

# Pasta for Children

## Introduction

*Pasta for Children Around the World* is a food and cooking curriculum to introduce and bring excitement about pasta, food, and cooking — to children everywhere!

The four lessons teach children about pasta, food traditions, and simple cooking, with recipes for healthy pasta meals from countries around the world. The lessons are organized by region and groups of countries.

### Key Messages

The key messages of the curriculum are that pasta meals are easy to make, healthy and delicious, AND pasta is a part of meals in countries around the world.

1. **Local:** It's easy to take local food traditions and mix them with pasta!
2. **Global:** Also, it's easy to make and enjoy healthy pasta meals from countries around the world.

Anyone—parents, teachers, community leaders, health professionals, food retailers or others interested in children, food, cooking, and health—can teach *Pasta for Children Around the World*.

Oldways developed this curriculum on behalf of the International Pasta Organisation to help children around the world learn simple, delicious, and healthy ways of preparing pasta meals. This will help form a foundation for healthful eating that will last them a lifetime.

The curriculum is divided into four lessons. Lesson 1 is about pasta basics, and how pasta is an easy way to introduce lots of healthy foods (for example, vegetables and beans), with the flavors and foods of any country around the world! Lessons 2, 3, and 4 include information about pasta and several countries. Each country's lesson covers: geography and agriculture; food and pasta facts; plus a traditional pasta meal recipe to make.

### Who is the Curriculum designed for?

The program is tailored for teachers, parents, and others to use with children ages 8-14. It can easily be adapted to the interests and skill levels of



children of any age, from kindergarten to high school. It can also be taught to people of any age including senior citizens, or to any group interested in learning about healthy eating.

### Who can Teach Pasta for Children?

The lessons are designed so that teachers, parents, grandparents, chefs, and other people who care about food and children will be comfortable teaching them. Each lesson is similar in structure, and the introduction (below) includes some step-by-step guides for preparing and teaching.

### What if I'm Not an Expert?

You don't need to be an expert in all cuisines and cultures. You just need to have a passion for good food and for teaching children about it. The class materials are designed and presented so that anyone with an interest in food and children can teach the lessons without a lot of study and preparation.

### Is Teaching Experience Necessary?

No, not at all. The lesson plans give you a framework: You can follow each lesson to the letter, or you can add material from your own experiences.

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## How are the Lessons Organized?

Following the introductory chapter about pasta, the curriculum is organized by geography: Europe and Asia; Latin America; and North America. Each lesson has a focus on pasta, and also covers the geography and agricultural products of each country. Fun food and pasta facts follow. Finally, the curriculum introduces a traditional pasta dish of each country, including a simple recipe that can be prepared by the children in a classroom, with parents at home, by an educator in a grocery store or health clinic, or by a teacher in an organized group meeting (church, scouting, or others).

## What Does Lessons 2, 3 and 4 Include?

Each lesson includes maps, food facts, pasta facts, recipes, and a "script" for the teacher to follow. All pages can be copied as handouts for the children.



## General Cooking Equipment for the Class

Each lesson includes a shopping and equipment list. The cooking lesson requires a hot plate, stove or other heating element. An easy solution is to buy two small electric burners. These are easily found in the housewares' section of department or variety stores. Of course, a regular kitchen set up can also be used.

The cooking lesson also requires a large pot for cooking the pasta, another pan or two for the pasta sauce, utensils such as knives, wooden spoons, rubber spatulas, measuring cups and spoons, and cutting boards for cooking and prep work (cutting vegetables or measuring ingredients).

You may want to do all the "prep" work for the class ahead of time at home, or you can also do this in front of the children in class.

## Practical Steps Before You Begin

Each lesson starts with the materials to be copied for the children in your class—the Recipes and the Maps, plus Food Facts, and Pasta Traditions!

We suggest you encourage the children to take these handouts home to share with their families. You'll need to check out the equipment and ingredient/shopping list for each class (see the list at the end of each lesson).

We encourage you to recruit volunteers (other parents, teachers, friends, family members) to help you.

If you do not want to cook in a classroom (or if there are rules preventing you), bring in a prepared dish to serve the children at the end of the lesson.

As a general rule of thumb, we have designed the class to last one hour, with the following time allotted per segment:

1. **Geography, Agriculture, Pasta Traditions:** 25 minutes
2. **Pasta Cooking Lesson and Set-Up:** 25 minutes
3. **Clean-Up:** 10 minutes

If you're teaching in a school setting, it is easiest to set up while the children are at another activity (art, recess, etc.). For clean-up, it is best to wash all the dishes at home. However, it is important to involve the children in clean-up: packing up, cleaning up tables and picking up things from the floor. When you are all packed, a group of children can help you carry the equipment and ingredients.

Plastic bowls or tubs with covers, or plastic bags work well to transport ingredients. We suggest extra-large canvas bags and extra-sturdy bags to transport all the bowls, bags, and equipment.

If you have any questions, please contact us at Oldways:

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