



Shopper's Guide

Get Saucy!

A steaming plate of homemade spaghetti with tomato sauce is a good go-to for a pleasing meal. But when time is too short to simmer a home-cooked sauce, store-bought sauce comes to the rescue. A container of premade, red pasta sauce can help you whip up spaghetti—or lasagna or manicotti, for that matter—in no time. But, when you turn to convenience, are you losing out on nutrition?



Sauces: Yes and no. As is the case with so many convenience foods, sodium content is a danger in prepared pasta sauces. With some pasta tomato sauces, you also want to keep an eye on fat and saturated fat.

But premade sauces have their nutritional pros, too. Some are decent sources of potassium, and vitamins A and C. In addition, pasta sauces are primarily made from cooked tomatoes and a touch of olive oil. Tomatoes are a great source of lycopene, which is a fat-soluble compound with antioxidant properties. Lycopene is absorbed better by your body in cooked tomatoes, and the addition of oil helps enhance absorption even more. Thus, pasta sauce is an exceptionally good source of lycopene, which offers a variety of health benefits, including helping to lower the risk of prostate cancer and protection against stroke.

Helpful hints. Keep the following in mind when choosing your noodle topper.

- ▶ **Watch your ladle.** A serving size of pasta sauce is one-half cup. Ladling double or triple that amount onto your pasta is easy. It's important to be aware of how much you're consuming, to know how much fat, sodium, and other nutrients you're getting.
- ▶ **Keep sugar in check.** All sauces contain sugar (some comes naturally in tomatoes), but some have as much as 2½ teaspoons per half-cup serving, which can add up when you're trying to keep sugar intake to a minimum.
- ▶ **Salt sense.** Sauces with meat and cheese tend to contain more sodium, however, sodium content can still vary greatly from sauce to sauce. Be sure to compare labels to find sauces low in sodium content.

—Heidi McIndoo, MS, RD

Pasta Sauce Nutritional Comparison

✓ = **EN's Picks.** As with all EN comparisons, this is only a sampling of products. Picks contain no more than 4 g fat (6% DV), 350 mg sodium (15% DV), and 6 g sugar, and at least 2 g fiber (8% DV).

PREPARED PASTA SAUCE (½ C)	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Carbs (g)	Sodium (mg)	Sugar (g)	Fiber (g)	Protein (g)
MARINARA								
365 Marinara	45	1.5	0	7	400	4	1	2
Amy's Family Marinara	80	4.5	0.5	9	590	5	2	2
✓ Muir Glen Cabernet Marinara Pasta Sauce	50	0.5	0	10	280	6	2	2
Paesana Sicilian Gravy Sauce	90	6	1	8	300	5	2	2
✓ Poblano Farm Traditional Italian Pasta Sauce	70	3.5	0.5	8	350	5	2	2
Prego Traditional Italian Sauce	70	1.5	0	13	480	10	3	2
Rao's Homemade Marinara Sauce	80	7	1	4	340	3	1	1
San Marzano Marinara Sauce	80	4	0.5	10	370	6	2	2
✓ Trader Giotto's Organic Marinara Sauce, no salt added	60	0	0	12	35	6	2	2
Trader Giotto's Roasted Garlic Marinara	100	5	1	11	580	6	3	2
MEAT FLAVORED								
Barilla Flavored with Meat Sauce	70	1	0	13	480	7	3	2
Hunt's Pasta Sauce, Meat Flavored	60	1	0	10	610	6	3	2
Newman's Own Italian Sausage & Peppers Pasta Sauce	90	3.5	1	11	550	7	2	4
Prego Italian Sausage & Garlic Meat Sauce	90	3	1	13	480	10	3	3
Trader Joe's Just Sauce Turkey Bolognese (Frozen)	120	6	3	6	620	3	1	9
FLAVORED								
365 Organic Creamy Vodka Pasta Sauce	80	4.5	2	7	440	3	2	2
365 Organic Four Cheese Pasta Sauce	70	3.5	1	7	450	2	4	3
365 Organic Tomato Basil Pasta Sauce	50	2	0	7	450	4	2	2
Amy's Organic Tomato Basil Pasta Sauce, light in sodium	90	4.5	0.5	11	290	6	2	2
Bertolli Imported Cask Aged Balsamic Vinegar Paired with Caramelized Onions Sauce	80	2.5	0	11	390	8	2	2
Classico Smooth & Rich Parmesan & Romano Pasta Sauce	70	2	0.5	12	450	8	2	3
✓ Cucina Antica Tomato Basil Cooking Sauce	35	1.5	1	6	240	1	2	1
✓ Dave's Gourmet Red Heirloom Organic Pasta Sauce	45	1.5	0	7	280	4	2	1
Dave's Gourmet Roasted Garlic & Sweet Basil Pasta Sauce	70	4.5	0.5	8	125	5	<1	1
✓ Engine 2 Red Bell Pepper Marinara	35	0	0	8	140	4	2	1
Hunt's Pasta Sauce Garlic & Herb	40	1	0	8	610	4	3	1
Lidia's Tomato Basil	60	3	0.5	7	430	5	1	2
✓ Muir Glen Organic Garlic Roasted Garlic Pasta Sauce	60	0	0	11	260	6	2	2
Newman's Own Sockarooni Peppers, Spices, & the Whole Shebang Pasta Sauce	70	1	0	12	460	7	3	3
Organicville Pasta Sauce Mushroom	35	1	0	6	450	4	1	1
Prego Traditional Italian Sauce	70	1.5	0	13	480	10	3	2
Ragu Chunky Garden Combination Sauce	90	2.5	0	14	460	10	2	2
Rao's Homemade Artichoke Sauce	80	6	1	4	320	3	2	1
San Marzano Creamy Vodka Sauce	90	6	2	8	430	6	2	2
Scarpetta Arrabbiata Fresh Pasta Sauce	40	2	0.3	5	250	3	1	1
Scarpetta Pink Pesto Fresh Pasta Sauce	215	20	7	5	330	2	1	2
✓ Scarpetta Puttanesca Fresh Pasta Sauce	50	3	0.5	6	320	3	2	2
Trader Giotto's Arrabbiata Sauce	70	3.5	0.5	8	400	5	1	1
Trader Giotto's Rustico Pasta Sauce	45	1.5	0	6	480	3	2	1
Trader Joe's Creamy Tomato Basil Pasta Sauce	120	8	3.5	9	460	5	1	3

Note: g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates, DV=Daily Value, Daily requirement based on 2,000 calorie/day diet. Source: Food Labels
Serving size is 1/2 cup (approximately 120 grams).