
15. PASTA

PANTRY PASTA

By Sara Hauman & Jordan Mackay

Some of life's most enjoyable meals occur between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. in the morning in your own kitchen. They don't involve delivery drivers or microwaves. They only require a pot of water, a saucepan, and a little tipsy hunger pang. Of course, I'm talking about one of the most satisfying and delicious of all meals — the late-night pasta.

Casual and desultory, the late-night pasta may be a product of whim, but it nevertheless serves multiple functions. The first is obvious: it fills the belly, providing ballast against all the alcohol you've presumably consumed. Or maybe you worked up an appetite after a night on the dance floor. But late-night pasta is more than just food. It's also a salty-savory burst of flavor that provides the brain with a final spark of stimulation while warming the soul. And the act of cooking is meaningful, providing a moment to calm down and settle in before heading to bed.

Late-night pasta fits into the category cookbook writers call "pantry meals," although pantry meals can be made at any time of day. But to pull it off, you will need an investment in an Italian pantry. It needn't be "well-stocked," just properly outfitted with staples: garlic, anchovies, salt, pepper, fresh parmesan cheese, olive oil, capers, olives, preserved tuna, and canned tomatoes. Also, those little tubes of tomato paste come in handy. All this takes up very little room in the cupboard and can be a lifesaver — so don't skimp. And, of course, you need pasta: always have on hand good quality spaghetti, bucatini, or linguine, and some sort of shorter shape like penne or rigatoni. With these ingredients at your disposal, late nights can suddenly leap from humdrum bores to spontaneous dinner parties.

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The recipes you have here are perfect, but also a jumping-off point. Really, just glance at them and absorb the steps, as late-night pasta is really meant to be tossed together casually. The Puttanesca and tuna pasta are variations that add a bit of protein. Spaghetti with pepperoncini and garlic is marvelously pungent and piquant and ensures a good sleep. But feel free to find your own way, too. If you happen to have Italian sausage in the fridge, why not fry it with a dab of tomato paste and garlic and serve it over penne? Or if you have leftover pork or chicken, maybe toss it with lemon, capers, and linguine? This is the night kitchen, and you can do whatever you want! Just make sure your pasta is solidly al dente.

What to drink with late-night pasta? Wine. What you've already been drinking all night doesn't matter. The idea of drinking spirits or beer with an elegant midnight pasta dish is somewhat gauche. It must be wine, and the flavor should be Italian. Most people will probably go for red, even though white wine works best with most of the dishes listed here. But a nice light to medium red — say a Chianti (Sangiovese), Langhe Nebbiolo, or Etna Rosso (Nerello Mascalese) — will pair admirably with almost any pasta and may have a soporific effect. The only danger of an Italian white or a zingy, refreshing Italian-inspired bottle from Massican is not that it will complement the food too well (it will); it's that its liveliness and energy may not best prepare you for your pillow. But hopefully, the entire night you've just spent bar hopping, dancing, schmoozing, or whatever has done the trick, and a cool glass of perfectly balanced, razor-sharp white wine won't summon insomnia.

And don't worry about doing the dishes. Some things are better left until morning.

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Chef Sara Hauman's career is sprinkled with culinary accolades: Eater Young Gun, Zagat 30 under 30, and Bravo Top Chef contestant. Having cooked in kitchens from Spain's famed Asador Etxebarri to San Francisco's Octavia, she now resides in Portland, OR.

Jordan Mackay is a James Beard award-winning writer covering wine, spirits, and food. He has written for the New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and Food & Wine magazine. Jordan has penned countless books including Secrets of the Sommeliers, The Atlas of Taste, Franklin Barbecue, Franklin Steak, and the recently released Maison Premiere Almanac.



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LATE NIGHT PANTRY PASTA OPTIONS

Serves 4-6

1. SPAGHETTI AL LIMONE
2. SPAGHETTI AGLIO E OLIO E PEPERONCINI
3. SPAGHETTI ALLA PUTTANESCA
4. PASTA AL TONNO
5. PENNE ALLA VODKA



15. PASTA

SPAGHETTI AL LIMONE

Serves 4-6


Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dry spaghetti
- 1 lemon
- 1 ½ cups dry white wine
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese, plus more for sprinkling
- Sea salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper

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SPAGHETTI AL LIMONE (continued)

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
 2. While the water is boiling, make the sauce.
 3. In a large pan on medium heat, zest the lemon and add the wine.
 4. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook until about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup remains.
 5. Whisk in the sour cream and bring the mixture back to a simmer, then remove from the heat.
 6. Juice the zested lemon.
 7. Boil the pasta until al dente, drain, and transfer the cooked pasta into the pan with a few tablespoons of pasta water.
 8. Add the grated parmesan and lemon juice.
 9. Toss the pasta to incorporate the sauce and adjust the salt as desired.
 10. Serve the pasta immediately with freshly cracked black pepper and more parmesan cheese sprinkled on top.
 11. Add a little more lemon zest for an extra kick.
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15. PASTA

SPAGHETTI AGLIO E OLIO E PEPERONCINI

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dried spaghetti
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp. red pepper flakes (Aleppo or Marash are great!)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped parsley
- Sea salt
- Grated parmesan cheese

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
2. While the water is boiling, make the sauce.
3. In a large pan on medium heat, add the olive oil, garlic, and chili flakes.
4. Heat the mixture until the garlic begins to sizzle and let cook for about 2 minutes. The garlic should be fragrant, but not browned.
5. Boil the pasta until al dente, drain, then transfer the cooked pasta to the pan with about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pasta water.
6. Turn the heat on low and add the parsley.
7. Continue to toss the pasta until the olive oil emulsifies with the starchy pasta water and coats the pasta.
8. Add salt as desired and serve immediately with more of the grated parmesan.

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SPAGHETTI ALLA PUTTANESCA

Serves 4-6

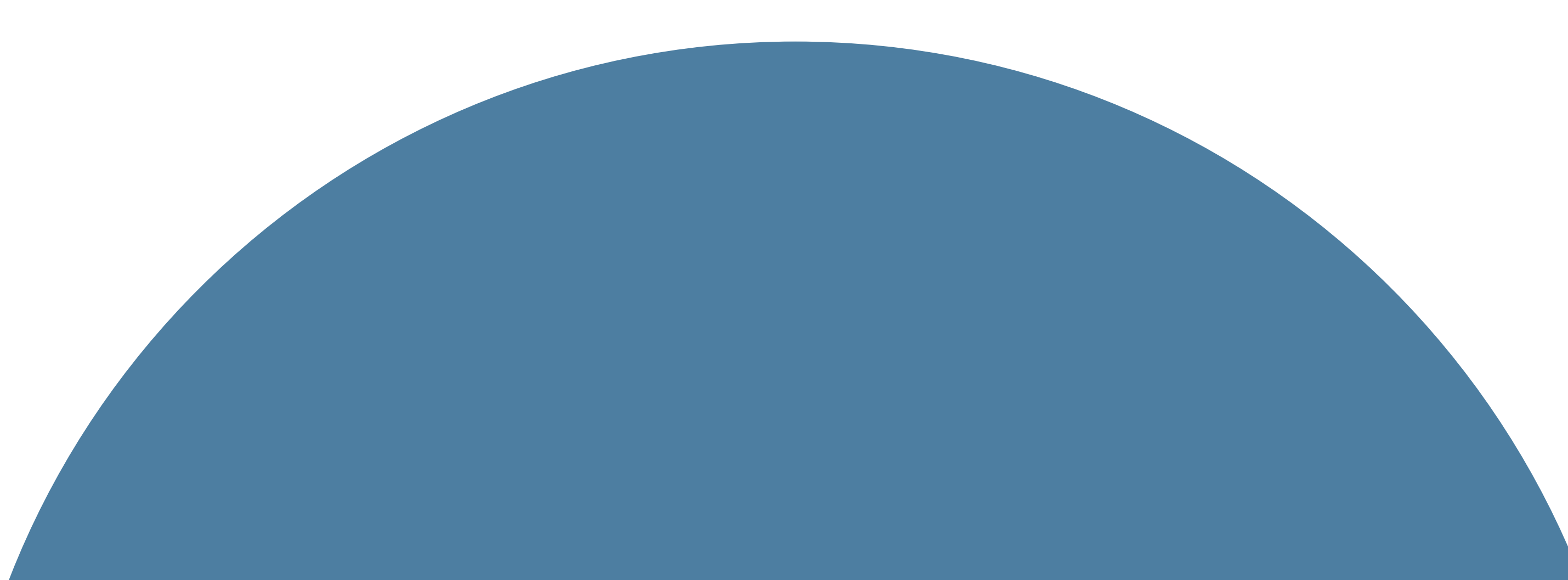
Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dried long pasta (spaghetti, bucatini, or linguine)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 6 anchovy filets packed in oil
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 28 oz. whole canned tomatoes, crushed by hand
- ½ cup kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
- 3 Tbsp capers
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- Sea salt
- Zest of 1 lemon

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SPAGHETTI ALLA PUTTANESCA (continued)

Preparation:

1. In a large pan, warm the olive oil on medium heat.
 2. Add the anchovy filets and cook for about 2 minutes, stirring frequently, so the anchovies begin to melt into the oil.
 3. Add in the garlic and stir for 30 seconds or until fragrant.
 4. Add the tomatoes, dried oregano and half the olives and capers.
 5. Bring the sauce to a simmer, then lower the heat and cover. Cook for 20-30 minutes.
 6. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
 7. Boil the pasta until al dente, drain, then transfer the cooked pasta to the sauce with about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pasta water.
 8. Combine the pasta with the sauce on medium heat until the noodles are fully coated, and the sauce is thickened to your liking.
 9. Season with more salt as desired.
 10. Serve the pasta immediately and garnish with the remaining olives, capers, chopped parsley, and lemon zest.
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15. PASTA**PASTA AL TONNO**

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dried long pasta (spaghetti, bucatini, or linguine)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 2 Tbsp capers, coarsely chopped
- 28 oz. whole canned tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 10 oz. olive oil packed tuna, drained and flaked into bite-sized pieces
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- Sea salt



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PASTA AL TONNO

(continued)

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
2. While the water is boiling, make the sauce.
3. In a large pan on medium heat combine the olive oil and garlic.
4. Cook the garlic, browning it on all sides, then remove and discard.
5. Add the pepper flakes and capers to the pan, stir, and let sizzle for about 30 seconds.
6. Add the tomatoes and a pinch of salt. Stir to combine and bring to a simmer.
7. Cook the tomato mixture for about 10 minutes until it thickens and emulsifies with the olive oil.
8. Boil the pasta until al dente, drain, then transfer the cooked pasta to the sauce with about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pasta water.
9. Add the tuna, then increase the heat to high. Continue stirring the pasta until the noodles are coated and the sauce thickens slightly.
10. Add the chopped parsley and adjust the seasoning with salt as desired.
11. Serve immediately.

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PENNE ALLA VODKA

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. dried penne
- 3 Tbsp butter
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 6 oz. tomato paste
- 14 oz. canned whole tomatoes
- 1 cup cream
- ½ cup vodka
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese, plus more for sprinkling
- Sea salt

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PENNE ALLA VODKA (continued)

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
 2. While the water is boiling, make the sauce.
 3. In a large pan on medium heat melt the butter and olive oil together.
 4. Add the onions, garlic, oregano, and red pepper flakes to the pot with a pinch of salt and cook on low to medium heat, stirring frequently until the onions are softened, but not browned.
 5. Add the tomato paste and stir to combine, cooking on medium heat for about 3 minutes.
 6. Stir in the canned tomatoes, crushing them coarsely with a wooden spoon or spatula.
 7. Cook the tomato mixture for 10 minutes at a simmer.
 8. Remove the sauce from the heat and stir in the cream.
 9. Transfer the sauce to a blender and blend until very smooth. Then, return the sauce to the pan.
 10. Boil the pasta until al dente and drain.
 11. Add the vodka to the sauce and gently bring to a simmer, then add the cooked pasta to the sauce.
 12. Cook the pasta in the sauce until the sauce thickens slightly, then add the grated parmesan cheese.
 13. Adjust the seasoning as desired.
 14. Serve immediately with more grated parmesan cheese on top.β
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