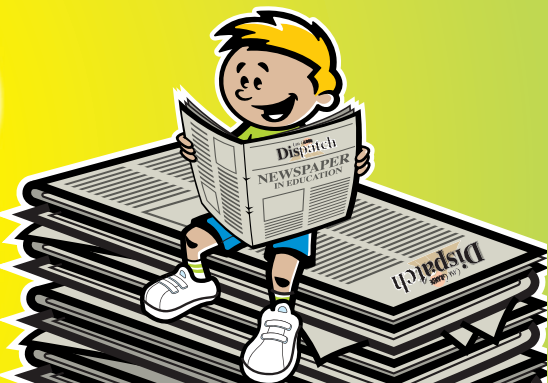


# KEEPING STUDENTS WELL INFORMED AT HOME DURING SUMMER VACATION

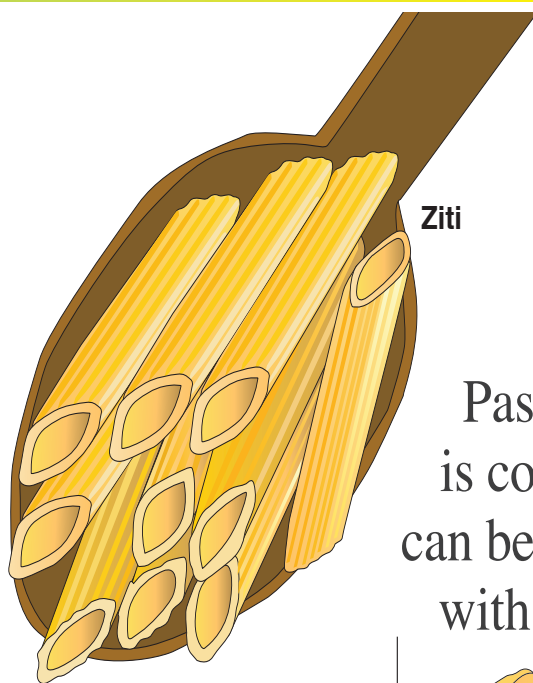


## WORLD OF WONDER

Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology

# PASTA

Pasta is loved by people all over the world but is considered an Italian cuisine by many folks. It can be served in soup, casserole or salad, or enjoyed with a high-quality olive oil or a decadent sauce.



Ziti



Spaghetti

### By definition

The word **pasta** is Italian for “paste,” named for the paste-like consistency of the dough.

Pasta comes in many shapes and sizes, with more than 300 forms known by more than 1,300 documented names.

### The basics

Traditionally, pasta is made with a **durum wheat flour** mixed with water or eggs, formed into shapes, then cooked by boiling or baking.

Pasta can be divided into two categories: **dried** (pasta secca) and **fresh** (pasta fresca). Fresh pasta can be made by hand at home, or you can purchase commercially made versions.

### Looking back

The origins of pasta are a bit of a mystery. According to legend, **Marco Polo** brought pasta from China to Italy in the 13th century. We do know that the Chinese were making noodles as early as 5000 B.C., and it is possible that the technique made its way to the Mediterranean through trade routes. There is evidence that the ancient Romans were making pasta; the term **macaroni** came into use around this time.

Pasta became popular in 13th-century Italy, and many pasta recipes were recorded. Making dry pasta was a time-consuming process. It was considered a luxury that only the wealthy could afford.

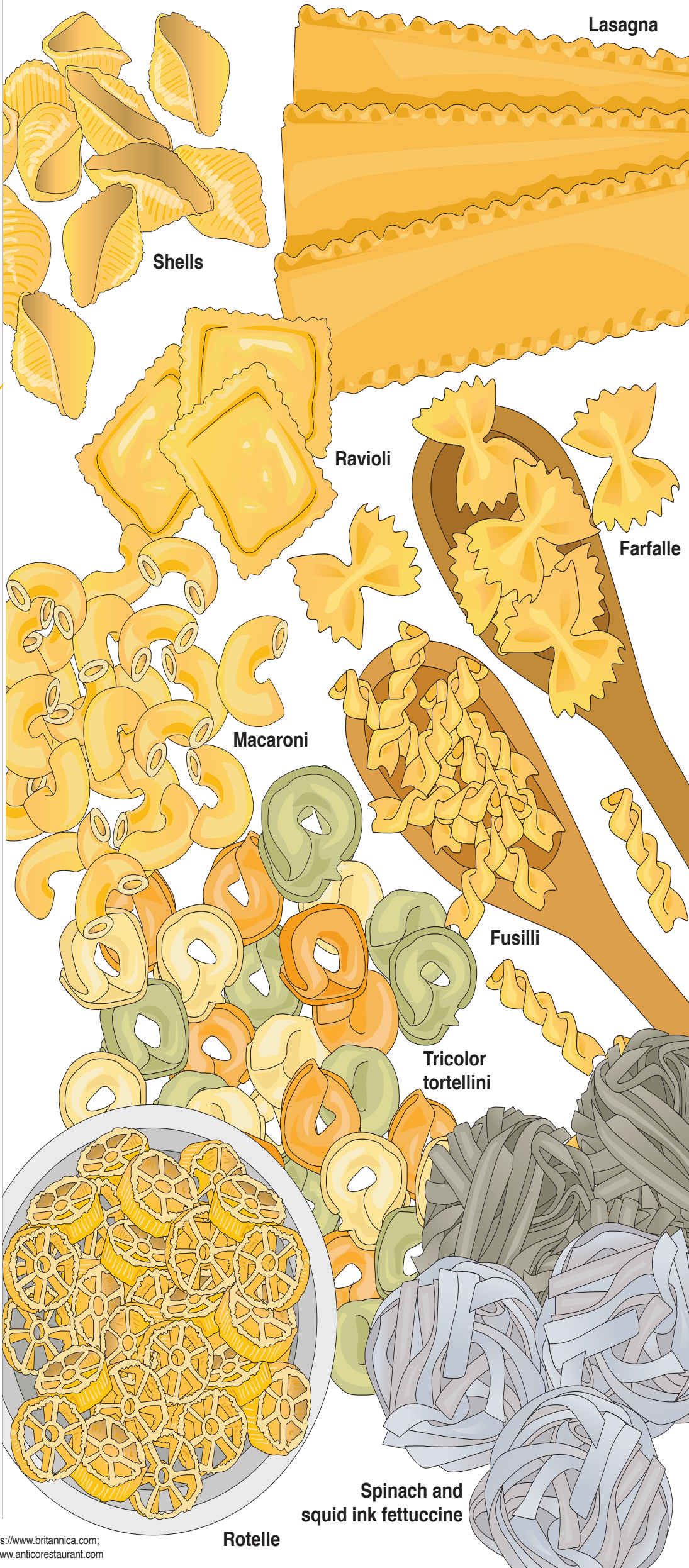
### Similar foods

In North Africa, a food similar to pasta, known as **couscous** (little droplets of dough), has been eaten for centuries.

Noodles made from zucchini or other vegetables are a popular alternative to traditional pasta.

**Shirataki** is a translucent Japanese noodle made from the **konjac yam**.

A the name suggests, **rice noodles** are made with rice instead of wheat.



Shells

Lasagna

Ravioli

Farfalle

Macaroni

Fusilli

Tricolor tortellini

Spinach and squid ink fettuccine

Rotelle

### Did you know?

Pasta did not play a large role at mealtime until at least the 16th century.

Pasta remained a luxury product until the 18th century, when the **kneading machine** and **press** were introduced. Farms also began growing more durum wheat, making pasta affordable, even for the poorest of households.

In England during the 1770s, the word **macaroni** came to mean “perfection and elegance.” The slang phrase “that’s macaroni” was used to describe anything really good.

Today, the word “macaroni” is commonly defined as pasta in cylindrical shapes (solid or hollow). The word **lasagna** refers to all flattened pasta shapes.

It is estimated that the average Italian eats more than 51 pounds of pasta every year. The average North American eats about 15.5 pounds of pasta per year.

**Thomas Jefferson** is credited with introducing macaroni to the United States. He ordered crates of macaroni and a pasta-making machine from Naples.

One cup of cooked spaghetti provides about 200 calories, 40 grams of carbohydrates, less than one gram of total fat and no cholesterol.

Pasta cooked **al dente** (al-DEN-tay) literally means “to the tooth.” The pasta should be firm but tender, offering a bit of resistance to the tooth.

Thin pastas like **angel hair spaghetti** should be served with light sauces. Thicker pasta shapes like **fettuccine** work best with heavier sauces.

Most pasta is cream- or yellow-colored, but some is made using spinach, making it green. Red pasta is made using tomato, gray pasta is made with squid ink, and some pasta is called “cellophane” because it becomes transparent when cooked.

SOURCES: *World Book Encyclopedia*, World Book Inc.; <https://www.britannica.com>; <https://www.bakeinfo.co.nz>; <https://en.wikipedia.org>; <https://www.anticorestaurant.com>

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