

# 10 Good Reasons to Eat Pasta

## 1 PASTA DOES NOT MAKE YOU FAT

What creates weight gain are excess calories, not regular servings of pasta. Pasta contains complex carbohydrates, and if dressed with ingredients that are rich in fiber and protein but low in fat (fresh herbs, legumes, vegetables and meats), it represents a balanced consumption opportunity.

## 2 "AL DENTE" PASTA KEEPS YOU FULLER LONGER

Due to the protein structure of the dough, pasta has a fairly low Glycemic Index. The Glycemic Index assesses the quality of carbohydrates with a scale that ranges from 0 to 100 indicating those that are digested, absorbed or metabolized quickly (high GI) from those that are slower (low GI). This means that a food with a low Glycemic Index is metabolized more slowly and prolongs the sense of satiety: pasta has a low GI value between 36 and 51 (i.e. potatoes have a value of 87).

Sources: Oldways and International Pasta Organization, The Healthy Pasta Meals Scientific Consensus Statement, 2011. NFI. Carbohydrates and glycemic index. <http://www.nutrition-foundation.it/monografia/Carboidrati-ed-indice-glicemico.aspx> (ult. acc. 10.12.2013) (ult. acc. 18.09.2013).

## 3 PASTA IS VERSATILE

Combine correct servings of pasta (80-85 gr) with vegetables, legumes, fishes or other, it is possible to obtain a tasty and balanced meal.

## 4 PASTA IS A CORNERSTONE OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S HEALTHIEST DIETS

Pasta, as a source of carbohydrate, is the basis of the Mediterranean Diet model, considered one of the most balanced in the world.

Source: Oldways and International Pasta Organization, The Healthy Pasta Meals Scientific Consensus Statement, 2011.

## 5 PASTA IS A SUSTAINABLE FOOD: GOOD FOR YOU, GOOD FOR THE PLANET

As demonstrated by the Double Pyramid model developed by the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition, the environmental impact of the foods at the base of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid is lower than that of the foods at the apex of the Food Pyramid.

## 6 THERE'S A PASTA SUITED TO EVERYONE'S TASTE OR DIET NEEDS

In addition to classic semolina pasta, it is possible to find other types: egg, common wheat, whole grain, protein-enriched, gluten free. Pasta can easily be adapted to suit any dietary need.

## 7 WATCHING YOUR CALORIES? PASTA HAS A PLACE IN YOUR MEAL PLAN

Many studies have shown that a good balance between carbohydrates, proteins and fats is essential to maintain a healthy body weight and reduce the risk of disease. A study in 2009 by the Harvard School of Public Health and Pennington Biomedical Research Center found that diets consisting of 36-65% of carbohydrates are as effective for weight loss as other diets lower in carbohydrates.

Source: New England Journal of Medicine, 26 February 2009; 360(9):859-73.

## 8 PASTA IS A SIMPLE AND SATISFYING WAY TO GET A GRAIN-BASED FOOD INTO YOUR DIET

By eating a pasta dish, depending on the size, it is possible to have two to four servings of cereal, as suggested by the US Department of Agriculture, and in line with the Mediterranean Model. Moreover, it is preferable to consume whole grains.

## 9 PASTA IS LOW IN SODIUM AND FAT

A correct serving of pasta without sauce (80-85 g) yields about 280kcal, is low in fats (about 1 gram, without saturated or trans fats), without cholesterol and low in sodium (not considering the salt that is added in cooking). To maintain these virtuous values of pasta, it is important not to go overboard with the dressing.

## 10 A GOOD AMOUNT OF CARBOHYDRATES IS USEFUL FOR PROLONGED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (90 MINUTES)

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy in our diet. Our body uses carbohydrates to obtain glucose, the "fuel" that provides the energy required for its operation. The body can consume it immediately or store it in the liver and use it when needed. A lack of glucose leads to serious health consequences. A generous amount of carbohydrates is, therefore, recommended for an intense athletic performance.

