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# 10 great places to noodle around with pasta

Whether mac and cheese or squid-ink linguine, pasta has a universal appeal, says chef **Jody Adams** of Rialto restaurant in Cambridge, Mass. The *Top Chef Masters* alum specializes in regional Italian cuisine. In honor of National Pasta Month in October, Adams shares favorites with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY.



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## Gemma

New York

The East Village restaurant in the Bowery Hotel wins over Adams with its simple take on pasta. She suggests the *strozzapreti*, which means "priest strangler" in Italian and describes tubes of hand-rolled pasta. She likes it served with spicy sausage and broccoli rabe. "It's an authentic, hearty dish," she says. "The kind of pasta everybody loves." 212-505-9100; [theboweryhotel.com](http://theboweryhotel.com)

## Coppa

Boston

Given that Adams is a Bostonian, a local restaurant has to be pretty extraordinary to make her list. Coppa makes the cut. "It's really a little hole in the wall. What they produce out of the tiny kitchen is phenomenal." She loves the house-made squid-ink pasta with octopus, squid and Castelvetrano olives. She says the slightly briny taste of the pasta is offset by the sweet flavor of the seafood. 617-391-0902; [coppaboston.com](http://coppaboston.com)

## Sardinia Enoteca Ristorante

Miami

Miami might suggest Caribbean flavors, but it offers much more, Adams says. This restaurant makes one of her favorite versions of spaghetti carbonara, but instead of bacon, it's prepared with *guanciale*, which is cured pork cheek. "It's one of the simplest forms of pasta. It's eggs, cheese and pasta and lots of black pepper. But it's not an easy thing to do well." 305-531-2228; [sardinia-ristorante.com](http://sardinia-ristorante.com)

## Zuni Café

San Francisco

This legendary Bay Area restaurant has built a huge following over the past three decades. Adams (and many others) loves its ricotta gnocchi with Wagyu beef Bolognese. "These gnocchi are the lightest, airiest gnocchi you've ever had. They're amazing." 415-552-2522; [zunicafe.com](http://zunicafe.com)

## Fornelletto Cucina & Wine Bar

Atlantic City

Adams isn't much of a gambler, but she's a fan of this eatery at the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa. One of her favorite dishes is lobster *fra diavolo* — lobster served with plum tomatoes, chiles, garlic and fresh herbs over spaghetti, a very thin spaghetti. The dish's name translates as "lobster brother devil," which is appropriate, Adams says. "I want something that matches the experience. There's a little bit of a devil's work at a casino." 609-317-1000; [theborgata.com](http://theborgata.com)

## Fig

Charleston, S.C.

Fig partners with farmers and growers to find local, fresh ingredients, and for Adams, it all comes together in dishes like potato gnocchi with lamb Bolognese. "It's a very small, bustling restaurant with a very creative culinary team who are changing the menu all the time," Adams says. 843-805-5900; [eatatfig.com](http://eatatfig.com)

## Willow Creek Restaurant

Evergreen, Colo.

This idyllic spot on a mountain lake is about 30 miles from Denver. Adams likes the braised rabbit with pappardelle, a noodle shaped like a wide ribbon. It's served with wild mushrooms and diced vegetables. "It's a great old-fashioned dish, and it tastes like it's straight from Tuscany," Adams says. "People drive miles out of their way for this." 303-674-9463; [willowcreekevergreen.com](http://willowcreekevergreen.com)

## Spiaggia

Chicago

Adams appeared on *Top Chef Masters* with the chef of this restaurant, Tony Mantuano. "He's a big guy, and he makes the most delicate pasta," she says. Her recommendation: *agnolotti del plin con polline di finocchio*, which she describes as tiny pasta pillows stuffed with veal with fennel pollen and crispy veal breast. 312-280-2750; [spiaggiarestaurant.com](http://spiaggiarestaurant.com)

## Street

Los Angeles

Pasta makes most people think of Italy, but there's plenty in Asia, too. And Adams swears by the Thai rice noodles with Chinese broccoli, seasoned pork, tomato, mint, Thai basil and chiles served at this restaurant showcasing street foods from around the world. It's run by another participant in Bravo's *Top Chef Masters*, Susan Feniger. "I had just traveled to Thailand before I went to her restaurant, and her dish was like I had never left," Adams says. 323-203-0500; [eatatstreet.com](http://eatatstreet.com)



By Jeff Kaucuk

In Chicago: *Top Chef Masters*' Tony Mantuano runs the kitchen at Spiaggia, whose standout dish is *agnolotti del plin con polline di finocchio*, tiny pasta pillows stuffed with veal.

## Al Forno

Providence

This New England institution has been called one of the best restaurants in America. How good is it? Even a sophisticated chef like Adams is reduced to words such as "yummy" to describe its baked pasta with tomato, cream and five cheeses. "This is quintessential comfort food," she says. "They use rigatoni, and they put this in a shallow dish, and you get a lot of nice crunchies on top when it bakes." 401-273-9760; [www.alforno.com](http://www.alforno.com)