

# Mastering Pasta: The Art and Practice of Handmade Pasta, Gnocchi, and Risotto [A Cookbook]

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Award-winning chef Marc Vetri wanted to write his first book about pasta. Instead, he wrote two other acclaimed cookbooks and continued researching pasta for ten more years. Now, the respected master of Italian cuisine finally shares his vast knowledge of pasta, gnocchi, and risotto in this inspiring, informative primer featuring expert tips and techniques, and more than 100 recipes.

Vetri's personal stories of travel and culinary discovery in Italy appear alongside his easy-to-follow, detailed explanations of how to make and enjoy fresh handmade pasta. Whether you're a home cook or a professional, you'll learn how to make more than thirty different types of pasta dough, from versatile egg yolk dough, to extruded semolina dough, to a variety of flavored pastas-and form them into shapes both familiar and unique. In dishes ranging from classic to innovative, Vetri shares his coveted recipes for stuffed pastas, baked pastas, and pasta sauces. He also shows you how to make light-as-air gnocchi and the perfect dish of risotto.

Loaded with useful information, including the best way to cook and sauce pasta, suggestions for substituting pasta shapes, and advance preparation and storage notes, Mastering Pasta offers you all of the wisdom of a pro. For cooks who want to take their knowledge to the next level, Vetri delves deep into the science of various types of flour to explain pasta's uniquely satisfying texture and how to craft the very best pasta by hand or with a machine. Mastering Pasta is the definitive work on the subject and the only book you will ever need to serve outstanding pasta dishes in your own kitchen.

Marc Vetri is the chef and founder of Philadelphia's Vetri Family of Restaurants, which operates a collection of the country's most critically acclaimed Italian restaurants: Vetri, Osteria (Philadelphia and Moorestown, NJ), Amis, Alla Spina, Pizzeria Vetri, and Lo Spiedo. Classically trained in Bergamo, Italy, Vetri is known the world over for bringing a bold, contemporary sensibility to classic Italian cooking. He is a member of Food & Wine magazine's 1999 "Best New Chefs" class and the 2005 winner of the James Beard Award for "Best Chef Mid-Atlantic." He is also the author of two cookbooks, *Il Viaggio di Vetri* and *Rustic Italian Food*. Outside the kitchen, Vetri is the driving force behind the Vetri Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to help kids experience the connection between healthy eating and healthy living. He lives in Philadelphia with his wife, Megan, and their three children.

David Joachim has authored, edited, or collaborated on more than forty cookbooks, including the multi-award-winner *The Science of Good Food* and million-copy bestselling series *A Man, A Can, A Plan*. He writes a column for *Fine Cooking* magazine called "The Science Of . . ." and his writing and recipes have appeared in numerous magazines such as *USA Today*, *Men's Health*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Cooking Light*, *Women's Health*, *Cook's Illustrated*, *Fine Cooking*, and *Bicycling*. He is also the co-founder of *Chef Salt*, a line of artisanal salt seasonings. Joachim lives in Center Valley, PA, and his favorite cooking tool is a leaf blower.

Pappardelle with Rabbit Rag<sup>2</sup> and Peaches

I've always been fascinated by the way fruits play so well in savory cooking. Porcini and peaches. Oxtail with Italian mustard fruits. Duck with grapes. When we started making this rabbit ragù, it needed a little pop, but adding vinegar or lemon juice wasn't enough. Fruit gave it so much more-acid, sugar, aroma, and something to bite into. Pappardelle are traditionally cooked with a ragù made from game meats, and in Tuscany, the game is often wild hare or rabbit.

Pasta Swap For a ragù like this, I prefer a thicker noodle. That's why I went with pappardelle. But square farfalle make a great substitute. They will wrap around the meat and sauce nicely and give you a big bite of pasta.

1 rabbit (about 3 lb/1.4 kg)  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3 tablespoons (45 ml) grapeseed or canola oil  
1½ cup (41 g) peeled and chopped carrot  
1½ cup (34 g) chopped celery  
1½ cup (56 g) chopped red onion  
1½ cup (79 ml) dry white wine  
¾ cup (135 g) cherry tomatoes, halved  
8 ounces (227 g) Egg Yolk Dough (page 26), rolled into sheets about ⅛ inch (3 mm) thick  
¾ cup (60 ml) extra-virgin olive oil  
6 tablespoons (85 g) unsalted butter  
¾ cup (25 g) grated Parmesan cheese, plus some for garnish  
2 ripe peaches, halved, pitted, and thinly sliced

Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C).

Rinse the rabbit and remove the innards and excess fat deposits. Reserve the innards for another use. Remove the hind legs and forelegs by driving your knife straight through the hip and shoulder joints. Cut each leg in half through the center joint. Snip through the breastbone with kitchen shears, and then cut the rabbit crosswise into 6 to 8 pieces. Season the rabbit pieces all over with salt and pepper.

Heat the grapeseed oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the rabbit pieces, in batches if necessary to prevent crowding, and sear them, turning them once, until they are golden brown on both sides, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer the pieces to a platter as they are done.

Add the carrot, celery, and onion to the same pan and cook over medium heat until the vegetables are lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Pour in the wine and simmer, scraping up any browned bits on the pan bottom, until the liquid evaporates, 2 to 3 minutes. Return the rabbit to the pan along with the tomatoes. Pour in enough water to come three-fourths of the way up the sides of the ingredients. Cover the pan and braise the rabbit in the oven until it is tender and the meat pulls easily away from the bone, 1 to 1½ hours.

Let the rabbit cool slightly in the pan, then shred the meat and discard the skin and bones. Pass the vegetables and braising liquid through a food mill fitted with the medium die, or pulse them briefly in a food processor just until the vegetables are finely chopped but not pureed. Return the ragù to the pan. If it is thin and watery, boil it over medium heat until it has reduced to a thick consistency similar to that of tomato sauce.

Return the shredded meat to the ragù. Taste it, adding salt and pepper until it tastes good to you. You should have about 2 cups (473 ml) ragù. Use it immediately, or transfer it to an airtight container and refrigerate it for up to 3 days or freeze it for up to 2 months. Reheat the ragù before proceeding with the recipe.

Lay a pasta sheet on a lightly floured work surface and trim the edges square. Cut the sheet crosswise into strips a little less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide, preferably with a fluted cutter. Repeat with the second sheet. Dust the strips with flour, cover them, and use them within 1 hour or refrigerate them for up to 4 hours. You can also freeze them in a single layer, transfer them to a zipper-lock bag, and freeze them for up to 1 month. Take the pasta straight from the freezer to the boiling pasta water.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Drop in the pappardelle and cover the pot to quickly return the water to a boil. Cook the pasta until it is tender but still a little chewy when bitten, about 2 minutes. Using a spider strainer or tongs, drain the pasta by transferring it to the pan of ragù. Reserve the pasta water.

Add the oil and butter to the pan and cook over medium-high heat, tossing and stirring vigorously, until the sauce reduces slightly, becomes creamy, and coats the pasta, about 1 minute. Add a little pasta water if necessary to create a creamy sauce. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the Parmesan. Keep the pasta moving until pasta and sauce become one thing in the pan. Taste it, adding salt and pepper until it tastes good to you. Stir in the peaches.

Dish out the pasta onto warmed plates and garnish each serving with some Parmesan.

#### Other Books

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