

The Origin and Evolution of *ragù bolognese* (*Bolognese Sauce*)

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Abstract

This paper discusses the origin and evolution of the Italian meat sauce ragù bolognese, known in English as Bolognese sauce, which was first documented in 1891 in a recipe by Pellegrino Artusi. It also examines an earlier recipe called Ragù per li maccheroni appasciati (Sloppy Macaroni) by Alberto Alvisi dating to the late 18th century. Later, the evolution of Bolognese sauce up to the present is investigated by dividing the modern age into the pre-World War II and post- World War II eras. We show that the original recipe entered the 20th century in two different directions. One basically preserved the original ingredients and cooking method, while the other began to experiment with the recipe by replacing, adding or leaving out original ingredients, and reducing the simmering time. These experiments reached a stage where the tradition-conscious Italian Academy of Cuisine felt a strong obligation to go back to the recipe's roots and register their authentic ragù bolognese version with the Bologna Chamber of Commerce in 1982 under the name ragù alla bolognese in order to set a standard for its proper ingredients and preparation.

Keywords: *ragù bolognese, Bolognese sauce, spaghetti bolognese, spaghetti with meat sauce*

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Introduction

Pasta served with *Bolognese sauce*, known in Italian as *ragù bolognese*, can be counted among the most popular dishes in the world. At least since the 1930s, but particularly after the post-World War II era, it has mostly been served with dried spaghetti. Therefore, the term *Spaghetti Bolognese* sounds more familiar to the Western ear than *Fettuccine Bolognese* or *Macaroni Bolognese*. In Northern Italy, *Bolognese sauce* has always been and still is known as *ragù bolognese*, and is best served with fresh long broad pasta, such as pappardelle or fettuccine, or tube shapes, such as macaroni and rigatoni.

A meat sauce recipe for pasta called *Ragù per li maccheroni appasciati* is documented by Alberto Alvisi in the late 18th century. The first recipe using the term *ragù bolognese* can be found in a cookbook by Pellegrino Artusi published in 1891. While many traditional variations exist, the Italian Academy of Cuisine registered a recipe for authentic *ragù alla bolognese* with the Bologna Chamber of Commerce in 1982. We should always keep in mind that Italy was only unified as a kingdom in 1861, and is still dominated by self-contained regional cuisines.

Returning British and American soldiers who served in World War II contributed significantly to the dissemination of *Spaghetti Bolognese*, a dish they may have encountered as dried pasta with minced meat sauce during the invasion of Sicily, Calabria and Apulia, where it is common to serve dried pasta like spaghetti with sauces. However, spaghetti with *ragù bolognese* can be traced back as *spaghetti with meat sauce* to at least the 1930s.

Today, the varieties of *Bolognese sauce* served in restaurants worldwide is as huge as the different grades of its quality. Preparing an authentic *ragù bolognese* takes time. So does the preparation of fresh pasta. Besides, some of the ingredients and optional ingredients are relatively costly. Lastly, no other cheese can replace the rather expensive Parmesan cheese *Parmigiano Reggiano*, which is classified for authenticity by European law, and is used to grate over the dish.

1. Origin

The first documented recipe for *ragù bolognese* can be found in Pellegrino Artusi's cookbook *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene (Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well)*, published in 1891. There, recipe 87 has the title *Maccheroni alla Bolognese* (Artusi 1891, p. 52-53). In an English translation (translated by Peggy Perdue) it reads:

Maccheroni alla Bolognese (Macaroni Bolognese)

For this dish the people of Bologna used a medium-sized pasta called *denti di cavallo (horse's teeth)*, and I agree that this kind of pasta is best for cooking in this style. Be certain, in any case, to use a fairly thick pasta, so that they do not fall apart during the boiling. This problem could occur in Tuscany, where a preference for light foods causes them to make what they call delicate pasta with holes so large and walls so soft that they can't stand up to the boiling, ending in a disgusting, inedible result.

As everyone knows, the best pasta is made with durum wheat, and is distinguished by being the natural color of wax. Be wary of pastas that try to mask their inferior origins by using artificial colors to achieve this yellowish tint, even though this might have once been done with innocuous substances like saffron or crocus.

The following proportions are approximate for seasoning 500 grams (a pound) or more of pasta.

150 grams lean veal (better if in fillets.) 50 grams pancetta. 40 grams butter. One quarter of a regular onion. Half a carrot. Two palm-length ribs of white celery or the herb portion of a green celery. Just a little pinch of flour. A little pot of broth. A small amount of salt, depending on the saltiness of the pancetta and broth. Pepper and nutmeg to taste.

Cut the meat into small cubes, chop the pancetta, onion and herbs with a mezzaluna, and put them under the heat with the butter. When the meat has browned add the pinch of flour and broth and continue cooking until it is done.

Drain the pasta thoroughly and toss it with Parmesan cheese and this sauce, which you can make even better by adding some dried mushrooms, or sliced truffle, or a bit of chopped cooked chicken liver. Finally, you can add a half cup of cream to the sauce at the end of the cooking to make it more delicate. In each case, it is best that the macaroni arrive at the table not dry, but bathed in a bit of sauce.

... (the remaining part covers remarks on pasta irrelevant to our research).

Let us remember for comparison with later recipes that Artusi uses twelve ingredients and offers three optional ingredients for his *ragù bolognese* recipe. The twelve ingredients are veal, pancetta, butter, onion, carrot, celery, flour, broth, salt, pepper, nutmeg and Parmesan cheese. The three optional ingredients are dried mushrooms or sliced truffles, chopped cooked chicken liver, and cream. Although macaroni is mentioned in the title, Artusi chooses as pasta type to go with the *ragù bolognese* a hollow short-cut pasta called *denti di cavallo (horse's teeth)*. Synonyms for *denti di cavallo* are *cannolicchi medi*,

sciviotti ziti, *denti di pecora*, *fischioti*, *fischioni*, and *canneroni*. See below a photo which shows *denti di cavallo* and can be found at <http://www.food-info.net/uk/products/pasta/shapes.htm#cannolicchi>:



Pellegrino Artusi (1820-1911) was an Italian businessman and writer, born in Emilia-Romagna. Between 1835 and 1850 he spent considerable time in Bologna. Writing only two decades after the unification of Italy, Artusi was the first to include recipes from all different regions of Italy in his cookbook. His book contains anecdotes as well as recipes. It is claimed that even the great French chef Auguste Escoffier took inspiration from him. Interestingly enough, Artusi could not find a publisher for his cookbook. So he used his own money to self-publish, selling a thousand copies of the first edition in four years. By the time of his death in 1911 more than 200,000 copies had been sold, and translations into several Western languages had been made. The first edition contained 475 recipes but Artusi constantly added new recipes to later editions reaching 790 recipes in the edition of 1911

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pellegrino_Artusi).

There was an earlier recipe named *Ragù per li maccheroni appasciati* documented by Alberto Alvisi in the late 18th century. In an English translation (translated by Peggy Perdue) it reads:

Ragù per li maccheroni appasciati (Sloppy Macaroni)

Put well-rendered lard, an ounce of butter, a finely chopped onion, and veal, pork loin or even some finely-minced chicken gizzard in a pot, and cook the mixture over high heat until nicely browned. Add the broth little by little along with an ounce of flour to give body to the sauce as it reduces. Be aware that this ragù must be neither too watery nor too thick, but perfectly cooked, and sufficiently flavored with salt, pepper, cinnamon or other spices.

The pasta must then be perfectly cooked in meat broth or well-salted water before serving with the above mentioned ragù.

Drain the pasta thoroughly and put it into a large bowl. Add the ragù and give it a stir. It will suffice at least for a first course at lunch.

It is essential that the dish be hot and well mixed before bringing it to the table.

Please note that in order to give the above mentioned ragù more substance it may be necessary to unify the savory flavors by adding some finely chopped mushrooms or truffles.

Alvisi's recipe uses nine ingredients and offers two optional ones. The nine ingredients are lard, butter, onion, veal or pork loin, broth, flour, salt, pepper and cinnamon. The two optional ingredients are chicken gizzard and "other spices". As pasta type to go with the *ragù* Alvisi chooses maccheroni.

Macaroni, spelled *maccheroni* in Italian, refers to a pasta in the shape of narrow tubes as defined at <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maccheroni>.



Little is known about Alberto Alvisi except that he was probably raised in Cesena, a city in Emilia-Romagna, and worked between 1785 and 1799 as cook for the bishop of Imola, Gregorio Chiaramonti, who went on to be Pope Pio VII while Alvisi dropped into obscurity (*Eminenza, il pranzo è servitor: Le ricette del cuoco del cardinale Chiaramonti*, p. 88-90).

A comparison between the two recipes shows that, if we allow lard and pancetta to count as similar in function as a fat source, all of Alvisi's ingredients except cinnamon are also used in Artusi's recipe. Of course, pancetta adds a saltier flavor to the *ragù* than lard. The two optional ingredients offered by Alvisi are different from Artusi's three optional ingredients. This result suggests that the recipe for *ragù*, that is, *ragù bolognese*, had already been rather well-defined at the end of the 19th century in Emilia-Romagna. Interestingly enough, neither recipe uses the later standard ingredient of peeled tomato or tomato sauce.

2. Evolution

2.1 Pre-World-War II Era

As mentioned in the introduction, it is generally presumed that returning British and American soldiers who served in World War II were mainly responsible for the dissemination of *Spaghetti Bolognese* (<http://www.spaghettibolognese.info/p/history.html>). These soldiers may have encountered some local version of *Spaghetti Bolognese* as dried pasta with minced meat sauce, prepared from ground beef, tomato, onion, bacon, spices, carrots and celery, during the invasion of Sicily, Calabria and Apulia, where it is customary to serve dried pasta like spaghetti with sauces. It became common habit to sprinkle grated Parmigiano cheese or a cheaper kind of hard cheese over the dish, often served with the plain cooked spaghetti being placed in the plate and then topped with the sauce (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolognese_sauce).

In this paper we would like to challenge the above mentioned theory and show evidence that macaroni and spaghetti served with *Bolognese sauce* were known in America and Germany before the World War II era. We will do so by showing evidence found in cookbook recipes and one surviving restaurant menu. In addition, we will refer to photographs taken in 1938 and 1939 depicting spaghetti served with sauce in order to illustrate the possible presence of *Bolognese sauce*.

In American cookbooks we can trace recipes for macaroni with *Bolognese sauce* as early as 1912. In that year Mabel Earl McGinnis published *Simple Italian Cookery*, under the pseudonym Antonia Isola which was required by her publishers (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonia_Isola). The book includes a recipe called *Macaroni with Meat and Sauce (Maccheroni Al Sugo Di Carne)*, shown at <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/i/isola/antonia/simple/index.html>. In chapter 2 "Macaroni and Other Pastes (sic!)", recipe 2, p. 10 reads (Isola, 1912):

*Macaroni with Meat and Sauce (Maccheroni
al sugo di carne)*

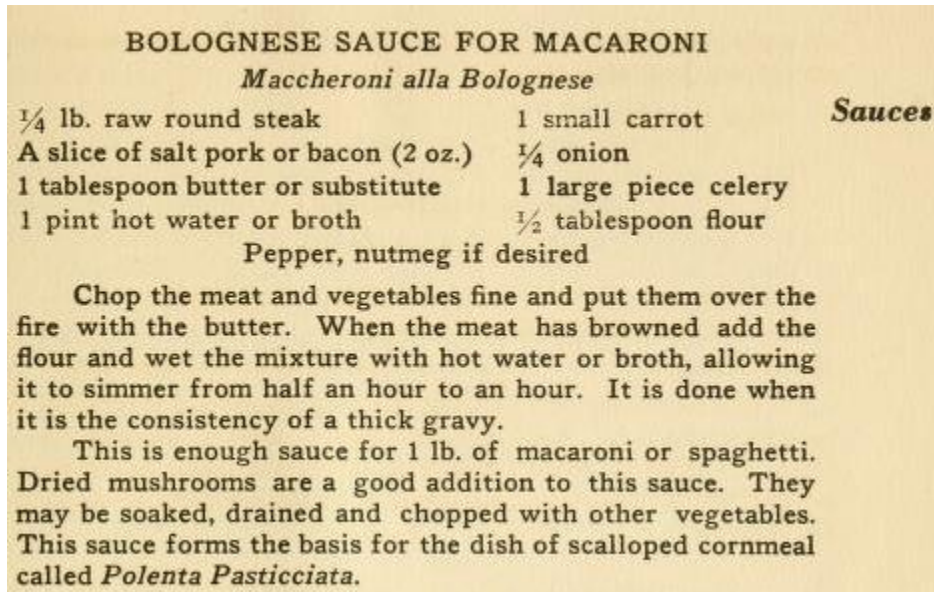
Take one-half pound of beef without fat. Prepare the ham fat as in the preceding receipt, chopped up with onion, celery, and parsley. Cut the meat into several pieces, put it with the fat, etc., into a frying-pan. Add salt and pepper. Cook until the meat is colored, then add two tablespoons of wine, white or red. When the wine is absorbed add two tablespoons of tomato paste dissolved in hot water. (Or tomato sauce as in preceding.) Boil all together for five minutes, with cover on the saucepan, then add one cup of boiling water, and allow it to simmer until the meat is thoroughly cooked — about one-half an hour. Boil and strain the macaroni as before, and pour over it the sauce from the meat. Mix well, and serve with the meat in the middle and the macaroni around it, with cheese (grated Parmesan) sprinkled over it.

This dish can be made with veal or mutton instead of the beef.

Although McGinnis' recipe was only published twenty-one years after Artusi's recipe, its eleven ingredients beef, ham fat, onion, celery, parsley, salt, pepper, wine, tomato paste or sauce, boiling water and Parmesan cheese are rather different. Parsley, wine, tomato paste or sauce and boiling water are new ingredients while pancetta was replaced by ham fat, and the veal was replaced by beef or could even be replaced by strong tasting mutton.

Butter and carrots are not used at all. Artusi's optional ingredients which are dried mushrooms, or sliced truffle, chopped cooked chicken liver and cream, are also missing. The fact that McGinnis only lived for a couple of years in Rome and not in Emilia-Romagna may have contributed to these changes (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonia_Isola). While no specific simmering time is given by Artusi and Alvisi, McGinnis' instruction of "about one-half an hour" seems to be rather short.

Another early recipe called *Bolognese Sauce for Macaroni* is included on page 23 in Julia Lovejoy Cuniberti's cookbook *Practical Italian Recipes for American Kitchens*, published in 1917. It is shown at <http://vintagecookbooks.healthyeatingandlifestyle.org/books/1917practicalital.html>:



Eight ingredients and three optional ingredients, including the dried mushrooms suggested in the text, are cited. We assume that "raw round steak" points to beef. The only differences to Artusi's original recipes are the missing salt and Parmesan cheese, as well as the replacement of veal by beef, and pancetta by "salt pork" or bacon.

Cuniberti's optional dried mushrooms are also listed in Artusi's recipe, while his optional sliced truffle, chopped cooked chicken liver, and cream are not mentioned by Cuniberti. The suggested simmering time of "half an hour to an hour" is longer than McGinnis' but still seems to be rather short for thickening the *ragù*. Since no detailed information on the author seems to be available, her approach to Italian cuisine is unknown. However, it can be said that Cuniberti's version is rather close to Artusi's original recipe.

In order to show that the evidence of recipes for *ragù bolognese* is not restricted to the American continent, we would like to briefly look into one German pre-World War II cookbook on Italian cuisine containing a similar recipe. The German cookbook of interest is *Die gute italienische Küche: Eine Sammlung von Original-Rezepten nebst praktischen Winken* by Maria Gaeta-Hahne, published in 1928. On page 55 the following recipe can be found (translated into English by the author):

Tagliarelli a la bolognese.

Cook the tagliarelli in salted water, strain them, put them into a pre-warmed bowl and pour the following sauce over them: Cut half a kilogram of good quality beef (goulash piece) into sizable cubes. Fry two onions with 50g bacon, add the meat with salt and pepper, braise it for a while in the fat, and add some water or broth. Cut half a kilogram of ripe tomatoes into pieces, cook and strain them, and add the pulp to the meat (in winter use canned tomato pulp dissolved in warm water), as well as a handful of parsley, some marjoram and a couple of basil leaves, put the lid tightly onto the pot and simmer for about one hour on a low heat. After this is done, take the meat out and mince it with a chopping knife, put it back into the sauce, add a glass of good white wine, a piece of butter, and pour the sauce over the tagliarelli. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

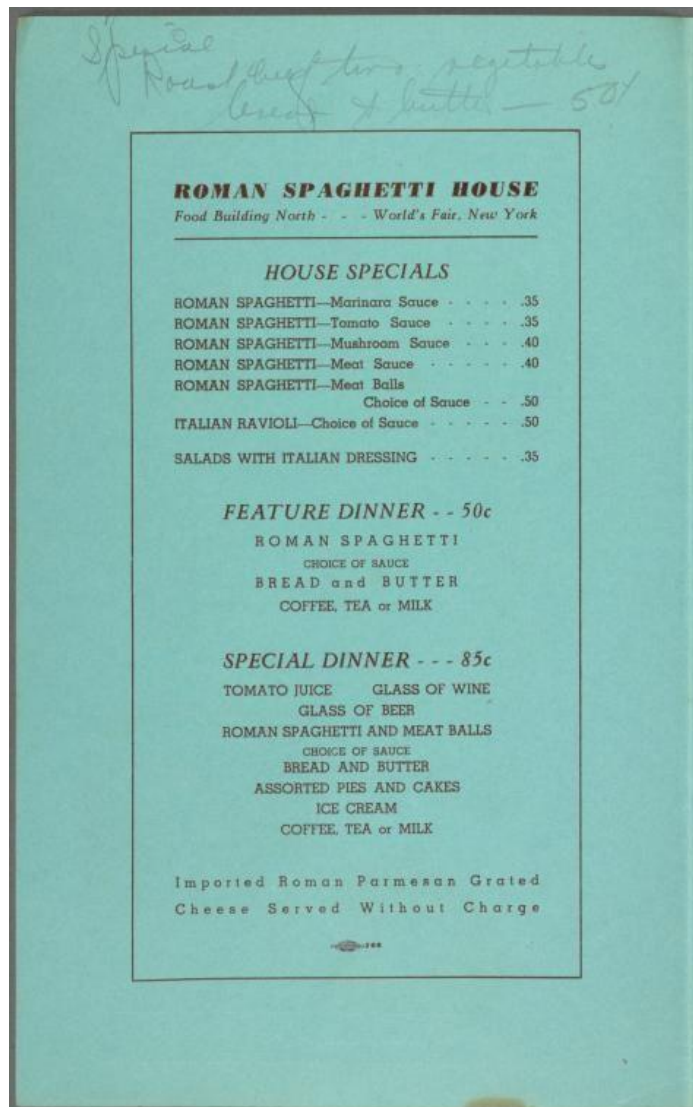
Tagliarelli is a synonym for tagliatelle

(<http://www.food-info.net/uk/products/pasta/shapes.htm>). Gaeta-Hahne uses beef, onion, bacon, salt, pepper, tomato, parsley, marjoram, basil, white wine, butter and Parmesan cheese for her recipe. Instead of Artusi's original recipe's veal she uses beef, and instead of pancetta, ordinary bacon. Identical ingredients are butter, onion, broth, salt, pepper and Parmesan cheese. Added are tomato, parsley, marjoram, basil and white wine. Missing are carrot, celery, flour and nutmeg.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the variations of Artusi's original recipe published over the next 37 years reveal both continuation and innovation of *ragù bolognese*.

Remarkably, two of the three above quoted recipes already promote the use of tomato and wine, two standard ingredients in later *Bolognese sauce* recipes.

In addition to cookbooks, we present below a second form of evidence for the existence of *ragù bolognese*, or to be more exact *Roman Spaghetti with Meat Sauce*, before World War II. Although few restaurant menus from that time survive, we were able to find a menu for a so called *Dinner [sponsored by] Roman Spaghetti House [at] Food Building North, World's Fair, New York* in the Buttolph Collection of Menus at New York Public Library's Rare Book Division. The term "Roman" in *Roman Spaghetti with Meat Sauce* seems to refer to the restaurant name "Roman Spaghetti House" and not to the meat sauce's cooking style. The menu is shown at <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/5e66b3e8-d6ed-d471-e040-e00a180654d7>:



The New York Public Library's Rare Book Division experts conclude that the blue cover illustration, not shown here, depicts a woman holding a plate of spaghetti and a 1930s World Fair motif. The price of forty cents for the *Roman spaghetti with Meat Sauce* also seems to point in that direction. It is also consistent with the information given by Levenstein (Levenstein, p. 51-52) in his book on the social history of eating in Modern America, where he says that the price for a large plate of spaghetti with meat sauce in Italo-American restaurants in New York of the mid-1920s cost about 35 cents. Unfortunately, the author did not succeed in finding a surviving pre-World War II Italian restaurant menu listing *Bolognese sauce*.

In pre-World War II photography, numerous documents of spaghetti and other pasta served with sauce can be found. Although it is not clear whether the depicted sauce is *Bolognese sauce*, we would like to show four examples in order to underline our belief that *Spaghetti with Bolognese sauce* was well-known before World War II.

In the first photograph we can see an Italian chef who emigrated to California in 1911 tossing long-cut pasta, maybe *bucatini*, a long-cut hollow pasta type, at a restaurant tableside (https://www.google.com.tw/search?q=american+1930s+photos+of+italian+food&biw=1920&bih=955&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewign_qWarPAhUHM48KHcybC_QQsAQIGQ#imgrc=x5hY-zapRWvtoM%3A):



The second photograph shows three young women eating spaghetti on inflatable mattresses in Capri in 1939 (AP Photo/Hamilton Wright,

https://www.google.com.tw/search?hl=zhTW&site=img&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1920&bih=950&q=Three+young+women+eat+spaghetti+on+inflatable+mattresses+at+Lake+of+Capri%2C+1939+%28AP+Photo+%2F+Hamilton+Wright%29&oq=Three+young+women+eat+spaghetti+on+inflatable+mattresses+at+Lake+of+Capri%2C+1939+%28AP+Photo+%2F+Hamilton+Wright%29&gs_l=img.12...1779.1779.0.3107.1.1.0.0.0.0.0.0....0...1ac.2.64.img..1.0.0.KfoCBVi9ImY#imgrc=rukseDeAQVzITM%3A). The caption says that it is taken at the "Lake of Capri" which unfortunately doesn't exist. But the Blue Grotto rock formation in the background can easily be identified. We decided to present this photo as paragon of the kitsch cliché for enjoying Italian spaghetti.



Two photographs published in popular predecessors of *Brigitte*, the largest women's magazine in Germany, illustrate that spaghetti was a well-known, established dish in well-off households in pre-World War II Germany. The first photograph is listed at

<https://ullsteinbild.de/ullsteinwebshop/workbench.html;jsessionid=9364C5F7D4F1140D8B6593174A5DEA19.as04?queryWord=+01074622&newTitle=ullstein+bild+%7C+Search%3A++01074622&qwAction=searchQueryWord&viewMode=tile&dateRangeValue=01.01.1937-31.12.1938> and appeared in *Blatt der Hausfrau* 5 (1937/1938):



The second photograph shows a chef of the famous restaurant “Al Papagallo” which was established in Bologna in 1919, tossing pasta in a pan

<https://ullsteinbild.de/ullsteinwebshop/workbench.html?queryWord=01073716&newTitle=ullstein+bild+%7C+Search%3A+01073716&qwAction=searchQueryWord&viewMode=tile&dateRangeValue=01.01.1939-31.12.1939>. It was published in 1939 in *Die Dame* 10.



We are very confident that we have shown sufficient evidence through cookbook recipes, one surviving restaurant menu, and photographs to prove that *Spaghetti with Bolognese sauce* existed in America and Europe well before World War II and was not first introduced by returning British and American soldiers who served in World War II.

2.2. Post World-War II Era

The evolution of *Bolognese sauce* after World War II proceeded too quickly and diverged too much to be adequately covered in this paper. Hence, we can only indicate some major developments which contributed to the vast array of new versions of *Bolognese sauce*.

America experienced various waves of immigrants from Italy during the late 19th and early 20th century, mainly from the Southern city of Naples and Sicily. Many of them opened small family style restaurants. Only a limited number of Northern

Italian immigrants came to the United States, and therefore they influenced this style of cuisine to a lesser extent. These Italian immigrants settled in the large American cities and their descendants, called Italian Americans, later created an early fusion cuisine.

By contrast, there was only a very limited number of Italian artists, tradesmen and ice-cream makers at the beginning of the 20th century in Europe. Later, ingredients for Italian cooking became more and more commonly available in Munich, Paris and London. These retailers often developed into taverns or restaurants, originally intended to serve Italian customers, but increasingly sought out by locals (Thoms, p. 6-7). During the 1950s and 1960s, West Germany signed bilateral recruitment agreements with several economically less-developed European countries for so-called “Gastarbeiter (*literally*: guest workers)” to work in the industrial sector in jobs

that required few qualifications. During the 1950s, Germany experienced the so-called “Wirtschaftswunder (economic miracle)” and urgently needed laborers. Increasingly, Italian “Gastarbeiter” saw the opportunity to set up new businesses in a foreign country. This was the case in West Germany in the 1970s when economic development caused many of the foreign workers called “Gastarbeiter” who had arrived in the 1950s and 1960s to lose their jobs. It did not require too much culinary knowledge to open a simple restaurant, and the capital needed was small enough that friends or families could help provide it (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastarbeiter>). It is very probable that *Spaghetti Bolognese* was on their menus. In her enlightening article, Ulrike Thoms presents figures for Italian restaurants in Berlin and Hamburg based on the Munich business directory from 1950 and the Berlin business directory from 1961 onwards. (Thoms, p. 13). The real figures are probably much higher since not every existing restaurant applied for an entry to a business directory. However, we present here the figures given by Thoms in a modified table:

| Year | Berlin | Munich |
|------|--------|--------|
| 1961 | 6 | 5 |
| 1970 | 44 | 26 |
| 1980 | 173 | 5 |
| 1990 | 467 | 121 |

More recent figures reveal that as of March 2014 there were more than 98,000 restaurants in the USA that fell into the Pizza, Pasta & Italian Simplified Menu Type

(<http://www.foodservice.com/articles/trends/can-you-guess-how-many-pizza-and-italian-restaurants-there-are-in-the-united-states/>). In the UK, the number of Italian restaurants (excluding takeaway pizza outlets) in 2005 was around 4700 (<http://www.fedrest.com/marketresearch.htm>). The German magazine *Stern* claimed in its issue of May 06, 2006 that there were 22.000 Italian restaurants in Germany (<http://www.stern.de/genuss/essen/italienische-lokale-la-deutsche-vita-3600204.html>).

Other factors which contributed to the worldwide spread and simultaneous departure from Artusi's original recipe, thus creating space for a more individual interpretation of *Bolognese sauce*, were the constantly increasing speed of communication and the increased mobility of chefs specializing in Italian cuisine, as well as that of their customers who traveled worldwide and frequently experienced different interpretations of this dish. Due to economic reasons, many restaurants had to come up with more budget-oriented versions in order to run a profitable business. For the average household in need of a fast version of pasta served with *Bolognese sauce*, pasta machines, dried pasta and ready-made *Bolognese sauce* in cans, tins or other packaging were easily available. Furthermore, *Bolognese sauce* has been exposed to fashionable approaches such as creative, innovative, and fusion cuisine. These approaches sometimes resulted in an extremely questionable degree of free interpretation, for example through the use of highly unusual ingredients, such as those suitable for vegetarian variants of *Bolognese sauce*. These highly unusual ingredients include red bell pepper, shredded turkey and honey (<http://www.theendlessmeal.com/crock-pot-leftover-turkey-bolognese/>); garlic powder, fresh spinach and marinara sauce (<http://www.cookingchanneltv.com/recipes/chicken-bolognese.html>); fresh Italian sausage, crushed red pepper flakes (<http://www.bitesoutoflife.com/2015/03/02/crazy-bolognese-sauce/>); "Frank's RedHot Sauce" (<http://direct.franksredhot.com/recipes/bolognese-alla-diavola-pappardelle-RE002619-1>); sugar and beer (http://www.cookingcomically.com/?page_id=310); almond slivers and green olives (<http://www.pastaweb.de/rezepte/schnelle-mandel-oliven-bolognese/>); red onion and Worcestershire sauce (<http://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/ryans-bolognese-sauce/>); smoked tempeh or tofu and roasted eggplant (<http://www.instructables.com/id/Vegan-Bolognese-Sauce/>); or butternut squash (http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g54042-d861981-r404143421-Charcoal_Steak_s_n_Things-Yardley_Pennsylvania.html#UR404143421).

Therefore, it is not surprising that the Italian Academy of Cuisine felt the obligation to register a recipe for authentic *ragù bolognese* with the Bologna Chamber of Commerce in 1982 under the name *ragù alla bolognese* in order to set a standard for its proper ingredients and preparation (<http://www.accademiaitalianacucina.it/en/content/rag%C3%B9-alla-bolognese>) which is quoted here in English translation (by Peggy Perdue):

Ingredients:

- 400 grams minced lean beef
- 150 grams of pancetta
- 50 grams carrot
- 50 grams celery
- 50 grams onion
- 300 grams passata (tomato sauce) or peeled tomatoes
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ cup whole milk
- A bit of broth, olive oil or butter, salt and pepper
- ½ cup cream

Preparation:

Cut the pancetta into cubes and then chop it finely with a mezzaluna. Sauté it in a 20 cm. pan, preferably one of terracotta or aluminum. Add 50 grams of oil or butter and the chopped aromatics (the carrot, celery and onions) and continue to sauté until the mixture softens. Add the chopped meat and mix well with a ladle. Continue to fry the mixture until it “sizzles.” Add the wine and mix gently until it is completely evaporated. Add the tomato sauce or peeled tomatoes, cover and simmer gently for about 2 hours or so, adding broth when needed. Towards the end of the simmering add the milk to soften the acidity of the tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. At the end, when the sauce is finished, according to the custom in Bologna, one can add some cream if one is using dry pasta. Cream is not used if one is using tagliatelle. This is the “updated” recipe for real Bolognese sauce, filed on October 17, 1982 by the Bolognese delegation of the Italian Academy of Cuisine at the Chamber of Commerce of Bologna.

Like Artusi’s original recipe, the Italian Academy of Cuisine proposes pancetta, carrot, celery, onion, broth, salt and pepper as ingredients. As well, it offers the use of cream as an option, but not dried mushrooms, sliced truffle, or chopped cooked chicken liver as Artusi did. The Academy replaces Artusi’s meat choice of veal with beef, and offers the possible replacement of butter instead of olive oil. Its recipe adds tomato, white wine and whole milk as ingredients but leaves out the original recipe’s flour, nutmeg and Parmesan cheese. We can state that the Italian Academy of Cuisine’s recipe succeeds in combining tradition with slight contemporary adjustments.

3. Proposals for Future Research

It comes naturally to mind that a similar study to ours could be done on the famous Italian tomato-based *Napoletana sauce* which seems to go back historically much further in time than *Bolognese sauce*. However, due to its simplicity, it does not offer much room for culinary experiment. Presumably, a study on the origin and evolution of *Spaghetti and Meatballs*, probably an innovation of early 20th-century Italian immigrants in New York City, would be more rewarding. To examine popular dishes of American Chinese cuisine, a style of Chinese cuisine developed by Americans of Chinese descent, for example *Chop Suey*, usually a mix of vegetables and meat in a brown sauce, could also lead to compelling results. Actually, many studies on fusion cuisine dishes could produce new insights.

4. Conclusion

Ragù bolognese, known in English as *Bolognese sauce*, was first published as a recipe in 1891 by Pellegrino Artusi. There was an earlier recipe called *Ragù per li maccheroni appasciati* documented by Alberto Alvisi in the late 18th century. Both authors documented an existing recipe in Emilia-Romagna. How far the preparation of *ragù bolognese* in local cuisine reached back in time is not the subject of this paper and cannot be answered here. In the 20th century, the original recipe went in two different directions. One basically preserved the original ingredients and cooking method, while the other began to experiment with the recipe by replacing, adding and leaving out original ingredients, as well as by introducing a rather short simmering time. These experiments reached a stage where the tradition-conscious Italian Academy of Cuisine felt a strong obligation to go back to the recipe’s roots and register their authentic *ragù bolognese* version with the Bologna Chamber of Commerce in 1982 under the name *ragù alla bolognese* in order to set a standard for its proper ingredients and preparation. Traditional pasta types recommended for *ragù bolognese* are macaroni or tagliatelle. These were replaced in modern versions by the commonly available spaghetti in dried form. This was not introduced as a pasta type for *Bolognese sauce* by returning American and British World War II soldiers, as is often claimed, but can be traced back at least to the 1930s. It cannot be expected that the eagerness to experiment with *Bolognese sauce* will come to an end. But it is good to know that tradition-oriented authorities in Italy keep a close watch on new developments.

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