

Shmanners 228: Noodles/Pasta

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Travis: What do you call a fake noodle?

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: An impasta!

Teresa: [exasperated] It's *Shmanners*. [laughs quietly]

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hi, dear.

Travis: How are ya?

Teresa: Good. That—that, uh—that terrible joke made me... chuckle.

Travis: I—I, uh, am not proud of that one! I didn't write it.

Teresa: You—oh, yeah.

Travis: I—I didn't write that one.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Uh, most of them I write. That one, uh, I knew that the width and breadth and depth of noodle jokes were just out there. I couldn't—sometimes

when I'm trying to write a joke... [clears throat] A word will get stuck in my head that I can't do anything with, but I could not get the word "oodles—" and I was like, "Oo—[stammers] do you wanna know about—what do you know about noodles? Oh, I know oodles about noodle—oh, that's—" I couldn't get there.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So I had to look it up. Can I tell you what I think about every time I think about spaghetti?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Without fail. There was a classic—I would say classic—

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: I've told you about this, haven't I?

Teresa: You have.

Travis: Yeah. Classic *Sesame Street* segment about Captain Vegetable.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And there was a part with a young man. Uh, a believe a puppet, singing "[singing] My name is Eddie, I like spaghetti! I eat spaghetti whenever I can!"

And I think about that every time I hear or think or see the word "spaghetti."

Teresa: That is not the story I thought you were going to tell. [laughs loudly]

Travis: Oh, were you gonna tell about when I got sick to my tummy by spaghetti?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Yeah. I think I was, like, going to dinner with a friend and his parents when I was, like, a small child. Uh, and we went to—anyone who is slightly in the know will know where it is, but I will not name names. Uh, a spaghetti restaurant

in Huntington, and I ate a little bit too much, and I get sick to my stomach and, uh, regurgitated, and it put me off the sketty for a while.

Teresa: Uh, am I correct in that the story concludes with it coming out your nose as well?

Travis: A little bit! I mean, I was trying—[reluctantly] Yeah, I was, uh—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I wasn't gonna name—I didn't want to upset anybody, so I was trying to avoid... the nitty gritty. But apparently that doesn't bother you! So just blowin' up my spot, uh...

Teresa: Doesn't bother me at all. Um, but—

Travis: I am—I am back on the sketty, back on the noodle.

Teresa: Yes. Our daughter is a big fan of spaghetti, as am I. I enjoy cold spaghetti the next day. But—

Travis: That is, in fact, the thing I know so well, that if we're, like, ordering from a restaurant that has spaghetti I'll just go ahead and add, like, a side of spaghetti for you to then put in the fridge. Much like I would say, uh, my favorite cold-the-next-day food is, hands down—what do you think it is?

Teresa: Cold-the-next-day food? Pizza.

Travis: Mmm, so close! That is my second.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: It's fried chicken.

Teresa: Fried chicken, yeah. That's good, too. No, but, um, I have al—it's not like a pregnancy thing development. Um, I'm not pregnant. But it's not something that developed when I was pregnant. I have always—

Travis: This is true.

Teresa: —loved cold spaghetti breakfast.

Travis: The other day, um, we were eating something and I was putting sriracha on my food, and Teresa observed, like, "Oh, you're really into spicy sriracha lately." And I said, "Yeah, it's—it's new, huh? Maybe I'm pregnant! Ha ha ha."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And Bebe said, "Are you pregnant?" And I said, "No."

Teresa: Which turned into an anatomy lesson at the dinner table. [laughs]

Travis: Yes. And at one point I said—I said, "Well, I don't have a uterus, so I can't get pregnant."

And she said, "[holding back laughter] Oh, daddy, I'm so sorry. I'm sure you'll find a way to get pregnant."

I was like, "No, wait, hold on!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [sighs deeply] Not a conversation I was expecting to have. Um, so... noodles. Now—

Teresa: Okay, okay. Now, I wanna get this out of the way. There is a semantic, tangible difference between noodles and pasta.

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: Pasta can be noodle-shaped, like spaghetti or linguine, um, because this is—there is a national linguine day this week.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Which is amazing.

Travis: Of course. Everyone knew that.

Teresa: Um, but technically... noodles and pasta are different.

Travis: Now, hold on. Is this—is this like a "all squares are rectangles but not all rectangles are squares" kind of thing? Or you're saying, like, "This is a noodle, this is a pasta, never the twain shall meet."

Teresa: Um, in the way of—I think never the twain, except for—okay. So, we'll get into a little more in depth... later.

Travis: You can't just tease me with this huge bombshell! Bombshell, pasta and noodles are different, but you gotta wait! This is like the nightly news. I can't—

Teresa: Alright, alright. Well, this is in response to a specific question from... Ariel asks, "I'm Asian and my husband is Italian, so this is a very touchy subject. When are they noodles and when are they pasta? Any long boy I call noodles, but when I tell my husband he's like, "What did you serve me?""

Travis: Okay. So, can I guess the difference?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Pasta is like flour-based, and noodle is, like, not flour-based?

Teresa: So, that's about right, okay? Um, so—

Travis: Huh! I'm—I'm comfortable living in that area for my entire life. *About* right? Yeahhh.

Teresa: The National Pasta Association defines it—

Travis: [blows raspberry] Okay.

Teresa: Yeah, I know, I know. But... everybody's gotta have someone.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: Some people have the National Pasta Association.

Travis: Do you think it's weird that in, like, the—the, like, National Association Registry, like, right before the NRA is the NPA?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And they're like, "Ooh, please don't confuse us. But—oh, please don't confuse us for them. Ugh."

Teresa: Uh, defines a noodle as containing at least 5.5 egg solids in their culinary makeup.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay? So, more eggs in the noodle dough than in pasta dough. Noodles are dense, and can come in a variety of shapes and sizes, as is the same with pasta, but they're most frequently seen in long, thin strips or rods. Okay. So—

Travis: Noodles. Heavy egg content.

Teresa: And they can be made from a variety of sources, like mung beans, potato, buckwheat, wheat, acorn, rice, chickpeas. All of that, right?

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Pasta differs primarily because of the ingredients, which are normally durum, semolina, wheat flour.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay? Um, and the processing. Whereas pasta can be rolled or extruded, noodles cannot really be extruded. They are more rolled and stretched and cut.

Travis: Okay. There's a difference, folks! We blew this whole thing wide open. That's gonna do it for us, thank you—no.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: There's more?

Teresa: Um, well, so... uh, in Italy, there are some higher-end markets that actually—

Travis: Hmm, gold noodles!

Teresa: —no, that actually have regulations that require pasta to be made of 100% durum flour in order to be authentic.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, Japan has also started using durum in their fresh alkaline noodles because they like the yellow color, right?

Travis: Oh, yeah. I get that. Now, I don't know—I have seen—there's something about an all-white noodle that doesn't strike me as being done.

Teresa: Huh, okay.

Travis: I think it's 'cause I'm used to baking, and I think of, like, it looks very pale to me, and it's like, "Oh, you haven't cooked it long—" But that's not—that's not how you make noodles at all. I—I don't know. I'm not baking my spaghetti, either. I don't know why this bothers me!

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: That said, you know what? I like noodles in all forms now, but ooh boy, will I take ramen over spaghetti any day. Don't @ me!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Don't @ me, folks! But I will take ramen over spaghetti any day.

Teresa: I think I'm the opposite.

Travis: Oh, really?!

Teresa: I think that I would take spaghetti over ramen.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I'm so sorry.

Travis: No, hey, you know what? That's good, because that way we're not competing for the same dish. You get one, I'll get—we'll go to that

spaghetti/ramen restaurant that we love so much, and we can each order...
[holding back laughter] one or the other.

Teresa: [laughs] Perfect.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and there's a lot to choose from, because there are over 200 different types of pastas in over 300 different shapes, um, that can be served warm or cold, in different sauces and presentations. Um—

Travis: There's the long, thin ones. There's the ones that look like bow ties. There's the swirly ones. There's... the ones that are shaped like *Frozen* characters. There's the—they probably don't count those, do they?

Teresa: No.

Travis: The ones where it's like, "Oh, look, it's the Paw Patrol!" [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] We eat a lot of unicorn-shaped macaroni and cheese around here.

Travis: Yeah, Bebe's gotten real into that. I don't know why that's a selling point. Where it's like, "Hey, you know how you love Olaf so much? [deep voice] Eat his face!"

Teresa: [laughs] Okay, alright. Let me—let me continue for a moment.

Travis: Okay, please.

Teresa: Alright. One evolved from the other. Uh, so noodles came first. Um, and then, it was refined into pasta, mostly by Italians.

Travis: That makes complete sense to me. 'Cause you got—[stammers] That Columbus fellow was always sailin' around. Was it him?

Teresa: No, this was Marco Polo.

Travis: Ohh.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: Ohh, not just an app inventor!

Teresa: [holding back laughter] Okay. [sighs deeply]

Travis: I was going to guess—

Teresa: I'm just trying to breathe, because there's—you're—you're gettin' 'em in quick today.

Travis: Well, it's 'cause I don't know anything about noodles. Um, I was going to guess that they evolved simultaneously, that it was the kind of thing where it's like—they—like, the idea of noodles over here, noodles over there, because there's, like—noodles don't seem to me to strike me as belonging to any one—like, the invention of them? But it's sounding more and more like that is not the case.

Teresa: No, it is. You're—you're there. Um, because even—even if that Marco Polo myth was true, there is more empirical evidence of noodles in China earlier than there is in Italy. But, I mean, I think—you're—you're right.

Travis: So originated definitely in China before Italy. But I'm thinking, like, also, like, Japan, Korea, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. But—yeah, but probably more independently. Um, because it's really hard to kind of pinpoint the exact place where they started, right? Um, much like cheese, when we spoke about cheese.

There were noodle-like things that were developed in pretty much every ancient culture.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, and even though we spent a lot of time talking about the difference between noodles and pasta...

Travis: Mm-hmm, yes.

Teresa: ... it really doesn't matter. You can—unless you are trying to be super specific, I'm gonna interchange 'em. [laughs]

Travis: This is, uh—this is a thing of, like—okay. Here is a weird fact that I know, to illustrate my point. The American Kennel Club, the AKC, says technically the only dog with spots is the Dalmatian.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Other than that, all the dogs have ticks, which is confusing already. But that's why, like, there's a dog called the Blue Tick Heeler, right? It's blue spots. But only the Dalmatian has spots, according to the AKC. So it seems like they've just drawn a completely unreasonable line in the sand of, like, "That's the only dog with spots."

Teresa: Arbitrary.

Travis: Arbitrary, thank you.

Teresa: Arbitrary is what you mean.

Travis: Of, like, "That is the dog with spots."

"What about *that* dog with spots?"

"Uhhh, no. [laughs quietly] Those are ticks."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And so I think that this is like, if you want to get technical, there is a difference between pasta and noodles. But... if we're looking at it in the vernacular of, like, everyone who talks about it ever, pasta is noodles, noodles is pasta.

Teresa: And... there are pastas that are noodle-shaped. We talked about that ear—okay. I'm—I'm done talking about it. Anyway... we have evidence of noodle-like dumplings in China as early as 17,000 BCE.

Travis: I don't know why, but I was like—

Teresa: No, 1700. Oops! [laughs loudly]

Travis: Oh, okay. Whoo! 1700 BCE. Still a long time ago, but—

Teresa: [laughs] Ohh...

Travis: We had dinosaurs over—we got woolly mammoth—

Teresa: [laughs] Noodles, eatin' noodles.

Travis: Yeah, that's—oh.

Teresa: Sorry.

Travis: It's okay.

Teresa: 1700 BCE.

Travis: Makes a lot more sense!

Teresa: Please excuse me.

Travis: No, it's alright.

Teresa: My eyes lost track from one line to the other.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: And so...

Travis: You said an extra 0 in there—

Teresa: [simultaneously] I said an extra zero.

Travis: —I get it.

Teresa: [sighs] Okay. [laughs quietly] And, um, there's evidence in an Etruscan tomb from the fourth century of people making what appears to be pasta.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Alright. This is what, um—what probably originated the Marco Polo... myth? Legend? Because he probably did bring noodles back. He brought a lot of stuff back.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But, um, the fifth century, there was the Silk Road. We've talked about this. Carrying things across the continents.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and merchants would bring dry noodles, known as itria, with them. Um, on their long journey. And so they were probably the ones that actually, quote, "brought pasta" to Sicily. Um, but, you know, this was—it wasn't quite pasta yet. It was more like noodles, but it was... it wasn't, like, "I'm gonna bring this back and everybody's gonna be so impressed." They already had something very similar anyway. Um, lagane, which is—

Travis: Like lasagna?!

Teresa: Exactly, which is thought to be an ancient ancestor of lasagna.

Travis: Yeah, big flat noodles! Big flat boys.

Teresa: Um, and the reason why Marco Polo theory has been debunked is because, in the early 2000s, a 4,000 year old bowl of noodles was unearthed in an archaeological... yes—dig in northwestern China.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: They were nearly perfectly preserved—

Travis: Add water.

Teresa: —long, thin, yellow noodles, found in—

Travis: Was the myth that Marco Polo brought them to China?

Teresa: No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But he brought them from China, I think.

Travis: Okay, whatever. Sure.

Teresa: Anyway, it's not right.

Travis: Okay. We're gonna talk more—we're gonna talk oodles about noodles—

Teresa: Oh, you got it in there!

Travis: Ahhh. But first, a word from our sponsors.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Teresa?

Teresa: Yes?

Travis: I would like to reward you for brushing your teeth.

Teresa: [quietly] Yesssss!

Travis: Well, not—okay. Not me, not me doing it, but I'm gonna tell you how to get rewards for brushing your teeth.

Teresa: Okay. That's alright, I'll take it.

Travis: You know Quip?

Teresa: I do know Quip.

Travis: You know of Quip?

Teresa: I do.

Travis: Well, with Quip's new smart electric toothbrush, good habits can earn you great perks like free products, gift cards, and more. And, they—okay. Here's how it works. You brush your teeth, right?

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: We should all be doing it, yeah.

Teresa: Every day. Every day.

Travis: We should all be doing it. The Quip smart toothbrush, which is for adults and kids, connects to the Quip app with Bluetooth to track your brushing, and you earn rewards from Quip and partners. And if you already have Quip, which we do, you can upgrade it with a smart motor, and keep all the features you already know and love, like the built-in timers, the gentle but great vibrations to clean your teeth, all that stuff. And, still, best tasting toothpaste on the market, as far as I'm concerned.

So start getting rewarded for brushing your teeth today, and go to getquip.com/shmanners right now to get your first refill free. That's your first refill free at getquip.com/shmanners, spelled G-E-T-Q-U-I-P.com/shmanners. Quip: better oral health made simple and rewarding.

Teresa: I'm gonna get those rewards. Get 'em.

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Graham: Hi! My name is Graham Clark, and I'm one half of the podcast *Stop Podcasting Yourself*, a show that we've recorded for many, many years and, uh, at the moment, instead of being in person, we're recording remotely. And, uh, you wouldn't even notice. You don't even notice the lag.

[extended pause]

Dave: That's right, Graham! And, uh, the great thing about this—

Graham: The—

[pause]

Dave: Go ahead?

Graham: No, you go ahead.

Dave: Okay, and—

Graham: [simultaneously] Okay, go ahead?

[pause]

Dave: And you can listen to us every week on MaximumFun.org.

Graham: Or wherever you get your podcasts.

[pause]

Dave: Your podcasts.

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Travis: Okay. So, pasta.

Teresa: Pasta.

Travis: Pasta.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Tell me more.

Teresa: Um, so pasta is delicious.

Travis: Yes, I've heard this. Yes, yes, yes.

Teresa: Um, I like mine as a vehicle for sauce.

Travis: I like mine with [singing] lettuce and tomato! [claps]

Teresa: No. Mm—mm. No.

Travis: No?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No.

Teresa: You like yours in soup.

Travis: I do—well, uh, that—

Teresa: Soup-like.

Travis: Soup-*like*.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Broth—broth light is my chosen. I—I like, uh—I like the ramen, but the soup part is my least favorite part of it.

Teresa: Huh.

Travis: I like the noodles, and I like all the stuff.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Um, couple of fun things about pasta.

Travis: Please.

Teresa: It's actually the reason forks became an eating utensil in Italy, whereas before forks, they probably ate it with their hands.

Travis: Ohh! That makes complete sense.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So the ability to kind of twirl and tine and stab and... shovel... delicious, delicious noodles and pasta.

Travis: Sure, sure.

Teresa: Uh, happened then. And even though we love noodles, you and I, and the world—

Travis: Yeah, yeah.

Teresa: —probably weren't, um, you know, weren't a big thing—wasn't a big thing in the US for a very long time. Um, in fact, they might not even have it now on our grocery stores if it weren't written about by our third president...

Travis: Thomas Jefferson.

Teresa: Thomas Jefferson.

Travis: I—I—it felt like that was a trick question for a second. That's—the delay—

Teresa: No, I was looking at you! Like, answer me, please?

Travis: I know, but I'm usually wrong?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And kind of the way you said it made it feel like the third president to do this [laughs] is what I was—it was Thomas Jefferson. Okay, so he wrote about it, these things, these noodle boys.

Teresa: He wrote about his love affair for a dish, uh, that is adjacent to macaroni and cheese.

Travis: Is this why you stick... okay.

Teresa: Okay. Yes, I can see it in your eye.

Travis: Stick a feather in his cap and call it macaroni?

Teresa: Yes, alright.

Travis: That's a different thing.

Teresa: So, here we go. He's—Thomas Jefferson spent a decent chunk of his career in France, and when he was visiting northern Italy, uh, because, you know, all those places are very close to one another, um, he discovered macaroni. Um,

which the French would smother in a sauce made of cream and various cheeses and things like that, and he loved it so much...

Travis: 'Cause he was a big fan of *Frozen*.

Teresa: That when he—what?

Travis: He was eating the *Frozen*-shaped mac and—

Teresa: Oh, okay. Sorry about that. I—I missed that callback.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, he loved it so much that he just raved about it [holding back laughter] to really anybody who would listen. [wheezes]

Travis: "You guys heard about this macaroni and cheese stuff?!" [laughs]

Teresa: And nobody—

Travis: "Hey, aren't you the President?!"

Teresa: —nobody had cable, so this is what passed for entertainment.

Travis: [stammering] "Thomas! Thomas! Tell us again about the cheesy mac-a-ron-ay?"

Teresa: Uh, it probably wasn't the macaroni like Kraft dinner that we think about—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: —because first of all, the pasta probably wasn't, um, elbow macaroni. Um, macaroni is kind of like a... it's—it's like a shortcut for any kind of extruded pasta shape.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, it was probably more like a bow tie or something. But anyway, um, he wanted to serve it to his guests at the White House, um, and it became so in vogue that the word "macaroni" became slang for "cool," right?

Travis: Which—that's how "stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni—"

Teresa: [simultaneously] Cap and called it macaroni, right.

Travis: It's making fun of us Continentals. Uh, right? Or whatever. Our—us, uh, nor—[stammering] us USA-ers, us Americans. Of saying, like, "Look how classy we are, simply because I put a feather in my cap!"

It's like, "Oh, you put a feather in your cap and you think your classy? You're not classy, son."

Teresa: That's right.

Travis: That's—it's—'cause he's a Yankee doodle dandy?

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: And he's a dandy who think—you get it. Okay.

Teresa: Yes. Yes. Um, you can go on YouTube and you can find several very entertaining YouTube videos about—of people trying to recreate Jefferson's macaroni. It's quite fun.

Travis: Okay. I thought you were going to say, like, make macaroni, or any kind of pasta, from scratch, which I assume is the kind of thing where it's, like, really rewarding to do, and difficult to learn. I assume.

Teresa: Yes. Well, um, it's about... [sighs] it's not difficult, but it requires technique.

Travis: Yes. And probably it's like once you know how to do it...

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: It's like, "Oh, wuh buh buh buh buh."

Teresa: Alright. So, one last part about the, um, Italian-American scene in the US pasta business.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: Um, so during the late 18th century, American crops such as corn, tomatoes, certain cactus fruits, zucchini, all these things, made their way back to Italy as kind of, like, oddities.

Travis: Uh-huh, yes.

Teresa: Right? "Hey, look at what we got from the New World," right? Um, and so, even though they were originally grown in small botanical gardens, their popularity grew to the point where they were grown in regions all over Italy. So, it was like the stuff that we think of as Italian came over from the US to Italy...

Travis: You said tomatoes, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That's a—that's a big 'un!

Teresa: Well, and then between 1870 and 1920, millions of Italian immigrants came to America, right? And so, they had—they—once upon a time, different regions in Italy pretty much stayed true to the type of pasta dishes that they had in their region, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: You would—you wouldn't go somewhere else and have the linguine that your mother made, right? It was—it was not heard of.

Travis: Regional.

Teresa: But because these Italian immigrants started being—started living in Italian, quote, "neighborhoods," even though—

Travis: Little Italys, if you will.

Teresa: Exactly! Someone from Rome living next to someone from Sicily living next to someone from Naples. So these regional recipes started to blend together. And that's also the reason why many Italian dishes Americans love aren't technically *authentic* Italian dishes, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, and, like, the whole operation really depends on World War II.

Travis: Okay?

Teresa: Lots of things come back from Europe during World War II, and the soldiers returning home craved the delicacies that they had while they were stationed in Italy.

Travis: Oh, yeah yeah yeah! Yeah yeah yeah yeah, okay.

Teresa: And this is where Italian-Americans began to open up restaurants and delis and—and all sorts of things, in order to meet this demand. Um, and so, now, pasta is considered a staple of US cuisine.

Travis: And probably... pretty much everywhere. To some degree.

Teresa: To some degree.

Travis: Okay, we have questions. We got questions.

Teresa: Yes, questions.

Travis: And you know what? Here's the number one question we got.

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: Uh, it's actually kind of two questions, right? So, number one: the right way to eat it.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: And here's the thing. Number two: is it okay to slurp? Because a lot of people pointed out that, for example, it's culturally different.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Uh, because, like, for example, ramen, and in Japanese culture, it's fine to slurp your soup, your ramen.

Teresa: Also, it is fine to slurp noodles in Chinese culture, as long noodles are thought to represent long life, so you don't cut your noodles.

Travis: But with, like, Italian, or here in the US... frowned upon.

Teresa: Um, here's the thing.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: If it is a filled pasta, it's just fine to cut it. So, like a ravioli.

Travis: Ah, yes yes yes.

Teresa: Right? Cut it with the side of your fork. That's fine here, also fine in Italy. Um, but a longer pasta, you should twirl it with your fork. That's, like, the whole thing.

Travis: But don't slurp.

Teresa: Don't—try not to slurp.

Travis: Okay, but... twirl it with your fork, no cutting? Do you do, like, a spoon to scoop up—like, you get it on the fork, you scoop it with a spoon?

Teresa: Um, if you are given a spoon with your meal, sure, you can twirl it on the spoon. That's not really a thing Italians do.

Travis: I feel like it's a thing, though, where you, like, spin it with the fork, right? And then you kind of come under and cup it with the spoon so it stays all together. [pause] [holding back laughter] Maybe that's just 'cause I'm a sloppy boy.

Teresa: [laughs] I am under the impression that you can use the spoon to help twirl.

Travis: Okay, got it. This is from Valerie.

"Is there any actual type of guidance for what shape of pasta goes with what sort of sauce or dish, or is it really just mixing and matching at whim?" Can I say *my* feeling?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: If it is, like, heavily sauce—like, a heavy sauce, right? If it's, like, a bechamel, right? A cheese sauce or something like that, I would go with something tubular, right? So it has more room to gather the sauce in it and deliver it to you, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: A lighter sauce, like a spaghetti sauce, I would go with, like, uh, the noodles, right?

Teresa: Well, okay. We have to—we have to delineate what... us Americans, US people would say spaghetti sauce is. Bolognese, spaghetti bolognese, is a heavier sauce.

Travis: Yes, yes, yes.

Teresa: So technically... they don't really go together. It's a dish that we eat.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It's fine. But if you're doing this heavy, light sauce business, technically... something like, um, spaghetti oleo, right? So it should have just, like, olive oil and salt and pepper on it, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: That thin, thin noodle. But you're exactly right, where a heavy sauce needs a textured, tubular—

Travis: A delivery system.

Teresa: —delivery system, exactly. Whereas a thinner, more delicate noodle, technically requires a thin sauce. But—

Travis: And we say "technically" because... do what you want.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, let's see. Uhhh... Tim—Tim? [laughs] Tim Tam Jim Jam asks:

"How much cheese is too much cheese for my pasta?"

Teresa: Um, again, if you're at home, put as much cheese on that thing as you want.

Travis: Right, right, right.

Teresa: Um, only you get to decide what—what the measurement is. But, if you are at a restaurant, in the way of a waiter comes around and offers fresh cracked pepper and fresh, like, shredded cheese, a good idea would be to allow them to turn it several times, and when maybe they slow, that's enough.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right? [laughs]

Travis: It is—I would say, much like salt—

Teresa: If you're waiting—if you're waiting on someone to tell you—

Travis: "[gruff voice] Keep going!" [laughs]

Teresa: "This is enough cheese," the language of their body will tell you that's enough cheese. Um, I usually say, no more than ten turns. That's way too many.

Travis: I mean, it's—it is a condiment, right? It is not a side dish. Um, so I think about it in terms of, like, if I was doing salt, right? Like, I wouldn't just sit there and pile it on, because at a certain point, I think the reason to delineate the difference between a restaurant and a, like, at-home thing, is at a restaurant, the cheese is like an accent, you know?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And I would feel like I was—like it was kind of insulting to the restaurant. That I was like, "Well, I really want to disguise the taste of the dish I got—"

Teresa: [laughs] Right.

Travis: "—with all of this cheese, please."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Um, this question is from Brent.

"What do I do when the noodle knot on my fork falls apart in my mouth? Slurp it up, or bite it and let the remainder fall onto my plate?"

Teresa: Um, it is suggested, uh, by Miss Manners, Judith Martin, that you slurp it up quietly. Um, because you're only likely to draw more attention to yourself by letting noodles fall out of your mouth and onto the plate than you are to just make 'em disappear up your mouth hole.

Travis: Okay, gross.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, this is from, uh, I'm gonna say Astrid.

"I like to have friends over, and I love making homemade pasta, but I hate my pasta al dente."

Now, al dente, that's how most instructions say to make it, which, uh, means "with bite, with teeth," right? So that when you bite it, it has a little bit—you can feel—it doesn't fall apart in your mouth, right? You can feel your teeth kind of cutting into it. It has a little firmness to it.

Teresa: The snack that bites back. [laughs]

Travis: Sure. Um... Astrid goes on to say, "I like when it's almost mushy, but I know most people don't like that, so what can I do to please everyone, including myself?"

What I would do—I love to cook, right? And I—I realize, for example, uh, I like my dishes often spicier than you and Bebe do, right? Or I like a little bit more flavor. I mean, salt, I like salt more than you guys do. So, uh, I will do everything all together up to a point, and then separate it to, like, put the finishing touches for me and for you, right?

Teresa: Right, and I think that you can do this with a—a boiling pasta. Maybe not a pasta dish, like something that you would have to finish in the oven, or put together as kind of like a pasta salad or something. But if you are serving pasta plus sauce, what I would say is pull out most of the pasta, put it in your colander to drain it, um, and divide whatever kind of sauce so that you can continue to boil your portion until it is the way you like it, and then dress it with the sauce. And the others at your dinner party can have their pasta al dente, dressed in their sauce.

Travis: Can I tell you what I do so that people at home can tweet at me and tell me if I'm doing something horribly wrong?

Teresa: Sure. [laughs]

Travis: I'm pretty sure this is what you're supposed to do. Please tell me if I'm doing it wrong, but don't yell at me, okay? Just, like, say—just politely, like, "Uh, excuse me, Travis."

Um, when you—when your pasta is done, right? In the pot, rinse it with cooler water—no, Teresa's telling me no, but I heard it keeps it from sticking together. Teresa's shaking her head "no" at me, but, like, I'm paining her by—is this hurting you, me saying this? Are people gonna yell at me?

Teresa: If you rinse the pasta, you are rinsing off the starch on the pasta, which is what keeps the sauce on it.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: So... better than that.

Travis: Okay. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Reserve a cup or two of the cooking liquid.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: So that if you find that your pasta is sticking, you can add the cooking liquid back in.

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: So just a little bit of cooking water, instead of sink water, to rinse it down the drain.

Travis: Okay. Now, everybody, you don't have to let me know—

Teresa: [simultaneously] Don't have to—don't—

Travis: —you don't have to tell me now, 'cause Teresa did.

Teresa: No tweeting.

Travis: And that's way better. Alright, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you to everybody who wrote in questions. Thank you to everybody for listening!

Teresa: Oh, wait! I love to cut my spaghetti when I eat it cold.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And I just have to tell you, there's a lot of things about cutting. When I am eating cold spaghetti over the sink in the morning for breakfast, I'm cuttin' it.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So—[laughs]

Travis: Well, this is a thing we hit a lot on this show, right?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Is, like, a lot of these are the technical, by-the-book, if you're looking to 100% it, this is the answer.

Teresa: Two or three strands on your fork to twirl it, and then up into your mouth, if you're in polite company. If you're like me [holding back laughter] and you like your pasta fast and ready—

Travis: Yeah, do what you want!

Teresa: —I—I cut it up when I eat it by myself standing over the sink. [laughs]

Travis: Listen, pasta is comfort food.

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Nood—ramen is comfort—like, noodles are comfort food, so you should be comfortable eating 'em. Like, that's—that—I would never, like, order some saucy pasta, like for, I don't know, a steak dinner or whatever, you know?

Teresa: Right. I think that—this really is the last thing. We talked about this with the deep dish pizza episode, right? If you are worried about the pasta delivery system, order something else at a restaurant. Um, if you're worried about, "Can I do this without making a mess?" Order something else. If you're worried about the proverbial boss is coming to dinner, don't make spaghetti. Right? So, you have a lot more—

Travis: But don't burn the roast! [laughs quietly]

Teresa: Oh! You have a lot more control over this than you think. Relax, and enjoy your pasta how you like it! Okay, for real.

Travis: I think that this, folks, is a great episode to share with friends. But maybe you have a different favorite *Shmanners* episode. Why don't you, this week, in the next seven days, find a chance to share a *Shmanners* episode that you have really enjoyed with a friend. I have so much fun making this show with Teresa, and I think—hopefully you have fun listening to it.

So let's try to get the word out, and get some more *Shmanners* Fanners in here! Uh, listening to these episode will make the world, uh, maybe not necessarily, like, a fancier place, but a nicer place? A nicer place to be.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Um, so share episodes with friends. You can—

Teresa: You can find those episodes and links at our Twitter, which is @shmannerscast.

Travis: Yes. You can also find them at McElroy.family. Um, if you have ideas for episodes, email us, shmannerscast@gmail.com.

Teresa: Join our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners, if you love to give and get excellent advice from other *Shmanners* fans.

Travis: And when we do pick a topic, we will put out the call for questions on our twitter account. Once again, that's @shmannerscast. Thank you so much, Alex, our researcher. Couldn't do it without you. Uh, who else do we thank?

Teresa: We like to thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Also, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, @shmannerscast. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, again, Shmanners Fanners.

Travis: Uh, and thank you Max Fun for being our podcast home. And that's gonna do it for us, join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*...

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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