

Expert Tips To Help Cooks Create Perfect Pair Of Pasta And Sauce

(NAPSA)—Chocolate and strawberries, champagne and caviar, fine wine and gourmet cheese—all celebrated food pairings. Yet the most enduring pairing took place in the 17th century and the two foods are still happily united.

The great culinary marriage of pasta and pasta sauce is widely revered throughout Italy and aims to harmonize the shape and surface of pasta with the color, consistency and flavor of the sauce.

James Beard award-winning Chef Roberto Donna and Barilla have joined together to offer tips, guidelines and recipes showcasing this pairing art form.

“It all starts with considering the size and texture of both the pasta and the pasta sauce,” said Chef Donna. “For example, angel hair pasta, which has a light, delicate surface texture, doesn’t have the strength to hold chunky sauce, so it’s best paired with less dense sauces like pesto, tomato and basil, and béchamel (white) sauces.”

Jumbo shells (conchiglioni), manicotti (cannelloni) and lasagne are the best choices to stuff with cheese, hold meat-based sauces (ragú) and vegetable fillings, or coat in meat, mushroom or béchamel sauce. The deep ridges and curves of elbow macaroni (called chifferi in Italian) and pipette can hold a double dose of a chunky, meat-based sauce.

Here are two delicious examples of perfect pairings:

Lasagne Alla Salsiccia E Porri

- 1 lb. pork sausage**
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 5 medium leeks, thinly sliced using white part (about 4 cups)**
- 1 cup dry white wine**
- 1 cup chicken broth**
- 1 cup half & half or whipping cream**



For a marriage made in heaven, pair your pasta to your sauce.

- 12 Barilla Oven Ready Lasagne sheets**
- 2 cups Barilla Italian Baking Sauce**
- 1-1/2 cups shredded Swiss cheese**

Sauce:

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook sausage in olive oil, breaking up meat into small pieces and stirring occasionally (about 15 minutes). Add leeks; continue cooking 3 minutes. Add wine and broth; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 20 minutes, or until liquid is reduced by almost half. Reduce heat to low; stir in half & half. Simmer for 5 minutes.

To assemble Lasagne:

Preheat oven to 375°F. In 9x13-inch baking dish, spread 1 cup of sausage mixture. Cover with 4 lasagne sheets and another cup of sausage mixture. Top with 1/2 cup Italian Baking Sauce, 1/2 cup cheese, 4 lasagne sheets, and 1 cup sausage mixture. Repeat layers once. Pour remaining 1 cup Italian Baking Sauce over lasagne; sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Cover with foil. Bake 50 minutes; let stand 10 minutes. Makes 8 servings.

Tip: Substitute veal stock for

chicken broth.

Pipette di Piselli e Coda di Rospo

- 7 Tbsp. olive oil, divided**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1 cup Barilla Roasted Garlic & Onion Sauce**
- 1-1/2 cups fresh or frozen peas, divided (see note)**
- 1 pkg. (12 oz.) Barilla Pipette**
- 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable broth, heated**
- 1/2 lb. monkfish or other firm-textured fish, cubed**
- 10 leaves fresh basil, torn into pieces**

Heat 3 Tbsp. olive oil, garlic, and bay leaf in large saucepan over medium-high heat until garlic turns golden. Remove bay leaf from oil. Add the Roasted Garlic & Onion sauce; heat to a simmer. Add 1 cup of the peas; heat one minute over low heat. Remove from heat and keep warm.

Cook the pipette for 7 minutes in boiling salted water; drain and return to pot. Meanwhile, bring the sauce mixture back to a simmer; add fish and basil. Simmer two minutes or until fish is just cooked, stirring frequently. Pour sauce over pasta; stir until blended.

Pour heated broth into blender container with the remaining 4 Tbsp. olive oil and remaining 1/2 cup peas; blend until creamy. For each serving, place about 1/4 cup of the blended pea sauce on the bottom of plate and spoon 2 cups pasta mixture in the center. Makes 4 (2-cup) servings.

Note: If using frozen peas, blanch for 30 seconds in salted boiling water. If using fresh peas, cook in boiling salted water until tender.

For additional suggestions and