

Low GI Daily Menu: Italian Al Dente Pasta Day

Saturday 24 October 2026 | Italian al dente pasta | Recipes & method (serves 2)

Buongiorno! Today we're celebrating Italian cooking the low GI way, with pasta cooked al dente, fresh spring vegetables and plenty of legumes and lean protein. Each meal is balanced to help keep energy and blood glucose levels steady throughout the day.

Daily total per person (approx.): 116 g carbs | 29 g fibre | 83 g protein | 1240 kcal

BREAKFAST

LOW GI

Ricotta, Strawberry and Walnut Sourdough Toast

Creamy ricotta and fresh strawberries on toasted grainy sourdough, finished with walnuts and a dusting of cinnamon.

Prep 10 min | Cook 5 min | Serves 2

Per serve: 38 g carbs | 8 g fibre | 18 g protein | 14 g fat | 380 kcal

Ingredients

- 4 slices (280 g) grainy sourdough bread
- 200 g fresh low-fat ricotta
- 150 g strawberries, sliced
- 30 g walnuts, chopped
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Method

1. Toast the sourdough slices until golden and crisp.
2. Spread each slice generously with ricotta.
3. Top with sliced strawberries and chopped walnuts.
4. Finish with a light dusting of ground cinnamon and serve immediately.

Why it's low GI: Grainy sourdough has a lower GI than white bread thanks to its fibre and dense structure, while ricotta and walnuts add protein and healthy fats to slow carbohydrate absorption.

Tip: Swap strawberries for sliced pear or apple when berries aren't in season.

Drink: Freshly brewed coffee or green tea, unsweetened

Italian White Bean and Tuna Pasta Salad

A zesty al dente pasta salad with cannellini beans, tuna, cherry tomatoes and rocket, dressed in lemon and olive oil.

Prep 15 min | Cook 10 min | Serves 2

Per serve: 40 g carbs | 12 g fibre | 30 g protein | 15 g fat | 430 kcal

Ingredients

- 100 g dried wholemeal fusilli pasta
- 1 x 400 g can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 x 185 g can tuna in springwater, drained
- 150 g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 50 g baby rocket
- 1/4 red onion, finely sliced
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, diced
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- small handful fresh basil leaves

Method

1. Cook pasta in boiling water until al dente according to packet directions, then drain and cool slightly.
2. In a large bowl, combine pasta, cannellini beans, tuna, tomatoes, rocket, onion and cucumber.
3. Whisk olive oil and lemon juice together and season with salt and pepper.
4. Pour dressing over the salad and toss gently to combine.
5. Scatter with torn basil leaves and serve.

Why it's low GI: Pasta cooked al dente has a lower GI than soft-cooked pasta, and the added cannellini beans boost fibre and protein, further slowing glucose release.

Tip: Cook pasta the night before and chill overnight, this raises its resistant starch content and lowers the GI even further.

Drink: Sparkling water with lemon slices

Al Dente Penne with Chicken, Asparagus and Peas

A fresh spring-inspired pasta dish with lean chicken, asparagus, peas and shaved parmesan, lifted with lemon zest.

Prep 15 min | Cook 20 min | Serves 2

Per serve: 38 g carbs | 9 g fibre | 35 g protein | 14 g fat | 430 kcal

Ingredients

- 140 g dried wholemeal penne pasta
- 250 g chicken breast, thinly sliced
- 1 bunch (150 g) asparagus, trimmed and chopped
- 100 g frozen peas
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 20 g shaved parmesan
- 1 lemon, zested
- small handful fresh mint leaves

Method

1. Cook penne in boiling water until al dente, reserving a cup of pasta water before draining.
2. Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat and cook chicken until golden and cooked through, then set aside.
3. In the same pan, add garlic, asparagus and peas, cooking for 3-4 minutes until just tender.
4. Return chicken to the pan with the drained pasta, lemon zest and a splash of reserved pasta water, tossing to combine.
5. Season with salt and pepper, top with shaved parmesan and torn mint, then serve.

Why it's low GI: Al dente wholemeal penne keeps the GI low, while lean chicken, olive oil and plenty of vegetables add protein, healthy fat and fibre to balance the meal.

Tip: Swap asparagus for green beans or broccolini if asparagus isn't available.

Drink: Sparkling water with fresh mint leaves

Why this menu helps

Each meal today is built around pasta or bread cooked and served in a low GI form, paired with legumes, lean protein and healthy fats to slow digestion and smooth out blood glucose response. Plenty of non-starchy vegetables add fibre and volume without extra carbohydrate, while fresh lemon, herbs and olive oil keep sodium and saturated fat low. Spreading moderate, consistent carbohydrate portions across breakfast, lunch and dinner helps support steadier energy levels throughout the day.

Nutrition values are estimates per serve and will vary with brands and portion sizes. Everyone's needs are different; talk to your GP, accredited practising dietitian or credentialled diabetes educator about the right amount of carbohydrate for you, and check your blood glucose as advised.