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# GASTRONOMY ITALY



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# GASTRONOMY - ITALY:



## TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS AND NATIONAL LABELS



Italy is among the European countries richest in biodiversity, due mainly to a favourable geographical position and a wide variety of geological, climatic and vegetation conditions.

Italy is the European country with the largest number of agri-food products with designation of origin and geographical indication recognised by the European Union: 838 products that contribute to making Italy a unique country in the world: 316 of these products are food, 526 are wines, 34 are spirit drinks.

**581**

**PDO PRODUCTS REGISTERED**

**261**

**PGI PRODUCTS REGISTERED**

**34**

**GI PRODUCTS REGISTERED**

## TRADITIONAL AGRO-FOOD PRODUCTS



The Ministry of Agriculture, food sovereignty and forests manages a list of traditional agro-food products that contains both raw ingredients and processed food (cured meat, sauces, liquors...) and dishes. The list is yearly updated.

## ITALIAN CUISINE

Italian cuisine is well known all around the world and recognised as tasty and rich for the variety of ingredients and cooking techniques. Italian cuisine is not just food or recipes but a set of social practices, habits and gestures, a kind of collective ritual of a people that conceives food as a cultural element of identity. In Italy, cooking is a way of taking care of family and friends (when you do it at home) or customers (when you do it at a restaurant). Preparation and consumption of a meal are moments of gathering and sharing. It is a mosaic of many local skills, an expression of creativity and knowledge that becomes tradition and is passed on between generations. It is also a form of biodiversity protection, based on not wasting anything, on the reuse of leftover food and on the seasonal products of the various territories.

# ITALY: HISTORY OF FOOD



Italian cuisine is the result of the exchanges occurred over the centuries, that have made it extraordinarily various, so that can be represented as a mosaic of local variations, that together contribute to create a more interesting whole than a simple image would make. Anyway there are three features that are common to all the local declinations: from the Roman period, the centrality of cereals, olive and wine, that are also key elements in the Catholic symbolism, the **vegetables** represent a continuous line, across time and space. The second feature is **pies** and the third one is **pasta**. These dishes can be found also in other European cookbooks, but in Italy there was a multiplication of recipes and formats.

## GASTRONOMY AS PART OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

With its 790 recipes, collected by the author, Pellegrino Artusi, with patient passion over many years and countless travels, "Science in the kitchen and the art of eating well" (often simply referred to as "l'Artusi") is the most famous and widely read book on Italian cuisine, the one from which all the great chefs of the last century have drawn inspirations and suggestions.

It is a singular work that exalts the pleasure of eating well; more than a recipe book it is a "manual" of taste, full of dissertations, linguistic ideas in a clear prose that recalls the cordiality of convivial speech.

The manual has been enriched and published in 15 editions edited directly by the author from 1891 to 1911, the year of his death. The recipes went from 475 in the first edition to 790 in the last one. We could say that this is an ante-litteram example of collective intellectual product, because Pellegrino Artusi collected recipes not only interviewing cooks and innkeepers during its trade trips but also receiving recipes from housewives who had bought its book and started a letter correspondence with the author, sharing their home-recipes and variations.

So, we can say that is a very authentic picture of Italian cuisine from the period immediately following Italian unification into a single Country.

# ITALY: NATIONAL DISHES



Food and wine products and specialities are powerful territorial marketing tools that can promote a destination, as well as being a key element around which to build a tourist offer.

To mention some of the most known and popular products and dishes from Italy we can list:

**SPAGHETTI**

**PIZZA**

**PARMIGIANO REGGIANO**

**BOLOGNESE SAUCE**

**RISOTTO**

**ICE-CREAM**

**TIRAMISÙ**

**MOZZARELLA**

**PROSCIUTTO**

This food is often imitated (Italian sounding).

Italy is also home for very popular beverages that represent Italian taste all around the world,

**WINE**

**ESPRESSO**

**CAPUCCINO**

Espresso and capuccino are based on an ingredient (coffee) that doesn't grow in Italy, but that Italians have made part of their daily life following a roasting, processing and brewing style that reflects the Italian taste.

In the following pages we propose a menù made of very traditional dishes from Liguria, followed by another version of the same dishes, prepared and served with a modern twist. The same, then, for a menù from Veneto.

# TRADITIONAL DISHES



## ITALY - LIGURIA

The “Forgotten” Ligurian menu  
a very traditional / typical menu from this region can be composed by

### **Caponada**

The “caponada” is simple cold soup with leftover bread. It used to be eaten on the antique Genoese vessels. The name refers to the “capon”, which is not an ingredient of the dish and it wants to be a riddle of the dish itself, as the fact that these vessels were used as jails.

### **Frandurà, la torta di patate (Potato Pie)**

Frandurà is a typical potato pie of the West of Liguria, and more specifically of the Argentina Valley. The main ingredient is the potato, to witness a simple but rich dish that is prepared with a batter enriched with tomatoes.

### **Minestra di pasta e patate (Pasta and potato soup)**

Nowadays it is not very common any longer, but in the past it used to be one of the most famous dishes of the typical trattorias where the local workers (longshoremen) would go. It contains many calories and potatoes and sausage are sautéed together. After adding vegetable broth, we add pasta and tomato. It is suggested on cold days.

### **Piccatiglio**

The name "Piccatiglio" has a Spanish root. This dish is prepared with leftovers, and it is a very typical old dish. The ingredients, such as leftover meats from beef, chicken or pork, are sautéed in oil and butter. Just before they are done, an egg is added.

### **Cobeletti**

*They are small desserts made from shortcrust pastry, in the shape of a small hat and filled with apple jam. They are a typical dessert of the antique tradition. It has become a DE.CO certification (it certifies the quality and the origin of the product). Today they are also made with peach, apricot or berries jam.*

# MODERN MENU



# LIGURIA

the typical dishes can be proposed with a modern twist and style as follow

## **Caponada “davvero”**

Saffron scented white meat juice, capon cooked at low temperature, focaccia crumble and smoked bergamot powder

## **Frandurà al cucchiaino**

Potato and Sarazzu cheese foam, puff pastry and marjoram, dry tomato and infusion of Lavagna oil and truffle

## **Minestra XXI**

Traditional scuccuzzone pasta creamed in clarified butter, low temperature veal cheek, crispy french bean, basil powder and louse grass

## **Il Piccatiglio Moderno**

Sous-vide baby pork, savoury eggnog, acidified and caramelized pine nuts and onion with raspberry juice

## **Cobeletto 3.0**

Hazelnut bisciut, bavarian with apple and citrus fruits, English cream and pistils of Ligurian saffron

# TRADITIONAL DISHES



# VENETO

a very traditional / typical menu from this region can be composed by

## STARTER

### SARDE IN SAOR

This recipe is one of the oldest in the gastronomic tradition of the Veneto region and is influenced by oriental contaminations, mainly due to the spice trade that the Serenissima entertained.

The peculiarity of the recipe lay not so much in the type of fish used (in addition to sardines, "sfoeti" and "moeche" could be used) but in the seasoning, which was actually a method of preservation, indispensable given the lack of refrigerators on board ships. In fact, the vinegar and onion in the recipe prevented, the former (vinegar) the development of carcinogenic bacteria in the fish, the latter (onion), prevented from scurvy due to the presence of vitamin C. Initially, saor was rich in spices but over the years it was made more palatable by eliminating them, keeping only sultanas and pine nuts, which are still part of the dish today.

Note: Moeche are crabs, that live all year round in the Venetian lagoon but they become "moeca" only for few weeks. In the first days of fall and spring, the crabs moult, leaving their old shell and building a new one, solid and bigger, to allow them to grow. In those days, before the shell starts to grow, the small lagoon crabs are soft and without the shell, perfect to be eaten without difficulty.

"Sfoeti" is the local traditional name of small soles.

### POLENTA, SOPPRESSA E FUNGHI

White polenta, made from a flour obtained from a particular variety of maize, is a staple dish in Veneto cuisine. In this case, it is combined with a traditional cured meat, soppressa, very similar to salami, but in which the noble parts of the pig are used. It can be used raw by simply slicing it and combining it with polenta, or seared quickly in a pan with a sprinkle of vinegar. This particular appetiser also features mushrooms, which are very present in the area.

# TRADITIONAL DISHES



# VENETO

## FIRST DISH

### RISOTTO CON LE SECOE

A classic example of a pauper's dish can be found in this recipe. Poor families, after slaughtering the beef, would try to retrieve what could be recovered and eaten, and so after boning the loin and obtaining the fillet and sirloin, they would carefully clean the bones, thus obtaining strips of meat (secoe) which they would use in the preparation of the risotto. To complete the dish, they would add tomato puree and a sprinkling of cinnamon.

## MAIN COURSE

### BACCALA' ALLA VICENTINA

Another symbol of the contamination caused by trade with foreign nations is stockfish. Imported from Norway, it lent itself very well to preservation as it was dried and could thus endure long periods of navigation without perishing, as well as being very good with the ever-present polenta.

## DESSERT

### IL ROMBO DEL DOGE

The name of this dessert comes from the shape that the pieces of this custard take on once cold and cut. A shape reminiscent of the Doge's gondola. Once the cream has been rolled out and cooled, it is cut into diamond shapes, breaded, fried and served cold or hot.





the typical dishes can be proposed with a modern twist and style as follow

## STARTER

Sarde, cipolla marinata all'aceto di mele con croccante salato di uva passa e pinoli  
Sardines, onion marinated in apple vinegar with salty crunch of sultanas and pine nuts

Polentina di mais bianco, carpaccio di soppressa con sauté di sottobosco  
White maize polenta, soppressa carpaccio with forest undergrowth sauté

## FIRST DISH

Risotto carnaroli con emince' di manzo, cannella mantecato con burro al Reggiano  
Carnaroli risotto with beef émincé (minced meat), cinnamon whipped with Reggiano butter  
(minced meat)

## MAIN COURSE

Stoccafisso in olio cottura, parmigiano, latte e battuto di prezzemolo e sarde dissalate  
"Oil-braised" Stockfish, parmesan cheese, milk and chopped parsley and desalted sardines

## DESSERT

Quadrotto di crema pasticceria croccante, salsa di crema d'acqua ai fiori d'arancio e gelatina al marsala  
Crispy custard square, orange blossom water cream sauce and marsala jelly

# ITALY: FOOD FESTIVALS



## FOOD FESTIVALS & TASTE MUSEUMS

We can say that almost all towns, cities and villages in Italy host at least one festival or event related to Food. Those events valorise local products, recipes and traditions related to the growing/breeding/processing of food as well as community rituals. They attract local / interregional and, the most popular ones, also international public.

For example, a very vivid festival from Liguria is the **Fish Festival** of Camogli (GE).

From Veneto, we can mention the Festival of a local variety of chicory that resembles a rose (**Radicchio variegato**) from Castelfranco Veneto or the Festival dedicated to one of the most famous desserts from this area: the **Tiramisù World Cup**.

Several taste and Food Museums have been established both by local/regional public bodies but also by private organizations (association, federations, enterprises...) and offer a true journey through the culture and knowledge of food.

## ITALIAN CUISINE IN THE WORLD



The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched in 2015 the "**Week of Italian Cuisine in the World**" to promote fine Italian cuisine and agri-food products.

Since then, a rich program of seminars and conferences, meetings with chefs and cookery courses, tastings and dinners accompany the sales promotion activities each year, in the last days of November. Several events all around the globe promote the Italian cuisine as cultural heritage and animate a debate about relationship between food and environmental sustainability, the culture of healthy food, food safety, the right to food, food education, territorial identity and biodiversity.

The Italian Cuisine has been officially candidate as intangible cultural heritage at UNESCO in 2023.

# ITALY: SOURCES



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