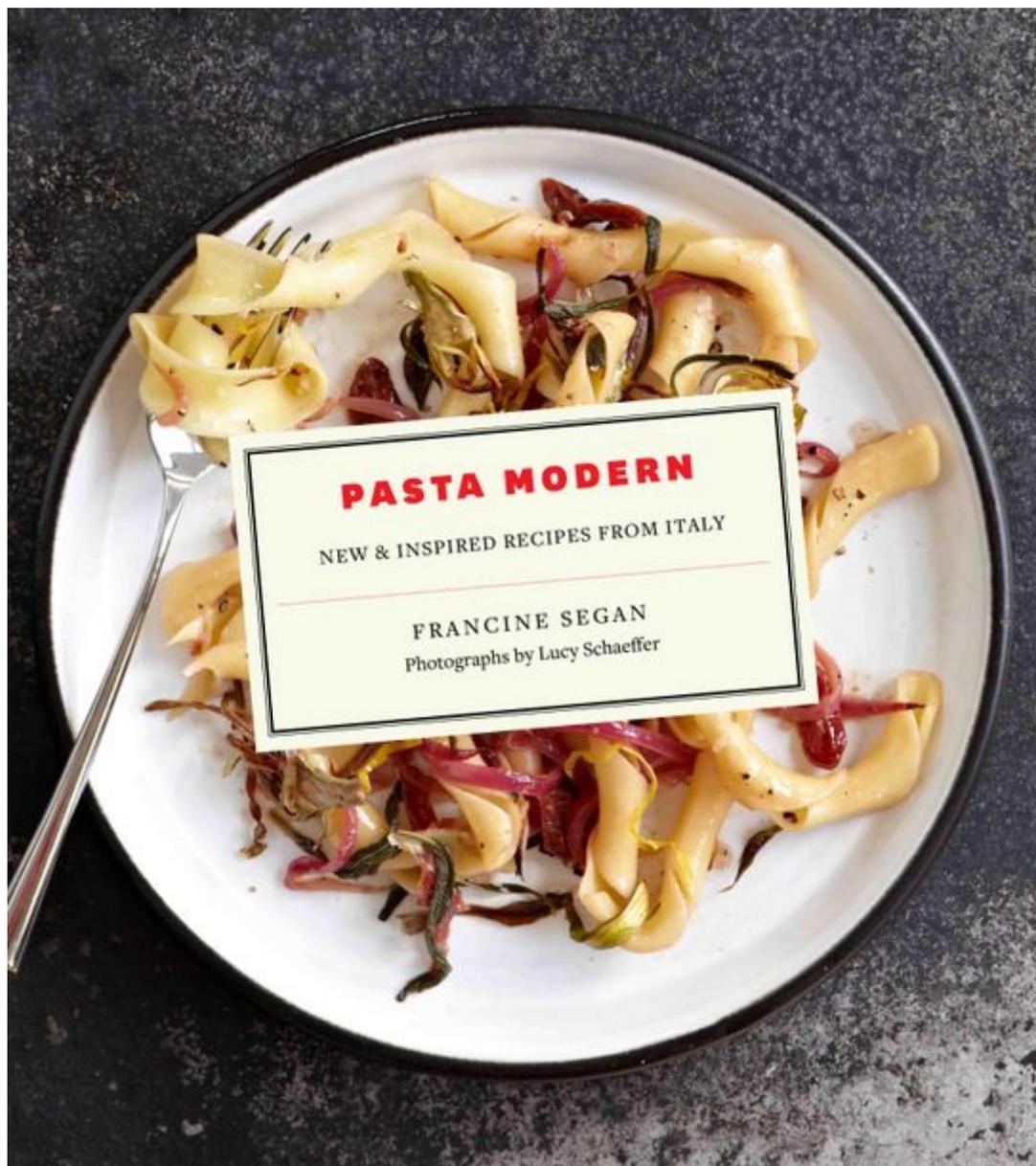


# Cook the Book: 'Pasta Modern'

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It's way too easy to get lazy with pasta. I usually turn to my tried-and-true penne tossed with bits and pieces of vegetables at the end of every week when I'm too tired to go out to the store. Or else I'll toss spaghetti with a quick tomato sauce and call it a night. Neither of these preparations is bad, of course, but after a while, I tend to think of pasta night as consisting of only these two dishes.

So, for me, opening up the creative, new pasta-centric cookbook from James Beard-nominated **Francine Segan** was totally exciting. *Pasta Modern* is filled with recipes of every persuasion—there are vegetarian and meat-centric dishes of course, but there are also fruity, chocolaty, nutty, and sweet pastas inside as well. Segan traveled all over Italy to research the recipes in *Pasta Modern*, and her extensive knowledge is evident in the diversity of styles and flavors throughout the book.

While there are a couple of expected recipes in the line-up (think spaghetti with meat sauce or the assortment of pestos) the majority of the flavors and ingredients in *Pasta Modern* are just that—modern. Take Segan's chapter devoted to coffee and chocolate: each recipe highlights a different nutty, floral, or sweet characteristic of these two complex ingredients. Throughout the book, tomatoes take a backseat to oranges, figs, fresh vegetables, and seafood.

Although the ingredients lists may seem surprising, Segan's techniques are almost entirely traditional. In only a few places does she call for anything other than boiling pasta and then tossing it in a skillet with the sauce. The fresh pasta recipes are also strictly traditional—but that doesn't mean that they are all familiar. For example, the *frascarelli*, a pasta made by dribbling water and egg into a bed of semolina flour, is like a cross between polenta and spaetzle.

Gear up for a fun, pasta filled week! We'll start with **spaghetti tossed with oranges, dates, and anchovies** and then we'll taste a **vegetarian carbonara made with pumpkin and caramelized onions**. Later, we'll have another spaghetti dish, this time tossed with **creamy avocado and lemon sauce** and served with white wine-infused shrimp. A distinctive **meat and pear "open" ravioli** dish will follow, and then we'll finish the week with the aforementioned *frascarelli*.

## Win 'Pasta Modern'

Thanks to the kind folks at Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, we have five (5) copies of *Pasta Modern* to give away this week. All you need to do for a chance to win is to tell us about **the most creative pasta dish you can think of** in the comments section below.