THE BARILLA STORY

«Let’s move forward, move forward with courage»
Pietro Barilla

1877 THE BEGINNINGS

Barilla is founded in 1877 in Parma, when Pietro Barilla decides to open a small bread and pasta shop. Production, which begins with 50kg of pasta per day, by 1905 has already reached 2500kg per day.

1910 THE FIRST PLANT

Riccardo and Gualtiero – who take over from their father and company founder Pietro – open the first plant with 100 workers and production of 8000kg of pasta per day. That same year the first Barilla logo is registered: a young boy pouring an egg yolk into a kneading trough. After the death of his father and brother, Riccardo runs the company in the ’20s and ’30s. In 1936, Riccardo’s son Pietro joins the company, marking the start of Barilla’s commercial expansion.

1947 AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

After Riccardo passes away, the new strategy – laid out by Pietro and his brother Gianni – aims to develop Barilla’s brand image: important investments are made in technology to improve the quality of the products, and in major communication campaigns. In 1952 Barilla stops producing bread to make pasta – sold for the first time in packs with distinctive graphics – its core business. It’s an instant success: Barilla becomes market leader in Italy for egg and semolina pasta.

On the cover, pasta of yesteryear, during drying.
1950-1960 THE ECONOMIC BOOM

In 1965 Barilla enters the bakery product market, opening the plant at Rubbiano (near Parma), designed for the production of crackers, breadsticks and toasted crispbreads. 1969 sees the opening at Pedrignano (Parma) of the largest pasta production complex in the world, with a capacity of 1,000 tons per day.

1971-1979 THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

In an economic and social climate characterized by uncertainty and pessimism, Gianni and Pietro Barilla sell the company’s majority shareholding in 1971 to the US multinational WR Grace. In 1975, to diversify production, Mulino Bianco is created, a line of bakery products that proves highly successful.

1979-1993 THE RE-LAUNCH

In 1979 Pietro Barilla – realizing his dream to reacquire the family business – buys back the company with the aim of re-launching the Italian-style main course and broadening its bakery product range. In ten years, the turnover grows tenfold, the number of plants increases from 5 to 25, staff from 2,000 to 8,500, and Barilla becomes number one in the European pasta market. In 1993, after Pietro passes away, the company is taken over by his sons Guido, Luca and Paolo.

1993-2002 INTERNATIONALIZATION

After the purchase of Pavesi (1992), a historical brand of bakery products and pastry from Novara in the north of Italy, Barilla launches its expansion in Europe and the United States through other major acquisitions: Filiz, one of Turkey’s leading pasta producers (1994); Misko, leading Greek pasta producer (1999); Wasa, the main producer in the world of crispbread (1999); Yemina and Vesta, leading brands in the Mexican pasta market (2002); Harry’s, the top French brand in the field of bread and bakery products for breakfast (2002). In these same years Barilla becomes the market leader in pasta in the USA.
2002-2015 THE PRESENT DAY

In 2004, Academia Barilla is born, a project aimed at promoting and protecting Italian cuisine around the world in several ways, such as offering cooking classes for chefs. The Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition is created in 2009, a multidisciplinary think tank aimed at stimulating debate and proposing solutions on the major food and nutrition issues facing our Planet.

Barilla for almost 140 years is the business experience of a family that today, with the brothers Guido, Luca and Paolo, is now in its fourth generation.