

# Fabulous Foods

## Pasta Cooked To Perfection

(NAPSA)—It's official. Italian food is America's favorite.

According to a recent Opinion Research Corporation survey, seven out of 10 Americans prefer the flavor of authentic, home-cooked Italian meals, but nearly half don't have the time or energy to spend in the kitchen.

Fortunately, preparing a home-cooked Italian meal is simple if you pair pasta with fresh, wholesome, flavorful ingredients. To help, here are some tips from award-winning Italian-American chef, Food Network host and recent "Top Chef Masters" contestant Michael Chiarello:

- Match the shape of the pasta to the texture of the sauce. A smooth sauce is great with long, thin noodles while more chunky sauces need a hollow noodle.

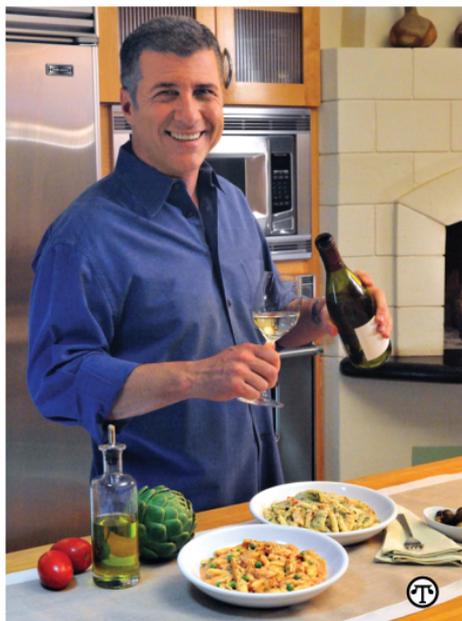
- Cooking your pasta al dente, or firm, is a must for authentic Italian meals.

- When pressed for time, try steaming your pasta in the microwave and heating the sauce separately.

- Family-style antipasti served on oversized rustic platters can add to the flavor of the experience. For classic platters, start with a variety of easy-to-find cured meats, Italian cheeses, marinated vegetables and olives and steak tomatoes.

- Serve bread hot and crispy from the oven, topped with olive oil, sea salt and a mixture of ground Parmesan cheese and dried herbs.

- Accompany your pasta dishes with other regional foods, such as fresh salads, antipasti and fresh fruit desserts.



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### **Pasta al Dente**

No time to cook? A recent survey found 50 percent of Americans don't have time to cook from scratch. Fortunately, Marie Callender's has a new line of Pasta Al Dente meals developed from classic Italian recipes with fresh-tasting herbs and spices.

The steamed-to-perfection dishes include Tortellini Romano with fresh basil and real Parmesan; Chicken Carbonara with uncured bacon and peas; Penne Chicken Piccata with white wine lemon butter sauce, Parmesan cheese, spinach and capers; and Rigatoni Marinara Classico with meatballs and Italian sausage.

For more information, visit [www.mariespasta.com](http://www.mariespasta.com).