

the
PASTA E FAGIOLI
MANIFESTO

BEANS AND NOODLES
AND ALL SORTS OF GOOD THINGS.

RANCHO GORDO AND BAIA PASTA
PRESENT FOR YOUR COOKING PLEASURE
SOME EXQUISITE EXAMPLES OF PASTA AND BEANS:
TRADITIONAL, MODERN,
SOMETIMES BLASPHEMOUS
AND ALWAYS DELICIOUS.

CLASSIC PASTA E FAGIOLI

We are calling this a classic version of Pasta e Fagioli but there's a good chance your Italian grandmother wouldn't agree. She would add a little more of this and a little less of that. But this version, from Baia Pasta's Dario Barbone, re-ignited my love for this dish. With good beans, good pasta and good vegetables, the rich, clear broth makes it unique. I don't want to oversell this but it's just plain delicious and I haven't stopped making it.

*1 lb Baia Pasta Organic Durum Wheat Sardinians
(Or try Whole Durum Wheat or Spelt pasta from Baia)*

1 ½ cup of cooked Rancho Gordo Cranberry beans

1 ½ cup of cooked Rancho Gordo Royal Corona beans

4 cups bean broth from the cooked beans (If you have less than four cups, make up the difference with chicken broth)

4 oz pancetta, cubed or roughly chopped

1 tbs of lard (or 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil)

1 medium onion, chopped fine

1 celery rib, chopped fine

1 carrot, minced

1 garlic clove, minced

1 rosemary sprig

½ tsp red pepper flakes

1 tbs tomato paste

extra virgin olive oil

salt & pepper to taste (optional)

Pecorino or Parmesan cheese, grated, for serving

As you prepare the beans, make sure you have plenty of liquid on hand when they are done as this will be the basis for your sauce.

While the beans are cooking, prepare the soffritto. Melt the lard (or olive oil) in a medium-sized pan over medium heat. Slowly fry the pancetta until fragrant and chewy. Once cooked, remove the pancetta with a slotted spoon and let rest on a paper towel. If needed, add more olive oil so there is enough fat to fry the aromatic vegetables. Add the carrot, celery, garlic and onion until the vegetables are soft and the onion is turning golden colored. Add the tomato paste and pepper flakes and cook for a few minutes until the paste is heated through and the tomato flavor is intensified.

Add the bean broth and rosemary sprig and adjust the salt and pepper to taste. Continue cooking on a gentle simmer for 15 minutes or so. The liquid should start to reduce.

Cook the pasta in a large stockpot in salted water for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain.

Add the drained pasta, beans, and reserved pancetta to the soffritto mixture, mix well and gently cook for a few minutes to marry the various flavors.

Serve immediately with a splash of peppery extra virgin olive oil. Pass around a bowl of grated pecorino or Parmesan cheese for the guests to help themselves.

JOY OF COOKING PASTA E FAGIOLI

You meet the most fun people when you work in the food business. I've always had a trusted copy of *Joy of Cooking* in my kitchen and while I love tradition, I'm always happy when a new, updated version appears. Whatever the edition, it's clear the authors love food and cooking and what they cook and the way they cook reflects where we're at as a country. I was really happy to meet Megan Scott and John Becker, the heirs to the throne. They love beans and have been making it a point to visit our Napa store when they're in town. They're as nice as they are talented. This version was in the last version and you can find it and the entire book on the *Joy of Cooking* app. There are many idiotic apps but a fabulous reference work that is also a joy to read, like *Joy of Cooking*, seems to be why apps were born!



Heat in a large saucepan over medium heat:

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Add and cook, stirring, until the onion is golden brown, about 5 minutes:

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 carrot, finely chopped

1 celery rib with leaves, finely chopped

2 tablespoons minced parsley

Stir in:

2 large garlic cloves, minced

Cook for 1 minute, then add:

3 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Royal Corona or Cassoulet beans

One 14 1/2-ounce can diced tomatoes

Partially mash some of the beans with the back of a spoon. Add:

2 cups chicken stock or broth, or as needed

Bring to a simmer, partially cover, reduce the heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in:

1 cup Baia Pasta Sardinians (Durum or Spelt)

Salt to taste

Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is tender, about 15 minutes. Thin the sauce, if needed, with additional stock or water. Season to taste with:

Black pepper

Just before serving, stir in:

1/4 cup grated Romano (2 ounces)

Ladle into bowls and serve, passing:

Additional grated cheese

PASTA E FAGIOLI SALAD

I doubt this would be in too many traditional Italian cookbooks but I think it's a terrific summer salad and easy to make, especially if you have some leftover beans on hand. The dressing may sound weird but the chocolate is really good! Of course you can make this with a simple vinaigrette but I'd love to hear that you tried this at least once. Do it for me.

Coarse salt and ground pepper

*¾ pound Baia Pasta Sardinians or Accordians,
Durum Wheat or Spelt*

*1 ½ cups cooked Rancho Gordo Cassoulet beans,
drained*

¾ cup crumbled fresh goat cheese (3 ounces)

2 cups arugula (rocket), washed

½ onion, sliced thin

Pineapple Vinegar Vinaigrette with Stone-ground Chocolate

3 tablespoons Rancho Gordo Pineapple Vinegar

1 teaspoon honey

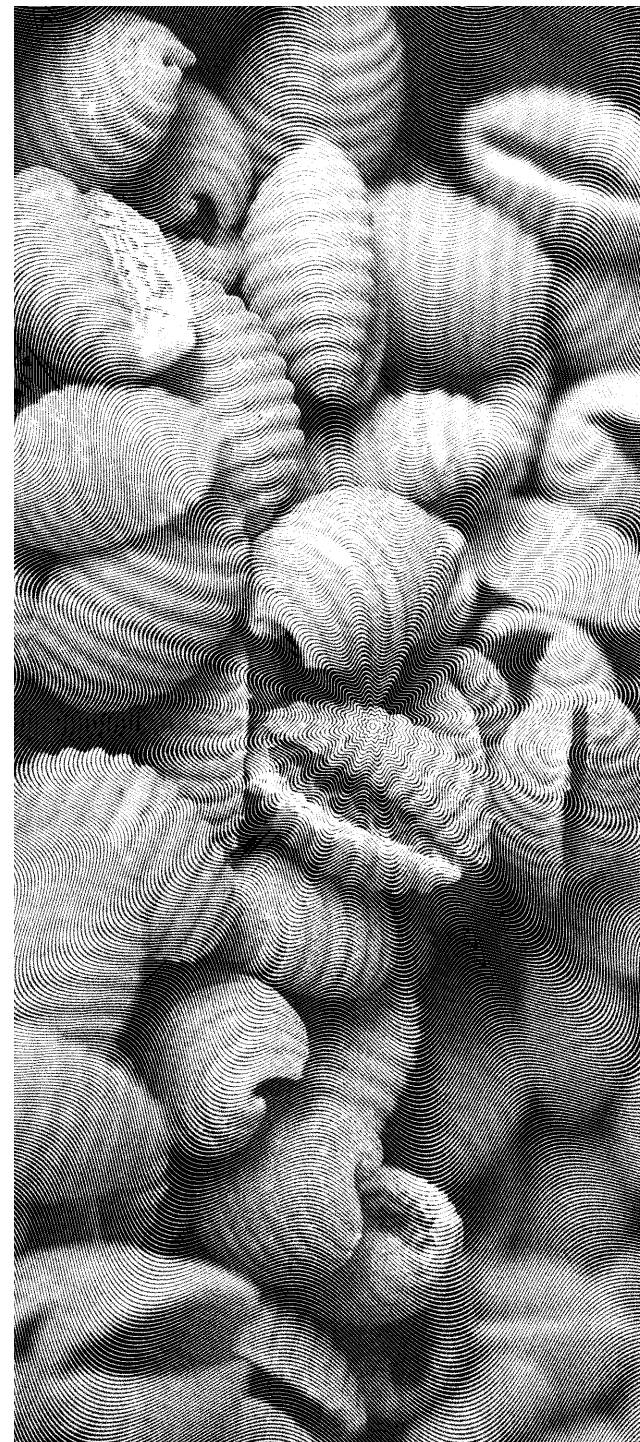
3 tablespoons Rancho Gordo Stone-ground Chocolate, finely grated

salt and pepper

1/3 cup olive oil

In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta until al dente. Drain pasta and rinse under cold water. In a large bowl, toss pasta with beans and goat cheese.

Make dressing: In a bowl, whisk together all the ingredients. (To store, refrigerate pasta mixture and dressing separately, up to 1 day.) To serve, toss pasta mixture with dressing, arugula, and onion.



JIMTOWN PASTA FAZOOOL

If you've spent any time at all with me, you probably have heard me go on about my friend Carrie Brown and her Jimtown Store, just outside of Healdsburg, California in the Alexander Valley. It's a classic roadside stop with great food, clever antiques and inspired toys.

Carrie gave me this recipe many years ago to show off our heirloom beans and it's been a Rancho Gordo favorite ever since.

Pasta Fazool comes from the Neopolitan word for beans, *fasul* and was made especially popular by Dean Martin, who gently crooned, *When the stars make you drool / Just like pasta fazool / That's amore.*

¼ pound diced Apple Smoked Bacon (optional)

(Carrie likes Hobbs brand)

1 tablespoon good quality olive oil (3-4 tablespoons if not using bacon)

½ cup finely diced sweet onion

¼ cup finely diced celery

¼ cup finely diced carrot

2 garlic cloves finely chopped

¾ cup diced Roma tomatoes or canned crushed tomatoes with juice

½ pound Rancho Gordo Royal Corona or Rancho Gordo Cassoulet beans, soaked 6-8 hours

4 cups homemade chicken stock or your favorite canned chicken stock

6-8 cups water if necessary

½ teaspoon Rancho Gordo Mexican Oregano or 1 tablespoon chopped, fresh oregano

1 cup Baia Pasta Accordions (Durum Wheat or Spelt)

1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Da Vero Lemon Olive Oil to drizzle

Vella Dry Jack to grate to taste over the "fazool"

In a large heavy bottom soup pot, sauté bacon until browned. Remove bacon from pot with a slotted spoon and set aside. Discard all but about 1-2 tablespoons bacon fat and add 1 tablespoon olive oil (or start with 3-4 tablespoons of olive oil if you are not using bacon).

Over medium heat, sauté onions, celery, carrots, and garlic until soft and onions are translucent, about 10 minutes. Add beans, stock, oregano, and return bacon to the pot. Simmer over medium heat until beans are tender, about 1 hour (cooking time may vary depending on freshness of beans). You may add water if necessary. Once tender, add the tomatoes and cook for an additional 10 minutes.

Add pasta and continue cooking until al dente. Remove from heat, stir in the parsley and allow the "fazool" to stand for 10 minutes before serving, to concentrate the flavors. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve: Drizzle individual bowls with Da Vero lemon olive oil, and sprinkle grated cheese on top.

PASTA Y FRIJOLES:

PASTA ACORDEÓN CON AYOCOTE NEGRO

Italian traditionalists should leave the room. Those who hold the traditions of Mexican cuisine should also take a break. For the rest of us, here's a wacky, delicious mashup of the two cuisines that had my 14 year old son going back for thirds.

Sopa de Fideo is a delicious soup in Mexico. Good chicken stock meets a fried noodle, a little thicker than angelhair, and the result is famous. I couldn't bring myself to fry a quality pasta like Baia but I did want to get the essence of this classic Mexican dish. In the Yucatan, you often see Sopa de Fideo with black beans. My pantry had Ayocote Negro, which are not a traditional black bean at all but the shorter, fatter pasta needed a bigger bold bean and this dish was born.

*2 tortillas, cut into very thin strips
safflower oil for frying the tortillas*

2 tablespoons olive oil

½ onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

4 canned Roma tomatoes

½ cup tomato juice reserved from can

3 chipotle in adobo chiles

1 tablespoon adobo sauce from can

½ pound Baia Pasta accordions

*2 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Ayocote Negro or
Ayocote Morado*

*4-5 cups bean broth (If you have less than four cups,
make up the difference with chicken broth)*

queso fresco or feta cheese

1 small bunch of epazote, chopped

In a saute pan, fry the tortilla strips in oil until crispy. Allow to drain on paper towels.

In a blender, add the onion, garlic, tomatoes, juice, chiles and adobo and blend well. Heat up the olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat. When hot, add the blender mix and stir well to avoid splattering. Allow to cook and reduce for about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, boil the pasta in plenty of salted water until done. Drain and reserve the pasta.

Add the bean broth to the tomato mixture and stir. Add the beans and cook together for five minutes. Adjust the salt and then add the pasta, stirring well. Cook for about five minutes over medium low heat.

Just before serving, add the epazote and mix. Ladle into bowls, sprinkle with some cheese and then add a few tortilla strips.

PASTA E FAGIOLI IN BIANCO CON ERBE TOSCANE

Judy Witts-Francini has been teaching, touring and consulting in Tuscany for years. She really knows her Italian food. I met her in 1988 thanks to the Internet, we've reconnected and stayed fast friends. I love her practical, no-nonsense style and as well as her famous sense of humor. This is her Tuscan Pasta e Fagioli and of course it is delicious and clever. In Tuscany, they would use a shape called *ditalini*. Baia's Sardinians are an ideal substitute. Judy's new Chianti Food and Wine app is now available on iTunes.

From Judy's kitchen:

COOKING BEANS THE TUSCAN WAY

- Rinse off the beans several times, look for small rocks or broken beans
- Place the beans in your pot
- Cover with cold water. Place on heat and bring to a boil, then lower the heat
- Add a branch of sage, a peeled garlic clove or two and a healthy ¼ cup of olive oil, I only use extra virgin
- Cook the beans until they are tender
- Remove any scum which rises to the top while cooking
- I tend to add more cold water as the beans cook, and absorb the cooking water. It keeps the pot from boiling too hard, as well.
- At the end of the cooking time, salt to taste and let sit before serving.

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

2 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed

2 sprigs fresh rosemary

4 leaves fresh sage

1 small dried chile (such as DeArbol), cut into large slices

2 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Cassoulet, Alubia Blanca or Royal Corona beans

2 cups reserved bean broth

1 cup Baia Pasta Sardinians durum wheat pasta

Cook the pasta in plenty of salted, boiling water until almost but not quite done. The pasta should be slightly undercooked. Strain and reserve the pasta.

Puree one cup of the cooked beans with the bean broth. Add to a large pot, add the other cup of beans and heat over a medium heat. When warm, add the cooked pasta. Check for salt and let cook until the pasta is al dente, but completely cooked.

In a saute pan, heat the olive oil, herbs, garlic and chile until just warm to release their flavors into the oil.

Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with the strained, warm herb oil.

Keep it simple. These beans are like having an empty palette to paint on.

PASTA CON CECI

While discussing Pasta e Fagioli, let's not forget our super fresh, dried garbanzos. So many recipes call for extended amounts of soaking and the addition of baking soda to help soften the beans. Your alternative is to buy new crop Rancho Gordo garbanzos. We rarely soak and they cook quickly, staying whole while melting in your mouth.

This dish combines chickpeas (*ceci* in Italian) with fresh spinach and Baia Pasta's Sardinian shapes.

2 cups cooked Rancho Gordo Garbanzos

1 cup cooking liquid from the garbanzos

2 cloves garlic, minced

3 large sage leaves

3 tablespoons olive oil (plus more for serving)

4 ounces pancetta, in small strips

4 cups fresh spinach, stemmed and chopped
salt

10 ounces Baia Pasta Sardinians (Durum or Spelt)

Parmigiano Reggiano, grated, for serving

Heat olive oil in a large pot over a medium low heat. When the oil is hot, add the garlic and pancetta and gently cook for about 10 minutes. The pancetta will start to brown. Stir in the spinach and toss so that the hot oil covers each leaf. Cook for about 3 minutes, until the spinach wilts. Add the garbanzos, the cooking liquid and stir. Let simmer for about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta (see pasta notes from Baia Pasta) in plenty of boiling salted water until *al dente*. Drain the pasta and then add to the garbanzo mixture. Test for salt.

Serve in bowls. Drizzle with olive oil and allow guests to add the Parmesan cheese.

*This recipe was inspired by one in the book **Fagioli: The Bean Cuisine of Italy** by Judith Barrett (Rodale Publishing 2004)*



COOKING BEANS

Normally on a bean cooking day (which frankly is everyday at Rancho Gordo), we put the beans to soak in the morning, after rinsing in lots of cool water and checking for small debris. We cover the beans by about an inch or so. If you haven't soaked, don't fret. Go ahead and cook them, knowing it will take a bit longer.

Heirloom and heritage varieties don't need a lot of fussing if they are used fresh, which I'd define as within two years. You can use a ham bone, chicken stock or as I prefer, simply a few savory vegetables. A classic mirepoix is a mix of onion, celery and carrot diced fine and sautéed in some kind of fat, often olive oil. A crushed clove of garlic doesn't hurt. If I'm cooking Mexican or Southwestern, I will sauté just onion and garlic in mild bacon drippings or even freshly rendered lard.

Add the beans and their soaking water to a large pot. You have been told before to change the water and rinse the beans. The thinking now is that vitamins and flavor can leech out of the beans into the soaking water you are throwing down the sink. There is conflicting scientific evidence that changing the water cuts down on the gas. If you want to, do it. If it seems unnecessary, don't.

If you've soaked them, the beans will have expanded, so make sure they are still covered by at least an inch, maybe a bit more. Add the sautéed vegetables and give a good stir. Raise your heat to medium high and bring to a hard boil. Keep the beans at a boil for about ten to fifteen minutes. After so many years, I think this is the moment that really matters. You have to give them a good hard boil to let them know you're the boss and then reduce them to a gentle simmer, before covering. I like to see how low I can go and still get the occasional simmering bubble. Open and close the lid, or keep it ajar to help control the

heat and allow evaporation. The bean broth will be superior if it's had a chance to breathe and evaporate a little.

When the beans are almost ready, the aroma will be heady. They won't smell so much like the vegetables you've cooked but the beans themselves. At this point, I'd go ahead and salt them. Go easy as it takes awhile for the beans to absorb the salt. If you want to add tomatoes or acids like lime or vinegar, wait until the beans are cooked through.

If the bean water starts to get low, always add hot water from a tea kettle. Many believe that cold water added to cooking beans will harden them. At the very least, it will make the cooking take that much longer to bring them back to a simmer. We don't recommend using hot tap water, straight from a water heater. Better to heat the tap water in a tea kettle or pan first.

Once you've mastered this method, go ahead and try some different techniques. Your bean friends will swear by this or that method and you should take their advice, keeping in mind there are few absolutes when it comes to cooking beans, only that it's very hard work to mess up a pot of beans.

COOKING PASTA

Baia Pasta recommends first and foremost not to be shy about salting the water for pasta. Use a coarse sea salt and as a rule of thumb, use a handful of coarse salt in 2 gallons of water for one pound of pasta.

Al dente texture is the stuff of legends and it's technically when the pasta has just passed the stage where there is no raw white interior and has reached its perfect textural maturity. Dario, from Baia Pasta says, "Our pastas do well even if you cook them a little longer, the noodles are just going to be on the softer side. Cook it too long and you might start to lose flavor and texture will become unpleasant."

Fun Fact: The more articulate pastas (i.e. lilies) require Baia to extrude them a little thinner and that's why some of their cuts cook faster than others.

ABOUT BAIJA PASTA

Renato and Dario combine the art of traditional Italian pasta making with great American-grown grains and produce small batches of short cuts of pasta in 5 different organic flours (durum, whole durum, spelt, whole spelt, and Kamut® khorasan wheat).

They are inspired by their roots in Piemonte (Northern Italy), where food is a passion, a language, an emotion; food is everything. Everything at Baia is dictated by the principles of the Slow Food movement: to provide people with delicious food that is good for them, good for the people who grow/produce it, and good for the Earth.

Baia Pasta is inspired by the Bay Area food scene and the many local artisans/chefs/retailers/farmers who are doing their part to make good, real food accessible. Thereby inspiring a transformation in production practices and the way we eat.

Renato and Dario have a small shop and production facility in Jack London Square, along the beautiful Oakland waterfront. Located so close to the San Francisco Bay, that it inspired the name of their pasta: Baia means “bay” in Italian. The sweet smell of fresh pasta often wafts from the production space into the shop: you’ll be enthralled. The retail shop is fully stocked with their rustic pastas and local, artisan pantry items, like olive oils, spice blends, salts, pickles, sauces, and tomatoes. If you love pasta, this is the place to be.

You can order the full line of Baia Pastas at shop.baiapasta.com

ABOUT RANCHO GORDO

Rancho Gordo founder Steve Sando was shopping one August for tomatoes and, despite Napa being one of the world’s most magnificent agricultural regions, all the tomatoes were from a hothouse in Holland! Worse, they were hard and pale pink instead of the ripe tomatoes he craved. He started to grow tomatoes and this eventually led to beans.

His first harvested heirloom bean was Rio Zape. They were similar to pintos but there was so much more going on. Hints of chocolate and coffee mixed with an earthy texture made my head spin. Steve was blown away by Rio Zape and the other heirloom beans he was growing, but also really confused why they were such a big secret. He took the beans to the farmers market, which led to wholesale accounts and ecommerce and now two retail stores. It seems Rancho Gordo had struck a nerve. People agreed that heirloom beans were worth saving, growing and cooking. Currently the warehouse, a retail shop and offices are in Napa, California and a stop at Rancho Gordo is part of many tours of the wine country.

Steve says, “All of my agricultural pursuits have been based on being someone who likes to cook but gets frustrated by the lack of ingredients, especially those that are native to the New World.”

You can order the full line of Rancho Gordo products at www.ranchogordo.com



*Edited by Steve Sando
with lots of help from
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