



WE LOVE PASTA



**HERE ARE THE 6 TRENDS
TO UNDERSTAND
HOW PASTA WILL BE IN 2050**

UNION FOOD 2019

PASTA BOOT CAMP: THE PROJECT



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Within the initiatives of World Pasta Day 2019, Unione Italiana Food gathered a panel of professionals (university professors, sustainability experts, journalists, nutritionists, pasta makers, chefs, food bloggers, experts in future food scenarios) - guided and coordinated by Carlo Alberto Pratesi, Professor of Marketing, Innovation and Sustainability at Roma Tre University - in a one-day-long full immersion meeting whose result are the following conclusions and the main trends that will mark the future of pasta from now to 2050.

THE REFERENCE SCENARIO: HOW WILL THE WORLD CHANGE?

Making forecasts is difficult. Most of all in a context of so sudden and fast changes as the times we are living.

By using the design thinking technology - created by the DSchool at Stanford University - the work started by giving 40 files to the participants, each one bearing a "hint" of possible future trends for a specific field, whether it is economic, technological, socio-demographic, regulatory or environmental. Each working group (5 in total) was asked to select the hints which could better describe the scenario of 2050. Based on these elements, 5 different possible scenarios have been proposed:

1. the ongoing climate changes and the changes in young generations' sensitivity will make sustainability a priority. The (decreased) impact in terms of CO2 emissions will drive purchases.
2. we will witness mass migration phenomena due to political and climate reasons that will lead, also due to the population increase (in 2050, almost 10 billion people will inhabit our Planet), to the development of true mega-cities. About 66% of the population will live in huge cities that will grow out of proportion.
3. agriculture will be more and more an ally of technology (artificial intelligence, drones, satellites) in finding safe and high-quality solutions to produce enough food for everybody and also in an environment- (and community-) friendly way.
4. The trend to give priority to personal health and well-being will continue growing, both due to population ageing (and the consequent necessity to prevent and treat nutrition-related diseases, so as to improve an already longer quality of life) and due to the choice by a greater part of the population to adopt healthier lifestyles (such as the Mediterranean diet, which will improve its global influence).
5. life will be so hectic that we could also have houses without kitchens, since food will be easily and immediately available. Food delivery will be much more spread so as food distribution logistics (with unimaginably rapid deliveries), which will possibly undergo epochal changes.

THE CONSEQUENT FOOD TRENDS: HOW WE WILL EAT IN 2050



Considering these possible scenarios, they discussed (first in groups and then during a plenary session) about how food habits could evolve. Probably, our food patterns will be characterized by a mixture of cultures and attitudes representing, in most cases, the single consumer who will indeed adopt several styles simultaneously.

At the end of the meeting and considering previous studies and analyses about the future of pasta in the context of global food evolution, 6 trends emerged.

They are described in details in the following pages.

#1

I EAT TRADITIONAL

PASTA WITH TOMATO, THE FLAGSHIP OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET IN THE WORLD

Almost all experts agree. Over the next 30 years, the food scenario will not change as rapidly as to leave out everything and substitute it with something totally new.

If it is true that every tradition has been first a successful innovationⁱ then, before it is totally overcome, a very long time should pass (in the range of centuries).

Anyway, pasta as we know it - in worldwide appreciated recipes - will still be a "classic", exactly as it happens today with *vintage* objects (a Fendi bag, a Hermes scarf, a Marinella tie) that everybody proudly shows off and talks about with great credit and respect.

Durum wheat pasta will have an important role in food nutrition and will be the flagship of tradition and of the Mediterranean Dietⁱⁱ.

Along with pasta, tomatoes and parmesan, Italy has always been exporting a lifestyle that the world is starting to understand and whose superiority in terms of health, well-being and quality of life the world is starting to acknowledge. This lifestyle also includes an attitude to conviviality (someone calls it *eater-tainment*ⁱⁱⁱ) that consumers all over the world will learn to appreciate, also in those contexts where food is not seen in the view of socialization and sharing of experiences.

Millennials elected spaghetti with tomato as the pasta of the future in a 2016 Doxa research^{iv}. Pasta with tomato has been elected as pasta of the future also by another research by Italian pasta makers (the then UNIPI) dated 1999 (imagine!).

It is the perfect dish to win the global challenge because it is democratic, cheap, easy to store, easy to cook and accepted with no prohibitions by all religions. Last but not least, it is good; indeed, taste will still be a success driver in food industry over the next 30 years.

In short, a future without durum wheat pasta as we know it is really not imaginable.

#2

I EAT ETHICAL

PASTA, VEGETABLES AND SUSTAINABILITY

The future will be more and more dominated by an interest in vegetables-based diets^v and there are no doubts that pasta will be "contaminated" by this trend.



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The reasons behind this evolution are surely linked to the growing desire to be in good health and think more about our own health, but they are also linked to a more responsible attitude of young generations who give priority to sustainability (environment-friendly agriculture, organic, fewer pesticides, protection of biodiversity and respect for farmers' communities) in their life choices.

Pasta & vegetables is and will increasingly be *also* an ethical choice^{vi}, in an age when non-ethical consumptions will probably be...non-consumptions.

Pasta with vegetables represents very well Millennials' ethics.

Due to this, it will probably be one of the "traditions" of tomorrow's Italian families.

Sustainable food par excellence^{vii}, pasta will be more and more often accompanied by home-grown products, in the spirit of a new "green" trend which will revolutionize, over the next decades, the sauces that have been accompanying pasta until now. Many classics - ragù, carbonara, amatriciana - have meat as their key ingredient; it will take some time, but in 30-50 years classics will probably have peas, carrots, onions, courgettes and artichokes as main ingredients.

What is the symbol of this trend? The experts at our Boot Camp imagined this: whole wheat fusilli with short-baking crunchy courgettes (to decrease the environmental impact of cooking), a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and some ricotta salata curls.

If the ethics behind the dish will be able to go hand in hand with its aesthetics, as in this case, then success will be guaranteed in 2050.

#3

I EAT GLOBAL

PASTA FUSION: A WORLD OF CONTAMINATIONS

The first law of every species' evolution is to adapt. While still being itself, pasta will have to be open to contaminations. Not only when it will explore new countries or meet new food cultures, but soon it will have to start doing it "at home", here in Italy.

There are more and more Italians - about 56% - open to taste ethnic food, because they are curious to discover different tastes and cultures, while 49% of our compatriots already think that some ethnic cuisines are a good alternative to Italian cuisine^{viii}.

People are starting talking about Ego Food^{ix} to indicate food that meets the cultural characteristics of consumers: it is focused on the Ego of those who eat it and not of those who sell it.

Just an example: the several versions of "instant" pasta (it is cooked by putting all the ingredients in a pot and adding hot water to have a ready meal in few minutes) that some Italian companies are starting to produce to approach the far east are a way to look at the future with openness and availability to approach new markets.

If pasta will not accept the idea, the philosophy of contamination, it will have to renounce traveling to many places in the world. As Chef Salvatore Tassa once said, we have to learn to "speak other languages through pasta, which is part of our alphabet"^x.

Due to its nature, pasta has indeed always been fusion and ready to change. It is part of its DNA. A classic like pasta with tomato is actually a fusion version of a dish dating back to the Middle Age and Renaissance, in which there were only white sauces (milk, cheese, butter), since tomato came from America and started to be used for sauces in Italy since the mid 1800s.

While being open to contamination, we will have to continue affirming the *Italian way of pasta*: the culture of its correct preparation, starting from cooking it "al dente" in order to taste it at its best and have the greatest benefits for health.



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A challenge (spreading the culture of pasta cooking) in which huge steps ahead have been made in recent years.

Someone could remember the editorial on the New York Times dated 1983 and titled *For pasta al dente*^{xi} that caused a sensation since it accepted that the superiority of the Italian pasta "philosophy" was in its cooking style and that well cooked pasta means "al dente".

#4

I EAT DIFFERENT

PASTA WITH INGREDIENTS STILL TO BE DISCOVERED

In the future, we will eat food looking familiar but with different ingredients^{xii}, as it is starting to be nowadays with vegetable hamburgers...

It has never been truer that the future is now. On the pasta market, there is already everything consumers could put at first place in their choices in the next decades. That is because innovation is a long-standing driver of the Italian pasta industry: every year, Italian pasta makers invest about 500 million euro in innovation, research and development, almost 10% of the sector's turnover. Indeed, consumers' expectations in this field are now high: according to an investigation by IRI, 1 Italian citizen out of 2 (48%) is interested in new ingredients, new products and new types of pasta^{xiii}.

First was whole wheat pasta, it may be said. An almost instant success that won more for its health content (whole wheat is an acquired and health driver) than for its taste. Many Italian people are still confused by this new taste and are not totally able to manage the recipes to cook good whole wheat pasta^{xiv}.

After that, legumes (peas, beans, chickpeas) meal pasta, spelt or kamut pasta approached the market. They are already sold by many companies and are currently under some...very shy tasting experiments by Italian people.

However, the future may bring something more - so say experts - and there is already someone proposing spirulina (a type of seaweed) tagliatelle or pennette with insects, in this way detecting 2 out of the 5 trends (mega-fruits, seaweeds, micro-proteins, jellyfishes and insects) indicated by Forbes in an article on future nutrition^{xv}.

3D pasta, another innovative trend of the future, has been introduced two or three years ago as an experiment. The first tests of "printed" pasta surprised journalists and readers^{xvi}.

Those who tasted it made a new and interesting taste experience.

In the future, everyone will have the possibility to order the most suitable pasta for one's own needs, and also according to the diseases one could suffer from (diabetes, high cholesterol levels) or simply according to one's taste.

Consumer goods like pasta will have to face more and more evolving demands that are impossible to standardize^{xvii}.

#5

I EAT SIMPLE

MORE AND MORE BASIC AND HEALTHY PASTA, IN THE NAME OF LESS IS MORE

One of the mantras of our time - less is more^{xviii} - is actually an almost century old definition.



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Indeed, one of the secrets of Mediterranean Diet healthiness was exactly a frugal approach to food (which today still looks like one of the secrets for longevity)^{xx}. There are many signs that the simplicity of recipes will experience great success over the next decades.

Shorter lists of ingredients and *no skill* will be the new imperatives of those consumers searching for a different balance through nutrition.

Healthy will win over gourmet^{xx}.

Simple, even elementary, sauces (pasta with oil and parmesan, pasta with peas) will experience a new successful period. Of course, this trend will have to find its prophet and its ABCs made of recipes adjusted to the needs of mid-millennium consumers.

Simplicity will more and more rhyme with quality. The imperative will be to process a very high quality raw material as little as possible (which will support whole wheat) and to accompany this pasta with the best tomato, the best extra-virgin olive oil, the best vegetables, the best cheese...

Ready meals at any time and for every occasion, express if possible (the lack of time will be another factor influencing our food habits) and healthy.

Food delivery will be one of the frontiers for future pasta: it will be necessary to find solutions to use this tool that will attract a growing part of Italian people consumptions.

Today pasta is not at the core of this offer due to the difficulties of its cooking and the quality of the dish after transportation.

Those who will find a solution (even a technological one) to these problems - in the name of simplicity and taste - will win a market that is unimaginable today.

#6

I EAT CONSCIOUS

PASTA AND THE CHALLENGE OF CORRECT INFORMATION: REAFFIRMING THAT IT IS GOOD, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE

The future of pasta also involves correct information. Indeed, nowadays we are crushed between two trends being inconsistent with each other but at the same time strong and deeply-rooted that will be even taken to extremes in the future.

On the one hand, there is customers' legitimate desire to search and receive information by food producers and to choose by better knowing the product (raw materials, productive processes, compliance with criteria related to environmental sustainability, protection of workers and local communities, etc.)

On the other hand, there is an unstoppable and uncontrolled flow of fake news confusing consumers (unlawful medical prescriptions stating that food is good or not based on rough, often ideological information with no scientific value).

For pasta to continue having a pivotal role in world nutrition, it is necessary to clarify what pasta really is and what it is not.

Sensitive issues like no-carb diets, allergies, gluten-free pasta benefitting everybody and the quality of raw materials should be discussed with serenity and openness by everybody, in the interests of truth and of consumers.

It will be important for pasta producers to take the responsibility to state more and more often that it is a safe and healthy product, but also to indicate how can it be responsibly consumed (instructions about how to choose among all pasta varieties, sauces and cooking modes).



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The huge varieties of uses of pasta in different cultural contexts will have to be at the heart of information aiming at raising awareness about the product, which is indeed suitable to all of the main food cultures of the world.

Tomorrow, more than today, correct information about a product and its qualities will indeed be the main driver of food development.



NOTES

ⁱ An opinion repeatedly expressed by Matteo Vignoli, Scientific Director of the *Master Food Innovation Program*, promoted by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Unimore), by the Future Food Institute in Bologna (FFI), by the Institute for the Future in Palo Alto (ITF) and supported by Emilia Romagna Region. The worldwide tour involved 15 talents who traveled to 10 different countries in 60 days to "discover" the secret of food innovation and what the future will bring.

ⁱⁱ Unfortunately, this is happening in an age when the Mediterranean Diet is losing supporters in Italy. A study (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30020486>) published on the *European Journal of Public Health* reveals indeed that the rate of adherence to this food pattern plummeted (MAI index of Mediterranean adherence) from 3.3 to 1.6. Many countries around the world have higher indexes than ours. Precisely, only 41% of northern Italians follow this diet, about 16.8% in central Italy and 42.1% in the south.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://life.wired.it/news/food/2012/05/07/cibo-futuro-ricerca-spagna.html>

This article published on Wired mentions a 2012 Spanish enquiry. The latter enlisted 8 hypothetical future food trends and, among these, there was exactly the "Eater-tainment": "future food will have to simultaneously satisfy taste and soul and should be able to create an experience and entertain consumers".

^{iv} <https://www.bva-doxa.com/la-pasta-per-i-giovani-tradizione-improvvisazione-semplicita-e-convenienza/>

^v <https://medium.com/s/futurehuman/the-future-of-food-goes-way-beyond-lab-grown-meat-ad67d6f64685>. In this interesting enquiry published on Medium in 2018, 8 experts in several disciplines discussed about the future of food and agreed - as of an opinion expressed by the nutritionists Diego Rose and Kristie Lancaster, in particular - that we will eat less meat and more fruit and vegetables to find a better balance between consumptions and sustainability in food production.

^{vi} https://www.repubblica.it/economia/rapporti/osservazioni/trend/2018/04/16/news/alimentare_confezionato_gli_otto_mega-trend_del_futuro-193860281/.

In this article published on La Repubblica, Cristina Lazzari, Director at Mark Up and GdoWeek, writes about 8 mega-trends regarding the future of packed food coming from an analysis by Euromonitor.

Ethical living is considered "the flag of the X generation": "...it is the most spread mega-trend in food industry: 30% consumers declares to be driven by it while purchasing. Vegetable-based food and food with vegetable proteins or insects is very much liked..."

^{vii} <http://www.welovepasta.it/pasta-cibo-sostenibile-che-ama-la-terra/>. This article published on a website by Italian pasta makers explains that the carbon footprint of a pasta portion is just 150 gr. of CO2 equivalent, and that only 3 liters of water are used to produce one kg of pasta.

^{viii} https://www.primaonline.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Nielsen_20180517_Linkontro_slide_conferenza_stampata-1.pdf

^{ix} <https://life.wired.it/news/food/2012/05/07/cibo-futuro-ricerca-spagna.html>

^x <https://www.agrodolce.it/2016/02/17/salvatore-tassa-la-pasta-come-linguaggio-globale/>

In this wonderful interview, Chef Salvatore Tassa clearly expresses the following concept: "So, we must propose our own interpretation of pasta, make it an Italian history but leaving aside that "lighthouse keeper" attitude we still have. It is good to preserve the traditions of specific territories and to defend an idea of pasta linked to our history if we do it in Italy, at regional or, at most, at European level. But we also need to deal with the rest of the world, to be ready to change the meaning of pasta without fear...we need to dismantle traditions to innovate traditions themselves. What we have to challenge, to measure, is our ability to speak other languages through pasta, which is part of our alphabet".

^{xi} <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/09/14/opinion/l-for-pasta-al-dente-162968.html>

^{xii} http://www.fosan.it/notiziario/529_anno_2050_tendenze_alimentari.html

^{xiii} <http://www.pastaitaliani.it/notizie/pasta-e-innovazione-mezzo-miliardo-di-euro-investiti-ogni-anno-dal-settore/>

^{xiv} *Il futuro della pasta*, Eumetra, 2019 (an in-herit study commissioned by Unionfood which will be presented on the occasion of World Pasta Day)

^{xv} <https://forbes.it/2018/01/09/i-5-boom-alimentari-del-futuro-e-il-loro-impatto-economico/>

^{xvi} <https://www.gamberorosso.it/notizie/blurhapsody-la-pasta-3d-di-barilla/>

^{xvii} <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/food/2017-09-29/barilla-pasta-futuro-sara-personalizzata-135605.shtml?uuid=AE00e2bC>

^{xviii} Actually, the definition is almost one century old and comes from the genius of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a trends anticipator (in design).

^{xix} <https://www.focus.it/scienza/salute/restrizione-calorica-diete-invecchiamento>

^{xx} *Il futuro della pasta*, Eumetra, 2019 *Il futuro della pasta*, Eumetra, 2019 (an in-herit study commissioned by Unionfood which will be presented on the occasion of World Pasta Day). The focus on the healthy aspects of food increased for 48% Italians, against an increase of the focus on taste-related aspects by 33%.