

**Introduction and Context**  
**Scientific Consensus Conference on**  
**Healthy Pasta Meals**

**Sara Baer-Sinnott**  
*Oldways, Boston*

**World Pasta Day Scientific Colloquium**  
**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**  
*October 25, 2010*

**First.....**

**Happy World  
Pasta Day!**

# OLDWAYS

Nonprofit education organization chartered 1990 in by the U.S., based in Boston.

Oldways' programs encourage individuals and families:

- (a) to eat and drink in healthy ways,
- (b) to enjoy the pleasures of their foods, drinks and meals, and
- (c) to pass food traditions down to following generations.

All of Oldways programs are based on:

- \* High-level consensus science evidence
- \* Culinary arts and traditions

# OLDWAYS

Known for its consumer food guides:

1. the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid (1993),
2. Asian Diet Pyramid (1995)
3. Latin American Diet Pyramid (1996), and
4. Vegetarian Diet Diet Pyramid (1997).

Develops other programs:

1. the Whole Grain Council and Stamp program(2003)
2. the Latino Nutrition Collection (2005)
3. the Mediterranean Food Alliance (2006),
4. Other international consumer education programs such as THE HEALTHY PASTA MEAL (2004)

# OLDWAYS

Bring together an interesting and powerful mix of professionals:

Scientists  
Chefs  
Food Industry  
Journalists  
Health Professionals

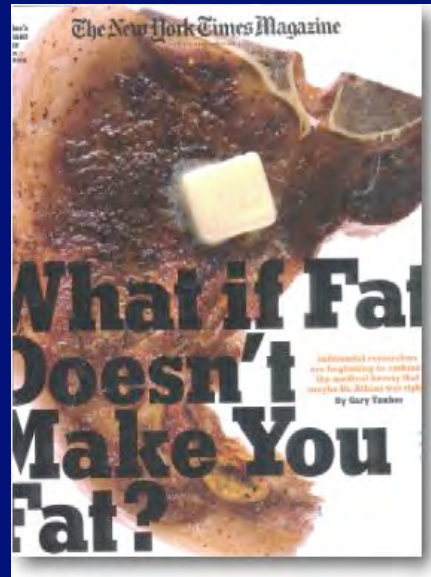
Believes that by working TOGETHER  
we can succeed and change the  
way people eat.

What makes **Oldways** different from other organizations is its combination of scholarly grounding in science, strong social conscience, and commitment to culinary excellence.

*Encyclopedia Britannica*

**In 2002...**

**Low carb “fad diet du jour” arrived via,  
*The New York Times Sunday Magazine* story,  
“What if Fat Doesn’t Make You Fat.”**



# Another Fad Diet...

As Dun Gifford, Oldways founder, wrote

This time the low-carb diet -- another "rogue wave" fad diet had rolled up out of the deep, and.....dietary anarchy was again on the loose.

- Companies made low-carb products
- Consumers were confused -- avoided carbs and especially anything that was a "white food"
- At first, consumers lost weight....but found they couldn't stay on the diet for long.
- There were potential long-term health risks



**To reverse this rogue tidal wave**

**In 2004...**

Oldways organized a high-level scientific conference in Rome to review current nutrition evidence about carbohydrates in general and the traditional pasta meal in particular.

At its conclusion, the nutrition scientists in attendance from six countries issued a  
**Scientific Consensus Statement on**

**The Healthy Pasta Meal**

# 2004 Healthy Pasta Meal

## Scientific Consensus Statement

1. The Mediterranean pattern promotes many carbohydrate-rich foods, including fruit, vegetables, legumes, and grains, including pasta, eaten with olive oil and wine in moderation.
2. Many of these foods have low glycemic indices, and may have key roles in preventing obesity and chronic disease (diabetes, coronary heart disease and certain cancers).

## 2004 Healthy Pasta Meal

### Scientific Consensus Statement

3. Pasta is the vehicle for ingredients of a healthy meal. Irrespective of fiber content, pasta has a low glycemic index. As a result, consumers receive the benefits of prolonged carbohydrate absorption as well as the advantages of the other individual ingredients of a pasta meal.
4. Slow-release carbohydrates such as traditional pastas have benefits for healthy longevity as well as physical and cognitive performance.

## Help to Dispel Pasta Myths

Just prior to this 2004 conference, the cover story of a major news magazine [Newsweek] reported that white spaghetti was a food to avoid, because it had a high glycemic rating.

A nearly-illegible footnote stated that the pasta with this rating *had been boiled for 20 minutes.*

# Pasta and Partners

This surprised the Rome conference scientists, because anything cooked to inedible mush will consequently have an artificially inflated glycemic index.

- \* Pasta has a naturally low glycemic index
- \* No one eats pasta naked.

This was part of the big news of the 2004 conference -- and in the real world -- helped consumers understand the healthfulness of the pasta meal.

[ The Washington Post ]

**Recipes**

*Fried Squid With Chili-Garlic Mayonnaise*

*Braised Squid With Tomatoes and Peas*

*Halibut With Green Olive-Basil Relish*

*Pasta With Garlic and Oil*

*Orecchiette With Broccoli Raab*

*Lemon and Pine Nut Tagliatelle*

More recipes inside

# Food

**F**

*On the Fringe  
Market Watch  
Wine/Foraging*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2004

MG PG VA

# Pasta Fights Back



*Spaghetti, Linguine,  
Tagliatelle et al.  
Take On the  
Low-Carb World*

By JUDITH WEINRAUB  
Washington Post Staff Writer

oor pasta.

With low-carb diets stalking the land, a distrust of all carbohydrates—especially bread, potatoes, rice and pasta—has taken hold.

Now pasta is fighting back.

And nutritionally it has every right to, accord-

## Spaghetti, rigatoni and linguine win a battle in the diet wars



Sandro Pace/The Associated Press

Michael Romano of New York's Union Square Café stirring sauce at the Rome conference.

By Elisabetta Povoledo

**ROME:** A conference promoting the health benefits of eating pasta has agreed that traditional Mediterranean eating patterns — which promote the consumption of carbohydrate-rich foods — are better than current Western dietary patterns, which are heavy on protein and saturated fats.

Scientists and nutritionists brought together by the Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust, a Boston nutrition research and advocacy group, went a step further and identified foods that have a low glycemic index — a way of classifying food by how it is metabolized and how quickly it raises blood sugar — as possibly having “key roles” in preventing such chronic illnesses as obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease and certain cancers.

Foods like spaghetti, linguine and rigatoni, for example. Titled “Healthy Pasta Meals,” the conference encouraged increased consumption of pasta — the cornerstone food of the traditional

eating patterns of people who live in the Mediterranean basin — because it has a low glycemic index.

Still, the scientific consensus statement issued at the end of the conference said that further research was required on the “long-term effects of low glycemic index diets.”

Oldways has long been a proponent of the Mediterranean diet, which also advocates ingesting fruits, vegetables, grains, olive oil and wine in moderation, but this was the first conference to focus on pasta, described in the final consensus statement as “the vehicle for ingredients of a healthy meal.”

“This is a rear-guard attack to defend the Mediterranean diet and things we think are good,” said Dr. John Foryet, director of the Behavioral Medicine Research Center at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

“Traditional carbohydrate foods are in,” echoed Dr. David Jenkins, a nutrition expert at the University of Toronto’s medical school, during the closing session of the conference on Wednesday.

“Pasta has been resurrected.”

That’s good news for the conference sponsors, the Italian pasta maker Barilla, the American Italian Pasta Company, and the Consorzio Parmigiano-Reggiano, the Parmesan cheese lobby. The findings should especially please pasta makers and retailers operating in the United States, where sales have sagged in recent years as a result of the popularity of diets that advocate low carbohydrate consumption, like the Atkins diet or the South Beach diet.

“Here we’ve got a group of eminent scientists signing on to a statement against the low-carbohydrate hula hoop,” said K. Dun Gifford, president of Oldways.

Jenkins, from the University of Toronto, described the fight against low-carbohydrate diets in the United States as a losing battle, but feared new fronts opening up.

“We must stop that losing battle before it hits countries where the risk is losing their dietary heritage,” he said.

International Herald Tribune

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# HEALTH

## Is the low-carb backlash beginning?

Some foodmakers say moderate will replace extreme in diets

Tuesday, February 24, 2004 Posted: 10:07 AM EST (1507 GMT)

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona (Reuters) -- U.S. foodmakers are scrambling to satisfy consumer clamorings for low-carbohydrate products but also see a move toward more balanced eating that could spell doom for the strictest low-carb diets, like Atkins.

At an industry conference last week in Scottsdale, Arizona, companies including Kellogg Co. and Hershey Foods Corp. touted products such as low-carb cereals and chocolate bars catering to the millions of Americans following diets that eschew carbohydrates like bread, sugar and pasta



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# Dining Out

YT D1

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2004

The New York Times

## Pasta Lovers Take a Stand in Rome (Where Else?)

By FRANK BRUNI

ROME  
**T**HERE comes a time when a besmirched, besieged food must step up to the plate and defend its honor, or at least its carbohydrate count.

Here in the land that has loved and cooked it best, pasta is about to make its stand.

For three days next week, physicians, chefs, pasta manufacturers and other pasta partisans will gather in Italy's capital for a full-boiled response to the advances of the low-carbohydrate Atkins diet, which threatens to put rigatoni on the run.

"We're not dancing anymore," said K. Dun Gifford, the president of Oldways Preservation and Exchange Trust, the Boston nutrition research and advocacy group that is organizing the conference. "This is 'Pasta Fights Back.' It needs to."

Mr. Gifford was using the nickname that he and other participants have given the event. Officially titled Healthy Pasta Meals, it is more than a summit of experts and entrepreneurs who are invested, gastro-

nomically or financially, in the fate of fusilli. It is a telltale moment in the carbohydrate wars, a clear sign of just how tough it is these days to be a starch.

What with the Atkins and South Beach diets, Sugar Busters and Protein Power, the carbohydrate is viewed by many Americans as a positively menacing macronutrient, the evil root of all love handles.

"It's a frenzy," said Susan Toussaint, director of marketing for the American Italian Pasta Company of Kansas City, Mo., referring to the widespread shunning of carbohydrates in the United States.

Ms. Toussaint said that over the last 12 months, her company, a conference sponsor, had a roughly 5 percent drop in American grocery-store sales of its pasta.

She said that decline was typical of the pasta industry and that one reason was the indiscriminate vilification of all carbohydrates. "Pasta's getting lumped in the same category as Krispy Kreme," she said. "It's not fair. All carbohydrates are not created equal."

That is the overarching message of the conference. Its many sponsors and patrons also include Barilla, a leading Italian pasta manufacturer. Although few Italians have

### Penne are under fire from carb warriors.

begun kneeling to the low-carbohydrate gods, trends do tend to travel across the Atlantic.

"If people stop eating pasta, it's bad for us," said Renzo Rizzo, a senior executive at Barilla.

Rome was chosen as the conference site for the semiotic and theatrical garnishes it provides. What better setting in which to praise pasta — and to point out that Italians, who eat it regularly, are generally slimmer, and live longer, than Americans?

Mr. Gifford has drafted scientists from around the world to make pasta's case.

"We're doing damage control for pasta, if you like," said Dr. David J. A. Jenkins, who teaches metabolism and nutrition at the University of Toronto's medical school.

Dr. Jenkins is an authority on the glycemic index, a measure of how quickly food is metabolized and how suddenly it raises

blood sugar. Steep jolts are widely considered bad for health and weight. He said that pasta's dense, compact nature means that it is digested more slowly than other starches.

Dr. Jenkins plans to explain all of this at the conference, which begins on Monday at the Cavalieri Hilton outside Rome's historic center. Also on the agenda are discussions of everything from cooking to cardiovascular disease, from the properties of wheat to fad diets through the ages.

"There was a graham-cracker diet at the beginning of the 1900's," said Mr. Gifford, whose group promotes a style of eating known as the Mediterranean diet.

The Mediterranean diet exalts olive oil, recommends restraint around red meat and makes ample allowance for pasta, which Michael Romano, the executive chef at the Union Square Cafe in Manhattan, described as a safe harbor in a confused culinary universe with "layers of mad cow disease and crazy chicken disease."

"It's good to try to find some sanity in all of this," said Mr. Romano, who will lend his talents to a big pasta dinner at the conference. "It's my comfort food. It's my soul food."

# Now in Rio in 2010

Gathered to celebrate the Healthy Pasta Meal

and

To update of the Scientific Consensus Statement.

# WHY?

# Why Focus on Healthy Pasta Meals

1. Obesity on the rise
2. Lack of balance in diet
3. Consumer confusion about health and price of healthy food
4. Malnutrition in parts of the world

# Scientific Focus of the Program

1. Studies showing definitively that carbohydrates are not responsible for obesity.

2. Research that focuses on the total diet -- healthy eating patterns like the Mediterranean Diet or traditional Latin American Diet.

## Scientific Focus of the Program

3. The role of carbohydrates in encouraging consumption of more vegetables, unsaturated oils, and other healthy foods, in pasta meal pairings.

4. Pasta meals' contributions to reducing obesity and malnutrition, as an affordable, healthy food widely available in societies of both excess and poverty.

# RESULT

1. Scientific Consensus Statement on the Healthy Pasta Meal -- a document with:

***A. Scientific foundation***

***B. Food as a subject***

2. Scientific Consensus Statement on the Healthy Pasta Meal -- a document that will:

***A. Communicate a healthy food message to consumers around the world***

***B. Increase consumption of pasta and other healthy foods***

# RESULT

3. Scientific Consensus Statement on the Healthy Pasta Meal -- a document that will:

***HELP CHANGE THE WAY PEOPLE EAT***

***and***

***IMPROVE HEALTH***

**Muito Obrigada!**  
**Muchas Gracias!**  
**Grazie mille!**  
**Thank you!**