



Pici is very common in municipalities of Castiglione del Lago, Panicale and Città di Castello where it is known as umbricelli. Pici are thick spaghetti made by hand with flour and water. This is a “poor” pasta (made from soft wheat flour and water) but it requires a long preparation time and is made by hand. The ingredients are mixed by hand (or in a mixer). Once a smooth dough has been obtained, it is rolled out with a rolling pin on a wooden rolling board, to a thickness of about 5 to 8 cm. Strips of pasta are cut horizontally (about 10 cm wide). These, in turn, are cut into little strips (about 1 cm wide) and are rolled on a rolling board until thick spaghetti, about 25 to 30 cm long, are formed. In the area of Terni, these umbricelli, with some variations, are called “ciriole” and are also known as “strozzapreti” (“priest-chokers”) in the Spoleto area. Some people call them “stringozzi” or “strangozzi”. The origin of this name is linked to the particular shape of the pasta, which is similar to shoe laces. According to this hypothesis, during the reign of the Papal State in Umbria, the anti-clericals lurked in strategic places, awaiting the passage of priests. As the priests arrived, the revolutionary anticlericals would take off their shoe laces (this is where the names stringozzo, strongozzo and, later, strangozzo come from) and then assaulted and strangled the priests with the laces. This dish is generally served with tomato sauce, spiced with a little chilli and flavoured with parsley, although nowadays it is served with all kinds of sauces in Umbrian restaurants. For anyone wishing to try new flavours, umbricelli or strangozzi are also found commercially with different flavours: truffle, nettle, tomato, etc. This is a fresh product and should be kept on food trays for no more than 1 to 2 days at a temperature of about 4° C.