Pasta: A Historical Perspective

Unit: Preparing Foods

Problem Area: Potatoes, Pasta, and Grains

Lesson: Pasta: A Historical Perspective

■ **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1 **Describe the origin of pasta.**

2 **Explain the role of pasta in history.**

■ **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

Ackerman, Jessica. "History of Pasta," *ezine*. Accessed Jan. 5, 2011. <http://ezinearticles.com/?History-of-Pasta&id=1072906>.

Buonassisi, Vincenzo. *Pasta: The History and Preparation of One of the World's Most Popular Foods*. Wilton: Lyceum Books, 1973.

Chesman, Andrea, Dottie Rankin, and Dorothy Rankin. *Noodle Fusion: Asian Noodle Dishes for Western Kitchens*. Crossing Press, 1999.

"History of Italian Food," *Socialappetizers.com*. Accessed Jan. 5, 2011. <http://www.socialappetizers.com/history-of-the-italian-food.html>.

"The History of Pasta," *The Nibble*™. Accessed Jan. 5, 2011. <http://www.thenibble.com/reviews/main/pastas/history-of-pasta.asp>.

Icon Group International (author). *Pasta: Webster's Timeline History, 30 BC to 2007*. Icon Group, 2009.

Zanini De Vita, Oretta. *Encyclopedia of Pasta: California Studies in Food and Culture*. University of California, 2009.

■ Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities

✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
✓ Visuals from accompanying masters
✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet, and/or other items designed for duplication
✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
✓ Classroom resource and reference materials
✓ Items suggested for the Interest approach:
- 1 can of prepared pasta
- 2 types of dried Italian-style pasta
- 2 types of dried Asian-style rice noodles
- 1 type of fresh Italian-style pasta
- Pot for boiling, salt, water, strainer, stove top and sink OR a pan for fresh pasta and an oven
- olive oil
- grated hard cheese (Parmesan, Romano, etc.)
- bowl for cooked noodles
- napkins (but no flatware)

■ Key Terms. The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

➤ Agnese family
➤ Alphonse Biardot
➤ béchamel
➤ cellophane noodles
➤ complex carbohydrates
➤ durum wheat
➤ E-fu
➤ egg noodles
➤ Escoffier
➤ Etruscans
➤ family-style dining
➤ farina flour
➤ food cost
➤ Franco-American
➤ glass noodles
➤ Marco Polo
➤ Marcus Apricius
➤ mill
➤ millet
➤ noodles
➤ pad Thai

- ▶ pasta
- ▶ protein
- ▶ Ramen noodles
- ▶ rice sticks
- ▶ semolina flour
- ▶ soba noodles
- ▶ somen noodles
- ▶ spelt
- ▶ udon noodles
- ▶ vermicelli

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

History lessons are often a challenge for students. Sometimes the "old switcheroo" is a useful tool to engage students in a lesson to which they may otherwise be indifferent. Consider assembling some consumables: canned pasta, fresh pasta, dried Italian pasta in one or two different shapes, dried Asian rice noodles in one or two different shapes, and perhaps some packaged fried chow mein noodles. Take the dry and fresh noodles out of their packaging and arrange them on a plate (no wrappers in sight).

For each noodle type, ask students to identify the type of pasta (e.g., spaghetti, ramen, linguine, cellophane, or canned), the ingredients used, and the country of origin. Ask how each type of pasta or noodle is used in the culinary arts and the menu name of some dishes that use each type. Ask students who have tasted the canned pasta prior to this demo to describe the taste and texture. Continue by asking students who have tasted fresh pasta or noodles to describe the taste and texture and how it compares to the taste and texture of canned pasta. Ask students to describe the process to make fresh pasta. (You may need to prompt the discussion.)

To engage students in the lesson, consider cooking one pasta type for them to taste. Ideally, baking the fresh pasta is an easy choice—lightly oil a baking dish, add some warm cooked pasta and perhaps a layer of ricotta cheese, and bake for 10 minutes at 350°F. Remove it from the oven, and drizzle some olive oil and grated cheese over the dish. Then let students taste it. If there is no oven available, boil the pasta, and finish and serve it the same way as described above. [NOTE: The first recorded pasta recipes were baked varieties, and most Europeans ate pasta with their fingers. Not until the addition of sauces did Europeans embrace the use of a fork to eat pasta and noodles.]

Ask students which chef came up with the idea of eating pasta with fingers. If you baked your noodles, ask if anyone has a clue which chef came up with that

recipe idea. They are in for a surprise when you tell them no famous chef is involved in either process! They have just experienced original cooking (if baked) and eating methods for pasta. If your noodles were boiled, ask where that idea originated. No one will anticipate it coming from the Arab world!

CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Describe the origin of pasta.

Anticipated Problem: What is the origin of pasta?

I. Origins of pasta

A. **Pasta** is the Italian word for "paste" or "dough" and, in its simplest form, is produced from a mixture of flour and water. Pasta has become the generic term for numerous types of noodle products made from simple dough—usually semolina flour and liquid. However, **noodles** are different from other types of pasta because most noodles contain eggs. All pasta products are based on flour ground from a starchy, high-gluten grain and some form of liquid. In general, the addition of eggs to noodle dough softens the gluten and makes more tender dough. Western pasta types are usually prepared from wheat flours; Asian pasta and noodles may use rice flour, potato starch, or bean flour. Pasta dough is colored, flavored, and shaped into numerous forms. The style, shape, and country of origin may vary, but some form of pasta is found in nearly all cultures.

1. A brief chronological timeline of pasta
    a. A cook toasts grains to make a paste.
    b. Then dumplings are made.
    c. Flattened dough is created next.
    d. Finally, shaped dough is made.
2. Pasta and noodles
    a. They are consumed hot or cold; boiled; steamed; stir-fried; or deep-fried.
    b. They are an excellent source of protein when they contain eggs.
    c. They are an excellent source of complex carbohydrates.
3. Each culture that adopted a form of pasta eventually created a specific term to describe it, including:
    a. India—sevika (thread)
    b. Germany—Nudeln
    c. France—nouilles

B. Pasta's birthplace has been a bit of a tug-of-war between countries, cultures, and dates (recorded and unrecorded). One common theory was that the adventurer and explorer **Marco Polo** brought pasta to Italy from his trips to China and Sumatra, but that theory has been discarded. Although Marco Polo may have brought pasta to Italy, he did not introduce it when he returned there in AD 1295. Also, there are records of pasta products in Genoa, Italy, as early as 1279. Most historians say China is the birthplace of pasta. It is a logical assertion in that Chinese culture is far older than the European cultures.

   1. In approximately 1700 BC, the Chinese are known to have prepared a noodle from rice flour. (NOTE: The type of flour used in pasta is part of the pasta origin debate. Is it "true pasta" if the flour is rice flour? Yes.)

   2. One report shows a form of noodle was developed in northern China from ground millet 7000 years ago. The shape of these noodles and how they were cooked is uncertain, but it is believed they were baked.

C. Italian and Greek pasta history

   1. There is evidence (though no proof) that Italy was involved in pasta development as early as 400 BC At that time, the **Etruscans** (people from the western region of Italy, now known as Tuscany) developed a **spelt** (a grain that would evolve into modern day wheat) noodle similar in shape to a flat lasagna noodle.

   2. Ancient Greeks and Romans document their involvement in producing flat dough rolled into broad noodles that were baked or roasted in stone ovens (not boiled as is common today).

   3. In the first century AD, Roman **Marcus Apricius** is the man credited with writing the first known cookbook titled *On Cooking*, in which he details the creation of a dough used in layers for pies—resembling lasagna—but again, baked, not boiled.

D. Arabian pasta history

   1. The first known boiled noodle is credited to Arabian traders who carried dried noodles with them on their travels—especially on the Silk Road. During their conquest of Sicily in the eighth century, travel and packing documents clearly state the inclusion of noodles and the associated cooking methods.

   2. The Arabian and Italian traders soon found that Italy had the perfect growing conditions to produce **durum wheat** (a hard, high-gluten, high-protein wheat variety), which is especially suited to pasta. When ground durum wheat flour is mixed with water, it becomes very elastic so dough may be easily stretched and shaped.

   3. A geographer detailed a flour-based product in the shape of "strings" in Palermo (a Sicilian city), then an Arabian colony. Fueled by the availability of durum wheat, local families produced large quantities of pasta that was sold in open-air markets.

   4. Mass-produced dry pasta was not refined until the 1600s. In Naples, Italy, a new pasta-drying process was developed, which produced a food product capable of being held for long periods. Hard, dried pasta became popular and

brought Naples out of an economic slump. The **Agnese family** is the family credited with opening the first pasta factory in northern Italy; their mass-produced pasta swept the country.

E. Pasta and sauce

1. Adding sauce to pasta was not known during this early period. Pasta was typically eaten plain or sprinkled with cheese. While the Spanish brought tomatoes from the "new world" to the "old world" in the sixteenth century, the first known tomato and pasta dish was recorded in 1839, when a famous chef—Ippolito Cavalcanti, the Duke of Buonvicino—developed a recipe for "Vermicelli co le Pommodoro," which are thin noodles with roasted tomatoes. It is widely considered the forerunner of modern carbonara pasta dishes (which include pancetta and eggs).

2. Thirty years later, recipes for soups and sauces with tomatoes were all the rage, all with distinct flavors that included beef, pork, and chicken. Pasta with tomato sauce made a lasting impression.

3. In the days prior to adding sauces, pasta was commonly eaten with fingers. Obviously, sauce made that too messy, so it was commonly accepted to eat the sauced pasta with a fork. The addition of tomato sauce changed dining etiquette in Italy and beyond.

F. American pasta influence

1. Thomas Jefferson is credited with bringing pasta to the United States in the late 1700s. Yet it was not until waves of Italian immigrants began arriving in the United States between 1880 and 1900 that the popularity of pasta dishes began to spread across this country. Italian immigrants brought their customs and recipes with them, making pasta a common dish in U.S. homes and restaurants.

2. Jefferson was so enamored with the boundless tastes and preparations for pasta that he invented a pasta machine.

Teaching Strategy: *Use VM–A to enhance the discussion of the spread of pasta from culture to culture. Highlight various regions on the map, and discuss the names each country chose for "pasta."*

Objective 2: Explain the role of pasta in history.

Anticipated Problem: What is the role of pasta in history?

II. The history of pasta

A. China: The historical role of pasta begins with its origins in China. Many may consider people from China and Asia as primarily rice-eating people, but that assumption is not upheld by the geography. China and the Asian continent are huge. Even with the extensive coastline, the bulk of China and Asia's land mass is

internal; and rice requires paddies or marshland to grow when irrigation is not viable.

1. The oldest known Chinese noodles were made from **millet** (a seed from wild grains). Millet is now common in the United States as a component of bird feed. The far northern regions of China, nearest to Russia, are better suited to wheat production; little rice is found in the region. The ability to **mill** (separate and grind) grain shows great skill in these early civilizations.

2. Chinese noodles (mein—pronounced "mane") were an advanced food product of the time that nourished people who could not benefit nutritionally from the raw grains. Pasta enriched one of the world's great culinary dynasties, using various grain types. Chinese noodles fall into one of three types: rice, wheat, or hand-pulled. The majority of Chinese pasta and noodles do not contain eggs (as in many Italian and European varieties); they are primarily composed of milled grain and water.

   a. Rice-based noodles are usually purchased in a precooked and dehydrated state. As a result, they have to be softened by soaking and then quick cooked. Rice noodles are high in starch and have a bland natural flavor, so they easily absorb liquids and the associated flavors of the foods with which they are served. Rice noodles work well with Asian cuisines that often utilize numerous sauces and flavors in the same dish. The high starch content naturally thickens the sauces. Rice noodle varieties are:

      (1) **Rice sticks** or **vermicelli** (VUR-muh-CHEL-e) are thin, white rice noodles.

      (2) **Pad Thai** are the thickest and widest of the rice noodles and are gluten free. The Thai dish "pad Thai" is a stir-fry of noodles and eggs.

   b. Wheat-based Chinese noodles are best known as **egg noodles**, or **E-fu** noodles, which have a spongy and chewy texture due to the soda (carbonated) water used in their preparation. They are made with eggs and wheat flour, so they are yellowish in color; are sold fresh or dry; and are made of the same dough as egg roll and won ton wrappers.

      (1) **Ramen noodles** are usually wheat-based noodles, but they are sometimes made with other flour sources. Ramen noodles are Chinese in origin and are used throughout Asian cultures in wok and stir-fry dishes. In the United States, many are found in stores as a "brick" of precooked crinkled noodles and are often packaged with flavoring for soup. Some types are considered health risks because they contain high levels of trans fats and sodium.

      (2) Won ton and egg roll wrappers are made from this same egg noodle base and may be boiled, fried, or steamed.

3. The Japanese learned that noodle dough could be made from almost any starch. Mung bean starch, for example, is the basis for the famous (bean thread) **cellophane noodles** also known as **glass noodles**. Virtually transpar-

ent when cooked, these noodles are great for stir-fry as well as for deep-fried noodles. Japanese noodles also include:

   a. ***Soba noodles*** are noodles made from buckwheat flour. They are brown and have a thick, heavy texture. They are more substantial than other Japanese noodles.

   b. ***Somen noodles*** are noodles made from standard wheat flour and oil; they tend to be thin and delicate.

   c. ***Udon noodles*** are noodles made from wheat but are known to be thicker and chewier than somen, more akin to fettuccine noodles. Endless varieties of Asian noodles are made with different starches and liquids and are cut into different shapes and sizes. Udon noodles are used in numerous Asian-inspired dishes, including:

     (1) Lo Mein is a soft-boiled and pan-fried noodle dish served with vegetables.

     (2) Chow Mein is a crispy fried noodle dish often served atop stir-fried vegetables and meats.

4. Asian culinary influence

   a. As the Asian population migrated, so did the culture and foods, including all those varieties of noodles. A different way to make and utilize noodles resulted.

   b. Asian-inspired noodle main dishes highlight noodles made from various starch sources; utilize different shapes and sizes; and can be served hot or cold.

B. Italy

1. Italy played a major role in pasta history. Most European cultures had their own versions of dumplings and pasta and yet were heavily influenced by Italian pasta dishes, perhaps an effect of the Roman Empire as it moved through Europe.

2. Italians are credited with the first mass production of dried pasta. Today, due to its climate, Italy remains one of the world's leading producers of hard durum wheat, which is the basis for granular semolina flour. Dried pasta provided an available protein food source for travelers when meat products were cost pro-hibitive. Sailors, hunters, explorers, and roadside travelers used the inexpen-sive and highly available dry pasta as a ready and mobile food source.

   a. ***Semolina flour*** is flour ground from the heart of durum wheat kernels and has high gluten content that helps to maintain the shape, form, and texture of dry pasta.

   b. ***Farina flour*** is flour made from the endosperm of any wheat kernel, not just durum wheat varieties. It is coarsely processed hard wheat flour used in hot breakfast cereals and pasta.

3. Italians are credited with the first mechanical production of pasta. They recorded the use of machines to produce pasta in the early 1800s. This was a huge advancement in food production and had a global ripple effect. The vol-ume of pasta available through factory production influenced and promoted

the growth of other factory food production across Europe and around the world.

    4. Adding sauces to pasta originated in Italy, forever joining tomatoes and pasta, but certainly not limiting sauces to tomato types. Cream and cheese sauces (e.g., Alfredo) and flavored olive oil increased pasta's appeal. The endless variety of family-made sauces throughout Italy spread across Europe, finding a ready audience in France. The famous French chef **Escoffier**, considered the "father of modern cuisine," used, refined, and defined five basic sauces in the late 1890s—two of them being tomato sauce types and one a white **béchamel** (a sauce that would become the basis for creamy cheese sauces in modern cooking). The spread of pasta impacted the development and growth of these sauces, along with the popularity of modern sauces in general.

C. United States

    1. The use of pasta in the United States began as immigrants poured into this country in the late 1880s. One immigrant, a Frenchman named **Alphonse Biardot**, brought his family pasta and sauce recipes with him at a time when immigrants came to live the American dream. In 1886, Biardot and his sons opened the **Franco-American** company in New Jersey; the company produced canned pasta and soup. Franco-American was a huge success and was eventually purchased by the *Campbell's Soup Company*. The *Franco-American* product line remains today.

    2. In the mid-1960s, SpaghettiO's® and RavioliO's® were introduced and became popular products geared toward children and busy families. These products were sold on the strength of the Franco-American name. The success of canned soup and pasta in the United States spawned the growth of the canned entree business.

D. Pasta entrees

    1. The idea of pasta (in its Italian and Asian forms) as an entrée spread across the world. Fast, easy, delicious and inexpensive, pasta became a staple in homes and restaurants around the world.

    2. Nutrition

      a. Historically, pasta was and is a ready and inexpensive source of nutrition in diverse environments as it may be made from almost any starchy grain (farinaceous products). Starchy foods are carbohydrates needed for energy. Should one crop fail, another might survive and provide the starch needed for pasta production. For nomadic people who did not have time to make dough and to let it rise, pasta became a vital and staple food product. Dried pasta could be kept in reserve for years.

      b. Unknown to ancient consumers of pasta and noodle products, the nutritional nature of pasta, specifically protein and complex carbohydrates, provided people with nutrients to build cells and to provide long-lasting energy. **Complex carbohydrates** (sugar molecules strung together in long, complex chains) are found in peas, beans, whole grains, and vegetables and require long and slow digestion, providing a steady stream of energy in

the body over many hours. The body turns complex carbohydrates into glucose (blood sugar) to feed the body and the brain. **Protein** is an organic compound that builds, maintains, and repairs body tissue. Today, pasta products are often chosen for these qualities.

    c. Historically, pasta played a further nutritional role for those with poor teeth and oral diseases. Highly nutritious and easy to eat, people with oral pain found, and still find, noodles a good choice for soft eating.

3. Food cost

    a. In the modern restaurant business, pasta has become big business, generating hundreds of millions of dollars globally. Of particular note is the low **food cost** (the actual cost to purchase the food ingredients) of pasta. Many foods in restaurants are expensive to purchase (e.g., lobster, shrimp, and filet mignon) and provide minimal profit, if any. The bottom line of any business is supported by the strong profit margin from more inexpensive foods (e.g., pasta). Even with a restaurant's substantial markup in the selling price, pasta still provides a considerable value to the consumer as portion sizes are often quite large.

    b. At home, the low food cost of pasta has made it a popular choice when finances are tight.

    c. While the food cost of pasta is low, the popularity of pasta and noodle dishes increased the role of grain farmers around the world.

4. Portion size

    a. Most Asian noodle dishes are eaten with few frills or with the addition of small amounts of meat and/or vegetables.

    b. Most Europeans view pasta as a separate course or as its own meal "as is."

    c. Most people in the United States include meat as a common element of pasta- and noodle-based meals. Though meat sauces are common in Italy, simple tomato and marinara sauces are more prevalent. In the United States, meat sauces are very common, and people opt for larger portions. In addition, people readily add meatballs, sausage, and other meats directly to their pasta dishes.

5. Family-style dining—Pasta main dishes have become a family-style dining opportunity in the United States. Noodles generally do not keep well after cooking. They lose their heat and become sticky. Moreover, pasta is generally cooked in quantity and at the last minute, so it is traditionally brought to the table in a large bowl. This style of dining—due in part to the nature of the food—promotes eating as a group. It also accentuates the nature of what is known today as **family-style dining**—the bringing of bowls of food to the table where people serve themselves and pass the bowls to the other family members. Many modern restaurants use this technique.

Teaching Strategy: *Use VM–B, VM–C, and VM–D to illustrate various pasta and noodle types, dishes, production, and service. Assign LS–A. Lead a discussion of the*

student research findings in which you are able to point out that there is no definitive answer.

■ **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Questions at the ends of chapters in the textbook may also be used.

■ **Application.** Use the included visual masters and lab sheet to apply the information presented in the lesson.

■ **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Short Answer

1. Answers will vary. Some examples of the relationship of pasta and family-style dining are:
   a) Pasta does not hold its heat or quality long after preparation, so the family must be assembled at the table to eat the hot pasta dish immediately.
   b) Typically, a large bowl of pasta is prepared, and the family members help themselves and pass the bowl to the other family members.
2. The low food cost of pasta provides high profit margins for restaurants and offsets the higher food cost of items with a more minimal profit margin (e.g., lobster, shrimp, and filet mignon).
3. Two famous dishes developed with udon noodles are:
   a. Lo Mein (soft pan fried udon noodles)
   b. Chow Mein (crispy fried udon noodles)

Part Two: True/False

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. F

Part Three: Completion

1. Franco-American (or Biardot family)
2. béchamel
3. *On Cooking*
4. millet
5. semolina
6. Japan
7. eggs
8. complex carbohydrates
9. dried
10. cellophane

Name _____

Pasta: A Historical Perspective

▶ **Part One: Short Answer**

Instructions: **Answer the following.**

1. In what ways is family-style dining associated with eating pasta?

2. How does the ingredient food cost of pasta dishes affect the restaurant industry?

3. List two famous dishes developed with udon noodles.

▶ **Part Two: True/False**

Instructions: **Write *T* for true or *F* for false.**

_____1. Semolina flour has a high gluten content.

_____2. Italy's climate is well suited for the growth of durum wheat.

_____3. Marco Polo introduced pasta to Europe.

_____ 4. Pad Thai is a wheat noodle.

_____ 5. The first known noodles were made from rice flour.

_____ 6. Thomas Jefferson is credited with bringing pasta to the United States.

_____ 7. Pasta is the Italian word for "paste" or "dough."

_____ 8. The earliest recorded recipes for pasta or noodles were for boiled rather than baked dishes.

_____ 9. All pasta products are based on flour ground from starchy, high-gluten grain and some form of liquid.

_____ 10. The addition of eggs softens the gluten and makes dough that is tougher than pasta dough.

▶ **Part Three: Completion**

Instructions: **Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.**

1. The company that started making canned pasta products in New Jersey is _____.

2. The white sauce often used as the basis for an Alfredo pasta sauce is _____.

3. Marcus Apricius wrote the first cookbook called _____ in which he recorded what is considered the first lasagna recipe.

4. Long ago, Chinese ground _____ grains to make their first noodles.

5. The premier flour for dried pasta is milled from durum wheat and is called _____.

6. The country of origin of soba, somen, and cellophane noodles is _____.

7. Noodles are different from other pasta types in that most noodles contain _____.

8. The nutrition associated with pasta and noodles is due to the high amounts of protein and _____.

9. Italians are credited with the first mass production of _____ pasta.

10. Virtually transparent Japanese noodles, also known as bean thread or glass noodles, are commonly called _____ noodles.

MAPPING PASTA'S DEVELOPMENT

Notice the proximity of China to India in the "spread" of pasta. Next, look at Italy's geographic position and its natural placement to receive and spread pasta throughout Europe and Great Britain.

CHINESE PASTA AND NOODLES

◆ Millet grains provided the Chinese with the starch needed for the first noodle flour.

◆ Records indicate the Chinese first described baking flat noodles. Decades later, Italian Marcus Apricius recorded an early baked lasagna product.
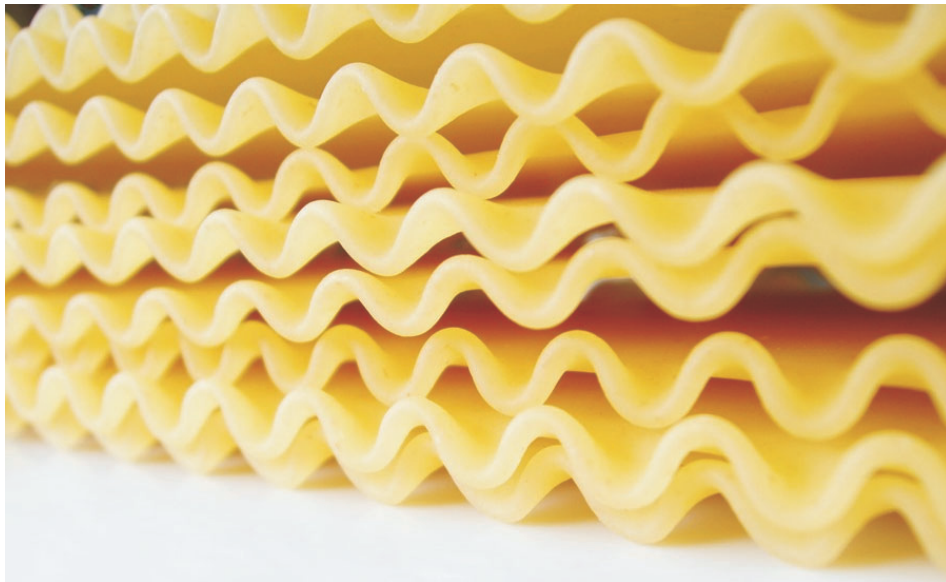
♦ Notice how thin and white this rice vermicelli appears; it is a product of water and rice flour.

♦ Thin and delicate Ramen wheat noodles are precooked and are sold dehydrated in packaged blocks. They are soaked or are gently cooked to rehydrate. Ramen noodles are prepared from the same dough as won ton and egg roll wrappers.

♦ These thick and wide gluten-free rice noodles are not fettuccine. They are pad Thai—with tofu.

JAPANESE NOODLES

♦ Mung bean starch is the basis for these cellophane noodles (also known as bean thread and glass noodles). Cellophane noodles are virtually transparent when cooked and work well in stir-fry dishes and as deep-fried noodles.

♦ Soba noodles are made from buckwheat flour, are brown, and have a thick, heavy texture. They are heartier than other Japanese noodles.

◆ Somen noodles are made from standard wheat flour and oil and tend to be thin and delicate. In this image, we see clear and pink somen varieties.

◆ Udon noodles are made from wheat flour, but they are thicker and chewier than somen noodles (e.g., fettuccine noodles).

PASTA PRODUCTION AND SERVICE

♦ The first Italian pasta factory was tiny. Now pasta is mass produced, as seen in this snapshot from an automated ravioli factory.

♦ Canned pasta is an Italian dish, developed by a Frenchman and fabricated in the United States. *Franco-American* products, such as these "Spaghetti-O's®," are still available.

♦ Pasta is a staple in homes and restaurants around the world because it is fast, easy, delicious, nutritious, and inexpensive. In restaurants, pasta results in big profits.

Name _____

Filling in the Blanks of Pasta History

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to create a historical outline of pasta history.

Objectives

1. Research pasta and noodle history.

2. Record accurate historical information related to pasta and noodles.

3. Compare and contrast your history with those of other classmates.

Materials

♦ lab sheet

♦ class notes

♦ textbooks and reference materials

♦ writing utensil

Procedure

1. Work individually to complete this lab sheet.

2. This lab sheet is designed to help you create a general historical outline of pasta. Your problem in completing this task is the following:

   a. Pasta historians do not always agree on the correct answer to each question. Your research will help you decide the correct answer.

   b. Although the general historical outline is shown below, sections of the text below are missing.

3. Your job is to fill in the missing sections after researching each question. You may use textbooks, cookbooks, the Internet, or any other research materials available to find the information. Your work will be judged on:

   a. Spelling

   b. Grammar

   c. Sentence structure

   d. Legible writing

   e. Accurate information

   f. Participation in a class discussion of Pasta History

4. Write the missing information in the spaces provided, and make sure you write legibly.

An Outline of Pasta History

Part 1:

As early as 7000 BC, the _____ were grinding _____ into a floury powder to make noodles. It is thought the cooking process for these noodles was _____, but this is uncertain. What is certain is that the explorer _____ did not introduce these noodles to _____, as they were already making their own versions. Noodles from Asia were commonly made with _____ flours. For the most part, they did not include the use of _____.

Part 2:

The idea of boiling noodles did not catch on within Europe until _____.

Dried pasta was first produced in large quantities in the city of _____, Italy, because of the _____.

The production increased even more when _____.

Part 3:

Though _____ originally brought pasta to America, it did not really become popular until _____.

The love of quick and easy pasta meals in the United States was taken a step further when in New Jersey, _____.

Historically, the value of pasta from ancient times to now has many important points, including these four noteworthy items:

a.

b.

c.

d.

5. Participate in a discussion of your research findings first with a small group of students and then in a general class discussion.

6. Turn in your completed lab sheet.

Filling in the Blanks of Pasta History

1. Answers will vary, but the following is a general response guideline.

2. The historical outline is intended to cause a discussion of timeframes, research sources, and historical opinions. Students should provide input to the discussion based on their own research. You may need to prompt students to respond with their findings.

3. Please use your judgment about the items cited in the last "fill-in-the-blank" in Part 3. There are always new pasta and noodle improvements that may be cited by student researchers.

Part 1:

As early as 7000 BC, the **_Chinese_** were grinding **_millet_** into a floury powder to make noodles. It is thought the cooking process for these noodles was **_baking or roasting_**, but this is uncertain. What is certain is that the explorer **_Marco Polo_** did not introduce these noodles to **_Italy (or Europe)_**, as they were already making their own versions. Noodles from Asia were commonly made with **_rice, buckwheat, and/or mung bean flours_**. For the most part, these noodles did not include the use of **_eggs_** in the dough.

Part 2:

The idea of boiling noodles did not really catch on within Europe **_until Sicily was invaded by the Arabians in the eighth century and the Arabian conquerors brought the technique to Europe_**.

Dried pasta was first produced in large quantities in **_Palermo_**, Italy, due to **_the ready availability of durum wheat in Sicily and Italy_**. The production increased even more when **_an improved process for drying pasta was perfected in Naples, allowing people to buy the dry noodles and keep them for extended periods. The opening of the first pasta factory by the Agnese family furthered the growth of dried pasta products_**.

Part 3:

Though **_Thomas Jefferson_** originally brought pasta to America, it did not really catch on until **_Italian immigrants came to the United States in the late 1880s, bringing their customs and recipes with them, resulting in pasta dishes on restaurant menus, in grocery stores, and in our homes_**.

The love of quick and easy pasta meals in the United States was taken a step further when in New Jersey, **_Alphonse Biardot and his sons opened the Frano-American Company in the late 1880s and produced canned pasta and soup. Though the company was_**

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purchased by Campbell's around 1915, the Franco-American label reached its highest fame in the mid-1960s with foods geared toward children and busy families.

Historically, the value of pasta from ancient times to now has many important points, including these four noteworthy items: (NOTE: Any four items from the following list would be considered correct.)

- a. *It provides nourishment to millions when crops fail.*
- b. *It provides income for farmers growing wheat, rice, and other starchy grains.*
- c. *It promotes "family-style dining" in Italy and around the world.*
- d. *It enriches Asian cuisines.*
- e. *It enriches Italian cuisines.*
- f. *It provides an inexpensive source of complex carbohydrates and proteins.*
- g. *It provides a strong profit source for modern restaurants.*
- h. *It encouraged improved etiquette after sauce was introduced as a topping.*
- i. *It encouraged the development of formal sauces by French chef Escoffier.*
- j. *It became a common food, bridging the different people of the world.*