claimed 'high or rich in protein' according to the nutrient content claims established by the USFDA. In addition, when compared to similar products sold in the supermarket, this fusilli has about double the amount of protein

Edible insects are trending now, with more than 1,000 articles published in the last year (on English media alone)! There are over 100 restaurants with bugs on the menu, and a number of recipe books.



96% of consumers will eat pasta, but only 25% will explore the variety of pasta usage (Mintel, 2018)

GETTING CREATIVE WITH MEAT IN PASTA

Spaghetti

Slow cooked brisket
Shredded short rib
Pork and beef mince

Papadella

Italian sausage meat
N'duja sausage
Veal, garlic and black pepper meatballs
Beef and Parmesan meatballs
Shin of beef
Slow cooked brisket
Short rib

Linguine

Italian sausage meat
Short rib
N'duja sausage
Veal, garlic and black pepper meatballs
Beef and Parmesan meatballs

Lasagne

Turkey and kale lasagne
Ground sausage lasagne
Meatball lasagne
Veal lasagne
Braised short rib lasagne
Ground beef lasagne

Penne

Italian sausage meat
N'duja sausage
Veal, garlic and black pepper meatballs
Beef and Parmesan meatballs
Shredded chicken
Pulled pork

Ragu

Short rib
Minced beef
Shredded chicken thigh



Trends

Taking a step away from the sea of yellow

When carbohydrates were the enemy of everything, chefs looked at other carriers. However, with the health benefits of pasta being advertised, chefs are combining the best of both worlds and incorporating functional ingredients within the dish.

High in fibre

Nearly 6% of NPD in 2017 featured a claim of high added fibre – up from 2.5% five years ago. Research has shown that UK consumers now want to increase their daily consumption. This can be achieved with using special type of flours in your desired pasta range.

Family style

66% of diners are interested in shareable dishes. This is driven by women and parents of under-16s. Restaurants have started to recognise this with serving sharing pasta dishes. This creates an opportunity to promote healthy child friendly side dishes that young families are most likely to order sides when having dinner out of home.