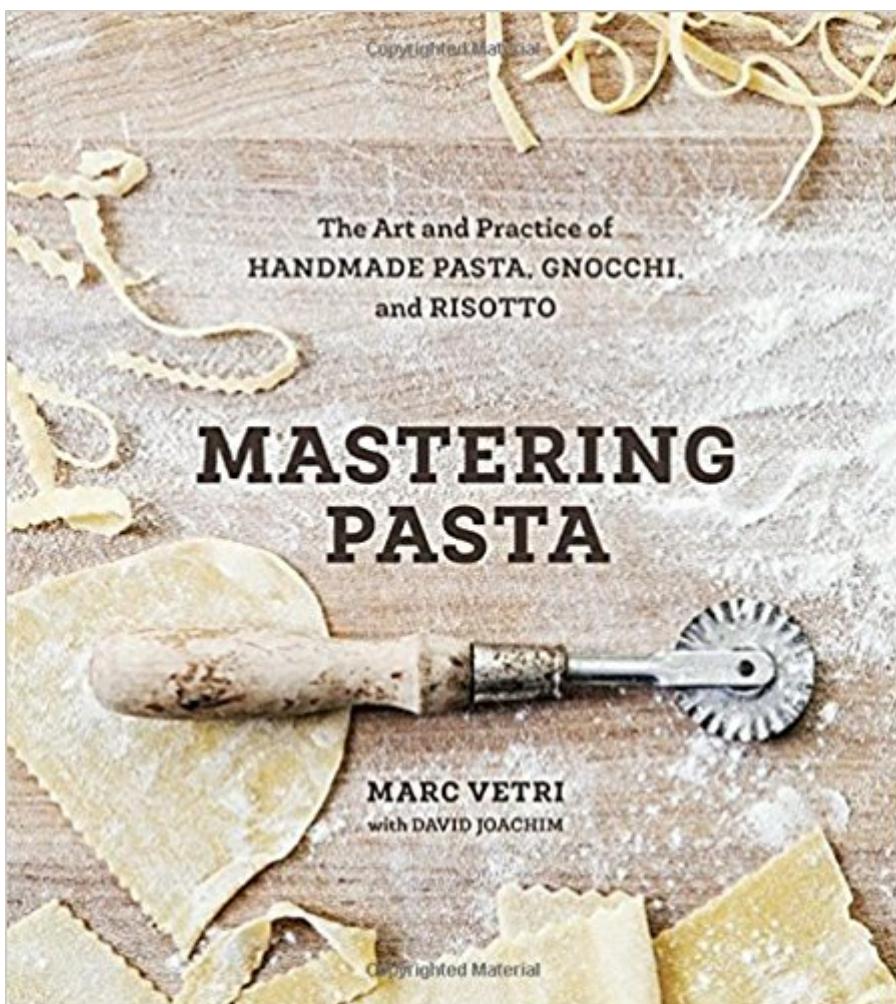


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# Mastering Pasta: The Art And Practice Of Handmade Pasta, Gnocchi, And Risotto



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Marc Vetri is the smartest Italian cook in the United States right now, and this excellent tome is exactly what every cook needs to codify and catalog classic pasta-making techniques along with some delicious, progressive, and thoughtful innovations. Mastering Pasta is nothing short of the single most important book on handmade pasta I have ever read and I am maybe just a little jealous about it... In any case, you will be a better cook and live a much happier life just by holding this book in your hands, let alone learning these simple and delicious recipes.” •Mario Batali, chef, restaurateur, and author  
“In my mind, Marc Vetri is one of the best pasta chefs on the planet. This is the pasta bible, written in the most beautiful way. Everyone needs a copy of this book on their shelf.” •Jamie Oliver, chef, restaurateur, cookbook author, and media personality  
“Marc Vetri is not your Nonna, but he’s the next best thing, marrying Old World technique with New World flavors. A thoroughly modern and mouthwatering pasta master class.” •Dan Barber, chef and co-owner of Blue Hill and Blue Hill at Stone Barns  
“Mastering Pasta is a true ode to one of the most beloved foods in the world. This is a cookbook that captures Marc Vetri’s passion for his craft and talent as a chef.” •Nathan Myhrvold, author of Modernist Cuisine  
“When it comes to pasta I have never had any better than those that come from the hands of Marc Vetri—and that includes dozens of trips to Italy.” I have said it for years that if there is one chef that could cook my last meal it would be Marc, and although I adore all his food, I think I would ask for ten courses of pasta because it is just that transcendent. This book will become the bible of all things pasta and help all of us continue to understand the perfect marriage between different flours that help create its magic. I’m sure Marc is not only proud of this masterpiece but also happy that chefs from around the globe will stop calling, texting, and emailing him for his fantastic recipes, techniques, and insight on all things pasta, since he put all the secrets right in this book! •Michael Symon, chef, restaurateur, television personality, and author  
“I love Italian food but I am kind of a bozo in the kitchen. Marc’s cookbooks have been great guides for me and I know this book will help me step up my pasta-making skills. Alright, that’s enough. Quit reading this and go eat pasta!” •Aziz Ansari, actor and comedian  
“Early on in Mastering Pasta, Chef Vetri tells us that recipes need cooks. True, but as cooks we need chefs like Marc to push us in an uncompromising pursuit to fully understand, and ultimately find, the beauty in our food. He does that page after page.” •Dr. Stephen Jones, director of the Bread Lab, Washington State University

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 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.

Marc Vetri is one of America's best Italian chefs, and the Philly native's latest book is a technique-driven walk through the process of making all kinds of pasta and gnocchi. Even though Vetri's a chef and many of his recipes are derived from his restaurants, the book is firmly grounded as an instructional guide for the home cook. *Mastering Pasta* is a beautiful book, heavy on photos of the actual making of the shapes, which is key. I especially like the decision to show that homemade pasta is by nature a bit erratic: Not every strand of hand-cut tagliatelle will be the same width, and there will be little creases where you'd folded the dough over. Vetri's recipes can get a bit esoteric, but he's very good about offering alternatives if you can't find sweetbreads or fresh porcini or snails. My main beef with the book is Vetri's basic dough. His batch is 395 grams, about 2 1/2 cups of various flours, moistened with 9 egg yolks, plus some water and olive oil. Sorry, but I can't see blasting through a whole carton of eggs for a batch of pasta that will serve 4 or 5 people. I mean I understand why Vetri does this: He runs a restaurant. He's trying to make a plate of pasta a special thing on a menu in a lovely restaurant. And his dough is indeed wonderful. But it's just too spendy for a

Wednesday night. And, given that you can whip up a basic batch of pasta in an hour, it's not crazy to think that some cooks might want to make pasta regularly, and not for special occasions. My advice: For day-to-day pasta making, use the Italian standard of 1 whole egg for every 100 grams of flour and you'll be fine. That said, I love this book. Vetri's flavors and originality are remarkable. Hell, he's even created a new pasta shape called "dove pasta," which looks a bit like the eagle pattern you see in Southwest Indian weaving. I'll definitely be making that. His technical sections are my favorite part of the book, and are useful no matter what you put on your pasta. His section on wheat is fascinating. What wheat you use actually matters, and they tell you why. Vetri shows you pasta shapes you've never seen before, combined with flavors you hadn't thought of. Bottom line: Buy this book if you've made pasta at least a few times before, and want to drill down deeply into the subject. Vetri is a master and it shows, and his recipes, instruction and flavors are top notch.

Mark Vetri is a talented professional chef. I am an advanced home cook. But when Mario Batali opined that this was 'the single most important book on handmade pasta I have ever read' and Jamie Oliver concluded 'Everyone needs a copy of this book on their shelves', I made the purchase. Okay...I've been making pasta at home for thirty years, I've attended a pasta class in Italy and I have owned and used 'Beard on Pasta' and 'The Essentials of Italian Cuisine' by Marcella Hazan for years. I am motivated to learn about pasta. But...what I expected from the promo for this book and what I found between the covers was disappointing. Bottom line: this book is a chef speaking to chefs. The fine first chapters on flours and making fresh and dried pasta dough will serve all-comers well, whether you are a beginner or are advanced. Unfortunately, that beginning gives way to a set of recipes that would challenge the home cook's pantry: 'Talleggio (that's a cheese) Ravioli with Radicchio, Honey and Walnuts,' 'Pea Agnolotti with Lardo,' 'Fig and Onion Caramella with Gorgonzola Fonduta...' Doppio Ravioli with Lamb and Polenta takes many steps and a good bit of time to prepare--assuming you have lamb and polenta on hand. Other enticing recipes call for foie gras terrine, octopus, scorpion fish, morel mushrooms, peekytoe crab--you get the idea. For sure, the book has beautiful pictures, is written intelligently and can provide 'inspiration'...but my inspiration was to find a high-end Italian restaurant and make a reservation! So...does this book 'reinvent the wheel' as far as most of us are concerned? Purists may cringe when James Beard--responding to what his reader's pantries would have on hand, says 'all-purpose flour' works best in America. I order a well-known Italian-milled Doppio Zero by mail order...but Beard is not

wrong. I began by using unbleached all-purpose flour in my noodles. (He also includes recipes using pasta flour blends of white and whole wheat, buckwheat...even yeasted noodles courtesy of Barbra Kafka. Here is also where I learned about gnocchi. But, maybe you want a recipe for Kreplach. Beard has it. Marcella offers a 115 page section devoted to pasta and sauces in 'Essentials': she is concise about explaining the use of doppio zero, semolina and other flours before also saying that she prefers to use unbleached all purpose flour for making pasta in America...even if she has other options. She provides fine instruction on mixing, rolling and shaping dough into pasta forms. She speaks to the importance of bronze dies on extruding machines, just as Chef Vetri does. Her sauces include the time-honoured, lip-smacking classics--and that makes all the difference in usability at home. These books will better serve beginning and advanced home chefs. But maybe readers are looking for recipes on the somewhat unrelated subject of risotto? Marcella's 17 pages of recipes will do for most of us. Both of these books would 'push Mr. Vetri's book off the shelf' in home kitchens...which is some different than concluding that everyone needs to have this book on their shelf.

This book is Heaven. Such great and thorough education on flour, dough and the process of pasta making. My one and only complaint is that a lot of the recipes call for ingredients that aren't easily located in your pantry or your local grocery store. I love Marc Vetri: he is truly a Master, but when it comes to writing a cookbook for non-chefs, it's important to keep that in mind. I like Octopus and will eat it in a restaurant but I really don't know what to do with it if it was an ingredient in my refrigerator. The thing is, it's not just one recipe or I wouldn't bother to mention it. For some chefs in regions where certain ingredients are readily available (big cities) and who cook with less mainstream items this won't be a problem. The recipes are relatively easy to prepare. I am still giving it 5 stars because it's a wonderful book, that is lovingly written and simply gorgeous.

This is an amazing cookbook. Vetri's approach addresses both the art and the science of pasta, and he gives lots of options for pasta dough, pasta shapes, and sauces. Before I bought the book, I read criticisms of some of his recipes (9 egg yolks in one recipe, for example), but I appreciate knowing how I can make luxurious pasta dishes as well as everyday family suppers--and everything in between. The book is also very beautiful, with an intelligent layout, lovely images and a clear and friendly writing style. It's a little like having a really experienced chef right beside you. I don't eat meat or poultry, so many of the sauce recipes need to be modified considerably for my family's use; hence the 4-star rating rather than 5 stars. But I agree with the reviewers who said this book is a

must for the home cook who wants to get serious about making pasta from scratch. My family is delighted with what I'm learning from Marc Vetri!

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