

# ANTI-FASCIST PASTA DAY

## PASTASCIUTTA\* ANTIFASCISTA



Commemorating the fall of fascism in Italy as we resist its rise in the United States

Anti-fascist Pasta Day, or “Pastasciutta Antifascista,” is a symbol of creative resistance and community solidarity, celebrated on July 25th in Italy to commemorate Mussolini’s arrest and the end of fascism.

### ORIGINS OF THIS ANTI-FASCIST CELEBRATION

Did you know that Mussolini and the Fascist regime were against pasta?

Pasta was demonized by the Italian Fascist government, who promoted beliefs that eating pasta made people lethargic and pessimistic. Their anti-pasta stance claimed that it was unsuitable for virile soldiers and unpatriotic because it made Italy reliant on foreign imports of wheat, undermining its self-sufficiency.

Mussolini ordered patriotic citizens to eat rice instead.

*“If pasta was something that Fascists despised, then you could say a love of pasta — any pasta — is instantly antifascist.”*

—Emiko Davies, [Antifascist Pasta, A Recipe and a Story of Resistance](#)



Gino Boccasile, *Mangiate Riso* (“Eat Rice”) recipe book cover, 1935, published by Ente Nazionale Risi (National Rice Board) part of Mussolini’s anti-pasta campaign.

### The day of the anti-fascist pasta

Why July 25th? On that date in 1943, Mussolini was ousted from power and arrested, marking the beginning of the end of the fascist government. The Italian population, tired of dictatorship, war and starvation, took to the streets to celebrate. Starting in 1931, Mussolini’s regime had made any gatherings of more than 3 people illegal—so to once again unite with their neighbors in the open was an act of powerful reclamation.

When the Cervi family in the town of Campegine heard of Mussolini’s arrest, they danced and sang all night, then set about releasing their anti-fascist friends from prison. Finally, after 21 years, they were free from fascism.

“There is one dish, one event, above all that represents **the anti-fascist pasta**: the incredible gesture made by the Cervi family, Genoveffa and Alcide and their seven sons, simple farmers, partisan supporters, who offered their entire town a celebratory meal of 370 kilos (815 pounds) of pasta dressed in butter and parmesan cheese (because ragu was an impossibility in the scarcity of war-torn Italy). Simple ingredients, but ones that could be described as pure luxury at the time.” (Emiko Davies, *Op. Cit.*).

They called it the “**most beautiful funeral of fascism**”.

\* The Italian word “pastasciutta” specifically refers to a cooked dish of drained pasta tossed with a sauce (rather than served in a broth), as opposed to “pasta” which is the generic term for the raw food product itself.

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*“The boiling sounded like a symphony. I heard many conversations on the end of Fascism but the most beautiful speech was that of the pasta boiling.”*

— recalls Alcide Cervi in “I miei sette figli” (1955)



The Cervi family. Image retrieved from [Wikimedia Commons](#), reproduced under [CC BY-SA 4.0 license](#).

“It might sound incredibly humble and ordinary, but in the context of the war, the hunger, the starvation gripping every corner of the country and the brutality of the Fascist regime, what they gave their community was generosity, humanity and joy. They gave them conviviality and for that one evening, freedom — the freedom to sit in the piazza enjoying a special, rare meal of pasta together.” (Emiko Davies, [Antifascist Pasta, A Recipe and a Story of Resistance](#))

The family later joined the Italian Resistance, but were tragically captured, tortured, and executed in retaliation for partisan actions.

“Pasta antifascista” or “pastasciutta antifascista” is a tradition stemming from their act of life-affirming delicious resistance.

## Celebrations Today

“Today Antifascist Pasta is celebrated on the 25th of July — the official date that is marked as the end of Fascism. [Istituto Alcide Cervi](#) (a museum and archive set in the original Cervi house dedicated to the fight for democracy) has a list of all the places in Italy that are offering Antifascist Pasta that day — “offering” being the important word because for it to be Antifascist Pasta it has to be free, in the spirit of that generous, festive day in the middle of the war with kilos and kilos of forbidden pasta served to the whole town.” — Emiko Davies

“There’s no longer a fascist party per se, but the reasons that allow for [the birth of fascism](#) continue to exist, and not just in Italy. That’s why it’s important to remain vigilant and keep the spirit of brotherhood that represents anti-fascism alive... eating pastasciutta is a “liberating” gesture that revindicates democratic values and solidarity, values that can be applied to any circumstance.” - Tiziana Trotta, [Macaroni against fascism: Why pasta is a symbol of resistance in Italy.](#)

*As we encounter fascism in new forms today, let us connect with the past and defend the present.*



# PASTASCIUTTA ANTIFASCISTA

## WHAT IS FASCISM?

What is fascism? What does it mean to be anti-fascist? If we look around, we can recognize the signs of fascism and amplify resistance to it. The ways it existed in Italy look a bit different but scholars have identified a number of recurring qualities to help us recognize the pattern.

This list at right was compiled by Laurence W. Britt in 2003, after researching seven fascist regimes: Hitler's Nazi Germany; Mussolini's Italy; Franco's Spain; Salazar's Portugal; Papadopoulos' Greece; Pinochet's Chile and Suharto's Indonesia.

You can read more about each of these 14 characteristics in [this article](#) from *Free Inquiry* magazine.

**In 2026 the United States is closer to fascism than ever before.**

*Where and how do you see the characteristics in our government and country today?*

## The 14 Defining Characteristics of Fascism

1. Power and continuing nationalism
2. Disdain for human rights
3. Identification of enemies as a unifying cause
4. Supremacy of the military
5. Rampant sexism
6. Controlled mass media
7. Obsession with national security
8. Religion and government intertwined
9. Corporate power protected
10. Labor power suppressed
11. Disdain for intellectuals and the arts
12. Obsession with crime and punishment
13. Rampant cronyism and corruption
14. Fraudulent elections



Photo by Patrick Tomaso

## RECIPE

### PASTASCIUTTA ANTIFASCISTA

*(Of course any type of pasta will do! This is the original recipe.)*

**For 4 people:**

- 320 grams of pasta of choice
- 100 grams of butter (preferably unsalted so you can add salt to your liking)
- 100 grams (2 big handfuls) of grated Parmesan cheese

*“It should look nice and creamy and taste buttery and cheesy. If it's looking a little dry, add some of the pasta water and toss again. **Serve as it is — the taste of freedom, comfort and joy.**”*

*—Emiko Davies*

# PASTASCIUTTA ANTIFASCISTA

## ORGANIZE AN ANTI-FASCIST PASTA DAY EVENT!

There are only 3 requirements:

- Offer FREE pasta
- Share the story of the Cervi family and this historic day
- Be aligned with values of antifascism, democracy, peace and justice

Tag Istituto Cervi using the official hashtag and they will re-share your content with the antifascist pasta network:

**#PastaLiberaTutti**

### Here are some ideas for creating your own event:

- Offer free pasta for a gathering of any size
- Share the history of this day, its celebration in Italy, and its relevance here now
- Fundraise for human rights organizations
- Art stations for people of all ages
- Make posters or banners to use in a protest march or put in your window
- Have a discussion on how do you talk to people across political differences
- Singing
- Use the 14 Characteristics of Fascism as a springboard for community dialogue about where we are at today
- Play bocce ball
- Host a virtual educational event
- Invite speakers
- Create an atmosphere of togetherness and deliciousness

*“Ancora oggi, ogni piatto offerto è un modo per dire da che parte stiamo!”*

— [Istituto Cervi on Instagram](#)

## ORGANIZE AN EVENT!

Host a community pasta event

Share the story of the origins of Antifascist Pasta Day

Arts and crafts for kids and adults

Have a discussion on how to talk with people across political differences



Fundraise for human rights orgs

Make posters or banners to use in a protest march or put in your window

Talk about how we see fascism showing up today

Singing together, playing music

# PASTASCIUTTA ANTIFASCISTA

## LEARN MORE HISTORY

### By Emiko Davies:

- [The history of Italy's partisans through food, Part 1:](#) The role of food in the fight against Fascism
- [Antifascist Pasta, a Recipe and a Story of Resistance, Part 2:](#) The wartime pasta dish that celebrates freedom

### By Tiziana Trotta:

- [Macaroni against fascism: Why pasta is a symbol of resistance in Italy](#)

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## RESOURCES

### National solidarity, pro-democracy and justice organizations:

There is local organizing and resistance happening in almost every town, if you're not already plugged in that's the best place to start. Here's a list of some national efforts that are helping people get organized.

- [Detention Watch](#)
- [Protect Democracy](#)
- [Movement Voter Project](#)
- [Singing Resistance](#)
- [Indivisible](#)
- [Veterans Fighting Fascism](#)
- [National Day Labor Organizing Network](#)
- [Showing Up for Racial Justice](#)
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
- [Sunrise Movement](#)

### Italian anti-fascist organizations:

- [Istituto Cervi](#), home of Pastasciutta Antifascista
- [Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia](#)
- [The National Association of Politically Persecuted Anti-Fascist Italians](#)

### Podcasts:

- [Fascism Barometer](#)
- [Fighting Fascism Podcast](#)

### Analysis & Action:

- [Meditations in an Emergency](#): essays by Rebecca Solnit
- [The Rising: Be Informed. Be Involved. Be Joyful.](#) information, good news + easy actions curated by Susie Buell
- [40 Ways to Fight Fascists](#): zine by Spencer Sunshine
- [\(En\)gendering Authoritarianism](#): report by the Othering and Belonging Institute

### Books:

- Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present by Ruth Ben-Ghiat
- How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them by Jason Stanley
- On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century by Timothy Snyder
- [Don't Be A Bystander: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century](#) poster and card

*\*sempre antifascista\**

# PASTASCIUTTA ANTIFASCISTA

## BELLA CIAO

Una mattina mi son svegliato  
(Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao)  
Una mattina mi son svegliato  
E ho trovato l'invasor

O partigiano portami via  
(Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao)  
O partigiano portami via  
Che mi sento di morir

E se io muoio da partigiano  
(Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao)  
E se io muoio da partigiano  
Tu mi devi seppellir

Mi seppellirai lassú in montagna  
(Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao)  
Mi seppellirai lassú in montagna  
Sotto l'ombra di un bel fior

E le genti che passeranno  
(Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao)  
E le genti che passeranno  
Mi diranno: "Che bel fior"

È questo il fiore del partigiano  
(Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao, ciao, ciao)  
È questo il fiore del partigiano  
Morto per la libertà

## BELLA CIAO (Goodbye Beautiful)

One morning I awakened  
(Goodbye beautiful, goodbye beautiful, goodbye)  
One morning I awakened  
And I found the invader

Oh partisan, carry me away  
(Goodbye beautiful, goodbye beautiful, goodbye)  
Oh partisan, carry me away  
Because I feel death approaching

And if I die as a partisan  
(Goodbye beautiful, goodbye beautiful, goodbye)  
And if I die as a partisan  
Then you must bury me

Bury me up in the mountain  
(Goodbye beautiful, goodbye beautiful, goodbye)  
Bury me up in the mountain  
Under the shade of a beautiful flower

And the people who shall pass  
(Goodbye beautiful, goodbye beautiful, goodbye)  
And the people who shall pass  
Will tell me, "What a beautiful flower"

This is the flower of the partisan  
(Goodbye beautiful, goodbye beautiful, goodbye)  
This is the flower of the partisan  
Who died for freedom



A group of Italian partisans during World War II, with the woman in the center holding sfoglia (fresh pasta dough), which became a symbol of resistance against the Fascist regime.



This zine was created by San Francisco Bay Area Anti-Fascist Pasta Day with inspiration from the Providence Anti-Fascist Pasta Day team. Zine design and "Make Pasta, Not Fascism" logo by Paola Coda.