

Lidia's Italy at Home

The importance
of being Italian

Tradition in the kitchen

Lidia
entertains

How to organize
lunches with guests

Discovering Italy

My culinary trip to Calabria

In my garden

The product
of the season: Zucchini

Italian Pantry

11 ingredients you
should always have
in your kitchen



Chef Lidia Bastianich brings us into her home to share her favorite family recipes:
Grandma's chicken and potatoes • Calabrese salad • Spaghetti with calamari, scallops and shrimps
Scaloppine saltimbocca, Roman style, with sautéed spinach • Chocolate and walnut palacinke



SAN BENEDETTO
OLIGOMINERALE

Acqua Minerale Naturale
NATURALE

SAN BENEDETTO



SAN BENEDETTO

Acqua Minerale Naturale

PRODUCT OF ITALY

Tutti a tavola!



Italians are known for conviviality, which happens to be one of the main ingredients at every Italian meal. The Italian table is known for its attention to seasonality, its fresh and delicious ingredients and often simple techniques. However, it is the Italian warmth and hospitality that creates the true Italian table.

Behind every meal, there is a chef or home cook with a story. Many of you know my stories, which I find in every ingredient, every technique, every recipe and ultimately every dish. I have an incredible bond with my origins that comes alive every time I work with food. The more I cook, the more I feel its presence.

Life always revolves around some type of table. There are special holiday tables, last minute weeknight tables and tables full of children and young people. Even during the most difficult challenges in life, time spent at the table can create moments of laughter and smiles. In the following pages, I hope to convey happiness and love in the form of food.

I hope that my advice encourages you to eat well, live well and savor every bite at the table. Small things like simply spending time together at the table and eating good food leads to conversation and important family time.

I would like to share with you what I have learned during so many years of traveling around the world and up and down the Italian peninsula in this new adventure. I have had the opportunity to bring back recipes to my table from so many different locations that have been handed down from generation to generation. I have enjoyed sharing the dishes and the various stories associated with those dishes with my own family and friends. Every time I find a new flavor that reminds me of my passion for my work.

Tutti a tavola a mangiare!

Vedip Burke

Contents

- 8** In my garden
- 12** Flavors of childhood
- 16** Italian pantry
- 20** Joe's wine selections
- 24** Lidia entertains
- 32** Italian American favorites
- 36** The importance
of being Italian
- 44** Discovering Italy:
Calabria
- 59** It's summertime!
- 62** 4th of July
- 66** Time to eat
- 72** What a wonderful pasta
- 80** My grocery list
- 86** Eat different
- 94** It's always dessert time
- 102** Ingredient of the month
- 104** About My American Dream
- 106** Italian glossary
- 108** #Lidiasitalyathome





THE CLASSIC. THE ORIGINAL. THE NEGRONI.

EQUAL PARTS **CAMPARI**, GIN, SWEET VERMOUTH

CAMPARI
GO A SIP BEYOND™

Campari® Liqueur. 24% alc./vol. (48 Proof). ©2018 Campari America, San Francisco, CA. Please enjoy responsibly.

Recipes

- 10** Spaghetti with saffron, almonds and zucchini
- 13** Frittata with zucchini and potatoes
- 14** Blackberry basil spritzer
- 27** Prosciutto di Parma “purses” and Grana
- 28** Erbazzone with squash filling
- 30** Onion tart
- 34** Spaghetti and meatballs
- 41** Crêpes with chocolate and walnuts
- 43** Grandma’s chicken and potatoes
- 52** Eggplants, onions, and potatoes
- 53** Calabrese salad
- 54** Pork chops shepherd- style
- 57** Bergamotto risotto
- 60** Stuffed hamburgers
- 60** Hamburger sauce
- 64** Pan-seared steak with pizzaiola sauce
- 68** Swordfish skewers glazed with sweet and sour sauce
- 69** Spicy stuffed clams
- 70** Steamed mussels in savory wine sauce
- 75** Gemelli with baked cherry tomatoes
- 76** Tortiglioni with tuna Ascoli-style
- 79** Spaghetti with calamari, scallops and shrimps
- 82** Asparagus gratin
- 83** Halibut with tomato and spinach
- 85** Scaloppine saltimbocca, Roman-style,
with sautéed spinach
- 88** Rice and zucchini crostata
- 90** Roasted olives with orange and rosemary
- 91** Olive oil mashed potatoes
- 92** Eggplant parmigiana
- 96** Plum tart
- 98** Berry tiramisù
- 100** Baked pineapple





GRANAPADANO.IT



MADE

with the same passion for almost 1000 years in the heart of the Po River Valley in Northern Italy using only local milk, and aged from 9 to over 20 months; controlled and guaranteed by the Consortium for the Protection of Grana Padano cheese, it has become the world's best-selling PDO* cheese and one of the most loved products

IN ITALY.



NATURALLY
LACTOSE-FREE*



PROUD SPONSOR OF



*The absence of lactose is a natural consequence of the traditional Grana Padano production process. It contains less than 10 mg/100 g of galactose.

* PDO: Protected Designation of Origin



EDITOR IN CHIEF
Lidia Bastianich

CO-EDITORS
Tanya Bastianich Manuali
Shelly Burgess Nicotra

COPY EDITOR
Lorenzo Manuali

- All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.



OUR HISTORY

FOR OVER 200 YEARS, THE LOCATELLI HAS REIGNED SUPREME AS ITALY'S FINEST CHEESE PRODUCER. THE LOCATELLI FAMILY METICULOUSLY HONED THE CRAFT OF CHEESE MAKING TO GIVE YOU A PRODUCT UNEQUALLED IN QUALITY, UNIFORMITY AND TASTE. TODAY IT IS FOUND IN THE FINEST GOURMET ESTABLISHMENTS, SUPERMARKETS, RESTAURANTS, CLUB STORES AND ITALIAN SPECIALTY STORES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. LOCATELLI PECORINO ROMANO IS CONSIDERED THE WORLD'S FINEST GRATING CHEESE, HAND-CRAFTED, ALWAYS FRESH GRATED FROM 100% PURE SHEEP'S MILK.

UNIQUE RECIPES

ASK JUST ABOUT ANYONE AND THEY'LL TELL YOU THAT ITALIAN FOOD IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD, AND NOTHING MAKES FOOD MORE ITALIAN THAN LOCATELLI CHEESE. IDEAL ON PASTA, SALADS, MEATBALLS OR ENJOY BY ITSELF WITH FRUIT, FIG SPREADS, GRAPES... BRING A TASTE OF ITALY TO YOUR TABLE.



MAKE IT MORE EXCITING
MORE FLAVORFUL
MORE DELICIOUS

**MAKE IT
MORE ITALIAN**

MAKE IT WITH LOCATELLI





IN MY GARDEN: ZUCCHINI

Throughout the summer, a must-have ingredient on my kitchen table is zucchini.

The hot summer weather often makes us feel the need for foods rich in vitamins, minerals and water that don't weigh down digestion. But most importantly, these foods need to also taste delicious!

That's why we are crazy about zucchini in my family.

They are versatile and add freshness to many tasty dishes. In the summer they are great on the grill, terrific in light vegetable soups, an excellent way to dress pasta and a great vegetable for risotto. They are also perfect au gratin or stuffed with rice or with meat for a full meal.

Zucchini are often the main ingredient in summer frittatas and flans and can be sliced thin and served raw in salads. The vegetable boasts many beneficial properties, and steaming them does not deplete the vegetables of its nutrients. Steamed zucchini are very tasty dressed and tossed in a salad. Zucchini may literally be used for everything; not only do they make cakes softer and more delicious, but they even



From earth to table

Delicate in flavor
and super fresh,
zucchini bring many quick
and easy recipes to life.

are known for fostering a healthy suntan while protecting the skin from damage caused by exposure to the sun.

Despite being on the market almost all year round, do not forget that even zucchini, like all vegetables, follow a natural season that provides for sowing in the spring and harvesting at a distance of about 6-8 weeks.

Some purchasing tips: make sure that the zucchini are firm, with a bright green skin and that the flowers, if present, are fresh and not wilted, always keeping in mind that the smaller ones have fewer seeds and are therefore more suitable for cooking.

For gardening enthusiasts, I recommend planting zucchini in pots. Make sure to pay attention to the amount of water you give them, as they require a lot and avoid excessive exposure to the sun. You will see the seeds sprouting at the latest within 10 days if the temperature remains between 65° F and 82° F. Zucchini can also be started with small sprouted plants from your nursery as well. How does one store freshly bought or picked zucchini? It's best to put them in the refrigerator, after washing and drying them, for up to a week. However, it's always best to consume them within 2-3 days.

Spaghetti with saffron, almonds and zucchini

SPAGHETTI CON ZAFFERANO, MANDORLE E ZUCCHINE

Select small, firm zucchini, though—preferably right from the garden. If you can, pick, or purchase, zucchini flowers at the same time.

They make the dish especially festive.



Yield

Serves 6



Ingredients

½ teaspoon saffron threads

2 teaspoons kosher salt

4 or 5 small, firm zucchini (about 1½ pounds total, or 1 pound zucchini and 24 fresh zucchini flowers)

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling

1 cup chopped onion

3 cups light poultry stock or water

1 cup finely chopped scallions

2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley

½ cup toasted sliced almonds

1 pound spaghetti

1 cup freshly grated Grana Padano



Recipe

Put the saffron threads in a small bowl with 2 tablespoons of hot water, and let them steep for 15 minutes. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil for the pasta.

Trim the zucchini, slice them lengthwise into thin strips, then cut the strips into thin 2-inch-long matchsticks. (If you have zucchini flowers, trim off any remnants of stem, pull out the inside filaments, the flower's stigmas, and chop the flowers into shreds.)

Pour the olive oil into a large skillet over medium high heat and stir in the chopped onion. Cook the onion for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, until wilting and translucent but not browning.

Ladle in ½ cup or so of the stock or water, and cook the onion in the bubbling liquid for a few minutes more, to soften.

Before the liquid evaporates, scatter the zucchini matchsticks into the skillet, and stir them in with the onion, then add the chopped scallions and salt.

Cook over high heat, stirring, as the zucchini releases more juices. Let boil and reduce for a couple of minutes, add the shredded zucchini flowers if using, then ladle in another 2 cups hot water or stock, stir well, and mix in the saffron threads and saffron-infused water, and the chopped parsley.

Bring the sauce to a boil, let it reduce for a couple of minutes to tossing consistency, then lower the heat to keep it barely simmering while you cook the spaghetti.

Add the spaghetti to the boiling water and cool until al dente. When the pasta is cooked, lift out the spaghetti with tongs, drain briefly, and drop them into the skillet.

Quickly toss the pasta in the simmering sauce and toss to coat. Toss in the toasted almonds and mix well.

Sprinkle with the grated cheese, toss well, then finish with a drizzle of olive oil. Toss and serve immediately.







Flavors of Childhood

We all know how difficult it is for our children to sometimes try new flavors and eat healthy food. Often they prefer sweets and snacks that fill them so they are no longer hungry for a good meal. What if we also want them to eat their vegetables? It's often "Mission Impossible." However, once we have the right recipes, that just might change.

Here is a complete menu that I recommend for children: a simple omelet of zucchini and potatoes, accompanied by a blackberry and basil drink. I love that the colors of nature-yellow, red, green and blue are enclosed in this meal. The blackberry spritzer is a thirst-quenching drink with a known super fruit; the omelet is full of potassium. This recipe is very simple, quick and economical.

The common goal is to educate children and today's youth about how to eat a balanced and healthy diet while learning to taste a variety of good food. For those who have the space, cultivating a garden is a great way to get children involved in understanding food and appreciating new flavors. One can also simply plant potted herbs and vegetables near a window or on a deck or porch and achieve the same goal. Cooking those vegetables together in the kitchen and tasting at the family table is the ultimate sense of satisfaction.



Frittata with zucchini and potatoes

FRITTATA CON ZUCCHINE E PATATE

A frittata can be served warm or at room temperature. It's an ideal brunch or breakfast entrée when cut into wedges, but you can also serve it as an hors d'oeuvre, cut into bite-sized squares. Other vegetables, such as peppers or asparagus, can be added or substituted, according to what's in season.

Yield

Serves 6 as a breakfast or brunch entrée, more as an appetizer

Ingredients

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 pound russet potatoes, peeled
and cut into ½-inch chunks
1 pound medium zucchini,
sliced into ¼-inch-thick half-moons
¼ teaspoons kosher salt
1 bunch scallions, white and green parts,
chopped (about 1 cup)
10 large eggs
½ cup grated Grana Padano
½ cup milk

Recipe

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large ovenproof nonstick skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the potatoes and cook until browned on the edges, about 5 minutes. Add the zucchini, and season with 1 teaspoon of the salt.

Cook, stirring occasionally, until potatoes and zucchini are well browned and tender, about 7 to 8 minutes. Add the scallions, and cook just until wilted, about 1 to 2 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, grated cheese, milk, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt until smooth.

When the zucchini and potatoes are tender, reduce the heat to medium low, and pour the egg mixture into the skillet. Cook, moving the skillet around to expose all parts of it to the flame and create a bottom crust on the frittata, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Bake until the frittata is set all the way through (insert a knife in the center to check) and the top is golden brown, about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove, and let cool 10 minutes.

To unmold, slide the frittata onto a cutting board and cut if serving it warm. It is also delicious at room temperature.

Blackberry basil spritzer

SPRITZ ALLE MORE E BASILICO

You can use between 2 and 4 tablespoons of the syrup base here for each drink, depending on how sweet you'd like it to be.

Yield

Serves 2 to 4

Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

1 pint blackberries

4 small stalks fresh basil, plus more for garnish

Seltzer, chilled

Ice cubes

Recipe

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, blackberries, basil, and 1 cup water. Bring to a simmer and reduce until syrupy, about 15 minutes. (Watch carefully so it doesn't burn.)

Strain and cool.

To serve, pour 2 to 4 tablespoons syrup into each serving glass, and add 1 cup chilled seltzer to each.

Stir, and fill the glasses with ice. Garnish each with a basil sprig, and serve.



OUR HISTORY

FOR 140 YEARS, OUR TRADITIONS HAVE BEEN
HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION
TO GENERATION.

THE UNIQUE AND UNMISTAKEABLE TASTE
OF PROVOLONE HAS ITS ORIGIN IN THE
"SECRET RECIPE" INVENTED IN 1877 BY THE
FIRM'S FOUNDER, GENNARO AURICCHIO.
IS STILL LITERALLY HANDMADE
BY EXPERT CHEESEMAKERS.



AURICCHIO

1877

Fatto a mano. Da sempre.



UNIQUE RECIPES

THE PROVOLONE
AURICCHIO IS
IDEAL FOR THE EVERY-DAY
COOKING OF EASY,
TASTY CULINARY DISHES.
SHRED, SHAVE OR GRATE.



THIS IS THE HOME OF
AURICCHIO LEGENDARY
PROVOLONE

ATTENTION TO DETAIL,
AN ANCIENT CHEESE-MAKING
TRADITION AND AGED
FOR OVER 12 MONTHS.

MADE BY HAND
SINCE 1877.



THE AMBRIOLA COMPANY, INC. SUBSIDIARY OF AURICCHIO S.P.A.
WEST CALDWELL, NJ 07006 - WWW.AMBRIOLA.COM

11 INGREDIENTS YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE IN YOUR KITCHEN

The first secret to a good meal is a well-stocked and organized pantry. Use very simple ingredients, whose flavors, however, are so intense that they make a difference and allow you to handle any circumstance that may arise, and at any time.

Here is my personal shopping list.

ITALIAN PANTRY



SUN DRIED TOMATOES

Any season is the right season to serve sun-dried tomatoes – as a delicious appetizer or as an addition to sauces.

They take their full taste from the sun, which accelerates the drying process, sweetens them, and concentrates the flavors.

Washed with a water and vinegar solution, left to dry in the sun during the summer (or dried, in the oven or with the aid of a useful desiccator), they are placed with garlic cloves and thyme and covered with plenty of extra virgin olive oil.

They are the ideal ingredient to enrich bread dough, savory pies, muffins, pancakes and thick pizzas.



GARLIC

Garlic is antibacterial, detoxifying and a good friend for the bones.

Garlic is an ingredient that many either love or hate. Regardless, it is an important part of the Italian tradition.

It gives extra flavor to pasta sauces, sautéed meats, vegetables and the delicious array of Italian toasted bread dishes like crostini and bruschetta.

To soften the effect of garlic, remove the herbaceous part inside the bulb; you can also use black garlic, a milder variety from the East.



BREADCRUMBS

A great method for reusing stale bread, breadcrumbs are used in many traditional Italian recipes as binders, for breading and to cook au gratin or gratinata.

Among the most famous recipes we find meatballs and fishballs: breadcrumbs provide a structure by binding with the egg and the seasonings required by the recipes.

Today you can buy breadcrumbs directly at the supermarket but in the past they used to be grated by hand and allowed to dry at a low temperature in the oven or in the open air.



ANCHOVIES

Anchovies are a poor, tasty fish, a blue fish rich in omega 3 and a core ingredient of many traditional recipes.

Anchovies may be “acciuغه” or “alici” and are differentiated by their preservation method: the former are left whole and preserved in salt, the “alici” are filleted and placed under an abundant layer of olive oil.

From the north to the south of Italy we find anchovies fried, on pizza with capers, in a green savory dip made with parsley or in pink sauce known as “salsa rosa”, in bagna cauda - a typical gastronomic specialty of Piedmontese cuisine, in tuna sauce dressings and with spaghetti in tuna and anchovy sauce.



ONIONS

From the same family as garlic, shallots and leeks, onions are found on the market in the most common varieties from white and golden onions, to the very tasty red onions from Tropea.

The taste may vary from delicate and sweet to sharp and enveloping, depending on the variety and the season.

Onions are at the base of almost every sauté and as a result are part of many sauces found in the Italian tradition.

They may also be eaten raw in their sweet and sour variety, perfect for an antipasto all'italiana (Italian-style appetizer).



COARSE SALT

In ancient times it was mainly used as a preservative, and it has several fundamental nutrients such as potassium, zinc and calcium.

Today it is the ideal preparation method for those who wish to eat light: baking in salt particularly enhances the delicate flesh of fish, forming the typical crust; in fact the large crystals, as they partially melt with the high temperature, form a natural wrap that retains the most scented aromas.

Also needed in brine or to salt cooking water for pasta, coarse salt is essential in the kitchen.



CAPERS

The caper is a small wild shrub whose buds may be eaten.

Preserved in oil, vinegar or in salt, they are always welcome in the kitchen of a gourmet.

Traditionally used in the cuisine of the Aeolian Islands and in Sicily, to season fish dishes or, once desalted, just added to salads, today capers are immediately recognizable in stuffed peppers, pesto, in rustic focaccias and in sauces.



HERBS

Aromatic or mixed herbs are essential to provide taste and flavor to every recipe of the Mediterranean cuisine.

In ancient times they were a useful remedy to give preparations flavor without adding expensive salt, but also to disguise the taste of meat and fish that were not exactly fresh.

Among the best known and used herbs we may find basil (famous on pizza margherita), parsley, oregano, marjoram, thyme and bay leaves for roasts, but also mint, chives, rosemary or sage.



GRISSINI

Perfect to nibble on before a meal, perhaps accompanied by cold cuts or soft cheeses, they are irresistible at any time of the day.

These fragrant bread sticks are more practical than the typical slice of bread, more tantalizing and creative thanks to the countless variants that can be created: sesame, rosemary, tomato, basil.

Very easy and quick to prepare, taking into account a reasonable rise time, they may be stored in a dry place for a long time.

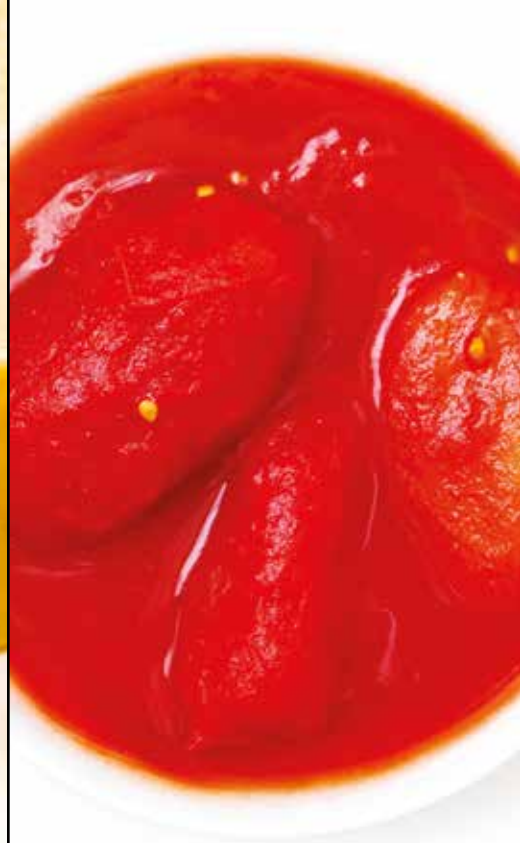


GRANA PADANO

When used in cooking, Grana Padano can be a substitute for salt. It also provides sauces with a certain unparalleled creaminess.

Grana Padano is very versatile: it may be added grated, flaked or, after a quick passage in the oven, transformed into a thin waffle or a tasty and spectacular container in the shape of a basket.

A blessing also for those who are lactose intolerant, Grana Padano is naturally free of lactose thanks to the traditional methods of processing and ageing.



PEELED TOMATOES

Preserving whole peeled fresh tomatoes is the housewives' solution to use red sauce all year round, preserving freshness and flavor.

Easy to store in the pantry, essential for condiments and for the traditional Bolognese sauce, peeled tomatoes are placed in the jars in the middle of summer, when their degree of ripeness has reached peak flavor.

Usually the tomatoes used are Perini tomatoes, such as the San Marzano variety, but there is nothing to prevent the possibility of using cherry tomatoes (ciliegino) or other varieties.



It's wine o'clock

I am more of a white-wine guy, no matter the season, and a longtime favorite of mine is Edi Keber's historic Collio Bianco from the lesser-known area of Friuli Venezia Giulia in Northeast Italy. It's a unique little corner of the world that is relatively untouched by mass-tourism – a slice of Italy that time forgot – on the border of Slovenia and Austria. This region is widely considered by oenophiles and wine professionals alike as the best white winemaking region in the world and Collio Bianco's classic blend of indigenous Friulan varietals (70% friulano, 15% ribolla gialla, and 15% malvasia) make it a stellar example of a wine that truly speaks of the place it comes from. The wine is vibrant, fresh, and full of citrus and apple flavors with good minerality. It is this sharp mineral backbone that acts as a knife for the palate that can cut through starchy, savory foods like Lidia's zucchini frittata and onion crostata, but is also an excellent option for drinking on its own. If red is more



By Joe Bastianich

Joe's life is a culinary adventure. A nice "Italian boy" that has become one of America's premier restaurateurs, a wine specialist as well as a New York Times bestselling author and TV personality.

your fancy, the La Mozza Cabernet Sauvignon I Perazzi hailing from the Maremma in southern Tuscany will do the trick nicely. The hot and dry dessert-like terroir (think old-school Clint Eastwood Spaghetti westerns – they were filmed here!) yields a round, plush, fruit forward wine that pairs well with a number of foods like pasta, roasted meats, and barbecue, making it an obvious choice for summer soirées. Made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, it is well-balanced with notes of blackberry, cassis, a touch of spices like vanilla and cinnamon, and a hint of caramel. This is a wine to buy in bulk and keep around the house all year as you can pair with most foods and it will please most people. Most importantly, there is no need to wait for a meal – it is highly enjoyable on its own. During warmer weather, I like to serve it slightly chilled, at cellar temperature. Cin cin!

Edi Keber Collio Bianco

PRODUCER EDI KEBER

GRAPE FRIULANO 70%, MALVASIA ISTRIANA 15% AND RIBOLLA GIALLA 15%
REGION FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA (ITALY)

Pale yellow with reflections of green. Malvasia Istriana dominates the aromatic and spicy aspect of the wine, and Ribolla Gialla offers the right level of acidity. Intense and dry aroma, with a slightly bitter aftertaste, harmonious, structured and full of personality. The palate is fruity and soft, savory, with a long and warm persistence.



La Mozza Cabernet Sauvignon I Perazzi

PRODUCER LA MOZZA

GRAPE CABERNET SAUVIGNON
REGION MAREMMA, TOSCANA (ITALY)

A truly Tuscan Cabernet, in which the great Bordeaux variety is interpreted with Maremma style: maximum ripeness and highest quality. Intense fruit, notes of ripe blueberry and wild black berries, with hints of spices that express the beauty of Cabernet without ever showing any of the varietal's herbaceousness or greenpepper qualities.





IT'S MORE THAN CHOCOLATE,
IT'S GIANDUIA.

PRODUCT OF ITALY



IN 1826 WE INVENTED GIANDUIA,
BLENDING THE BEST COCOA
WITH ITALIAN HAZELNUTS:
A VELVETY CHOCOLATE PASTE
NOW ENRICHED WITH CRUNCHY
WHOLE HAZELNUTS FROM PIEMONTE.

PROUD SPONSOR OF



CAFFAREL-USA.COM



Photo credit: Meredith Niernan, WGBH.

Lidia entertains

Spring and summer bring nice weather and a desire to be outside. It's the perfect time to enjoy the company of friends and family, relax from work commitments and prepare and even experiment with simple dishes that can be enjoyed around an outside table. Birthdays, anniversaries, graduations are all precious moments to celebrate in this style. Food for me is the key element around which a memorable evening or fun afternoon are centered.

When we organize an aperitif or a dinner at home - perhaps in the garden while taking advantage of the beautiful summer evenings - I like to think that everything that will be served at the table will help bring us together, united from the youngest to the eldest. It is precisely for this reason, that I believe such occasions call for recipes that aren't too "demanding": I'm thinking of simple dishes that don't necessarily require everyone to remain seated at their place in order to be enjoyed,



Together

When we organize a dinner at home for family and friends, I like to think that everything served at the table will help bring us together.

but instead dishes that make it easier for everyone to mingle and walk around freely. Finger food is absolutely perfect for this purpose: small and tasty dishes that can also be impressive, able to satisfy even the most demanding palates with their versatility.

If you do not have a garden of your own, the ideal thing would be to organize a picnic in the park or in one of the city's green areas where, armed with sheets and blankets, everyone will be able to relax on the grass, play outside, have fun with their four-legged friends or perhaps enjoy a romantic sunset.

Obviously a tasty meal consisting of Italian delicacies like assorted panini, rice salad, "crostata" or tarts, pasta salad, spelt or barley salads, omelettes and pizzas work well on these occasions. Of course, don't forget the dessert! You do not need a chef style presentation worthy of an elegant restaurant to make a good meal.



The beauty of these foods is in their simplicity. This simplicity will nevertheless be happily consumed in the company of loved ones.

Italians love to enjoy moments outdoors, and often their picnic baskets become complex treasure troves of delicacies. Eggplant parmigiana, stuffed vegetables and pasta frittatas are a few examples of how far Italians might go to satisfy their hunger; they might prepare an elaborate meal with numerous entrees even though it is intended for a light picnic in the park. For an Italian, the most important thing in life is about being together; however, it's a bonus if you can also eat well during those occasions.

I like making several, simple dishes for my guests when I organize a dinner at home. This way, I have a chance to provide a variety of tastes during the same meal. To amaze your guests and taste a little “made in Italy” authenticity, I suggest preparing these three delectable dishes that also tantalize the appetite of the little ones: fagottini or “purses” of Prosciutto di Parma, squash “erbazzone” and onion tart. These three dishes will definitely give a flare of Italian flavor to your summer evenings.



Prosciutto di Parma “purses” and Grana

FAGOTTINI DI PROSCIUTTO DI PARMA E GRANA

I was first served a similar dish by my friend Carlo at Galloni Prosciutto in Langhirano, near Parma. He took thin slices of prosciutto, stuffed them with robiola, and tied them closed with a chive. A mouthful of flavor. Here I cook them and use an aged cheese, which is more tasty than a fresh cheese. Cook the “purses” just long enough to brown them. Overcooking will make them salty, and since prosciutto di Parma is an air-cured product, it doesn’t need to be cooked to be rendered edible. When buying the prosciutto, ask for slices from the widest part of the ham, measuring about 8 by 4 inches.

Yield

Makes 20 purses

Ingredients

20 sturdy fresh chives, each at least 5 inches long
10 thin slices Prosciutto di Parma,
each approximately 8 by 4 inches
½ cup grated Grana Padano
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Ripe fresh figs, quartered, or cubes of ripe cantaloupe
or honeydew melon, for serving

Recipe

Bring a large skillet of water to a boil, and add the chives. Stir, separating the chives gently, just until they turn bright green, about 5 seconds. Transfer them with a slotted spoon to a bowl of cold water, and let stand a few seconds to stop the cooking. Remove the chives, and drain them on paper towels. Cut the prosciutto slices in half crosswise to make pieces that measure approximately 4 by 4 inches.

Place about 1 teaspoon grated cheese in the center of each square. Gather the edges of the prosciutto over the cheese to form a “purse” with a rounded bottom and a ruffled top. Pinch the prosciutto firmly where it is gathered, and tie around this “neck” with a length of chive. Continue with remaining prosciutto slices, cheese, and chives.

In a large nonstick skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over low heat. Add half of the purses, and cook, shaking the skillet very gently, until the undersides are golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon butter, and cook the remaining purses in the same manner. Serve hot with fresh figs or ripe melon pieces.



Erbazzone with squash filling

ERBAZZONE DI ZUCCA

This tart is delicious and versatile, and can be served small as an hors d'oeuvre, or in larger portions as a main course, with a salad, or with a poached egg on top. Though I prefer erbazzone served warm, they're fine at room temperature, terrific to take on a picnic or pack as a lunch-box treat. Frozen erbazzone can be reheated in the oven (or toaster oven) and is nearly as good as when first made.

Yield

Serves 12

Ingredients for the dough

Makes about a pound of dough, for 1 erbazzone

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Recipe

Put the 2 cups flour and the salt in the food processor fitted with the metal blade. Pulse a few seconds to aerate. Mix the oil with ⅓ cup cold water in a spouted measuring cup. With the processor running, pour the liquid through the feed tube and process about 30 seconds, until a smooth and soft dough forms and gathers on the blade.

If the dough is not gathering on the blade, it is probably too dry. Add more water, in small amounts, until you have smooth, very soft dough.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead by hand for a minute, until it's smooth and soft. Pat into a rectangle, and wrap in plastic wrap. Let rest at room temperature for ½ hour. (The dough can be refrigerated for up to a day, or frozen for a month or more. Defrost in the refrigerator, and return to room temperature before rolling.)

Ingredients for the filling

1 small butternut squash, about 1 ½ pounds

3 cups milk

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 cup Italian short-grain rice, such as Arborio, Carnaroli, or Vialone Nano

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the baking pan

3 large eggs

2 bunches scallions, finely chopped

1 ¼ cups freshly grated Grana Padano

1 cup fresh ricotta, drained





1 cup heavy cream
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 batch dough for erbazzone, at room temperature
All-purpose flour for rolling the dough

Recipe for the filling

Peel the butternut squash, slice it in half lengthwise, and scoop out the seeds. Cut the squash into a few big chunks, and shred them on the coarse-shredding holes of a box grater. Wrap in a kitchen towel and squeeze out the extra liquid. Pour the milk into the saucepan, and set it over medium heat. Add the rice, butter, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the salt, and heat to a boil, stirring occasionally.

When the milk is boiling, stir the shredded squash, and adjust the heat to keep the milk simmering away until it has all been absorbed (though the rice will still be quite al dente), about 12 minutes. Scrape all of the rice and squash into a large bowl, and let cool.

In a small bowl, beat two of the eggs with the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt. Stir into the rice mixture along with the scallions, a cup of grated Grana, all the ricotta, and the heavy cream. Season with freshly ground black pepper to taste, and stir the filling until thoroughly mixed.

When you're ready to bake the erbazzone, set a rack in the bottom half of the oven and preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured work surface, gradually stretching it into a rectangle that's 5 inches longer and wider than the jelly-roll pan.

Drape the sheet of dough over the pan, then gently press it flat against the bottom and rims, leaving even flaps of overhanging dough on all sides.

Spread the filling into the dough-lined pan in an even layer over the entire bottom. Fold the dough flaps over the filling, making pleats at the corners, to form a top crust that looks like a picture frame, with the filling exposed in the middle. Sprinkle the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated cheese over the filling. Beat the remaining egg in a small bowl with a pinch of salt. Brush over the crust. Bake another 25 minutes or more, until the crust is golden brown and the filling is crisp on top.

Cool the erbazzone on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes to set the filling before slicing. The erbazzone can be served warm or at room temperature, cut into bite-sized appetizer, or large pieces, in any shape you like.

Onion tart

CROSTATA DI CIPOLLE

Think of pie dough when you make this dough. Do not work the dough much; you need to combine the ingredients quickly. The assembly is fast and easy. Keep the dough chilled until ready to roll it out for the tart. The rest could not be any simpler, and once it's finished you have an exquisite tart for your antipasto. I love to serve it warm with some tossed greens next to it. It's a great lunch as well.



Yield

Serves 10 to 12



Ingredients for the dough

3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
2 sticks cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes



Ingredients for the onions

4 tablespoons unsalted butter,
plus more for the cookie sheet
3 pounds onions, halved and thinly sliced
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup grated Grana Padano



Recipe

For the dough: pulse together the flour and salt in a food processor. Scatter in the butter cubes, and process in pulses until the butter looks like coarse crumbs.

Drizzle in 6 tablespoons cold water, and pulse until the dough just comes together, about 10 seconds. Add a little more water if it's too dry, or a little more flour if it's too wet. Dump the dough on a floured counter and knead a few times, until it comes together; it shouldn't be too sticky or crumbly. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap, and let it rest in the refrigerator while you prepare the onions.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onions, and season with the salt. Cook until wilted but not colored, about 10 to 15 minutes. Add the cream, bring to a simmer, and cook, covered, until tender, about 10 minutes. Uncover, and increase the heat to simmer away any excess liquid, about 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool while you roll out the dough.

Butter a 15 by 10 inch rimmed cookie sheet. On a floured surface, roll out the dough to a rectangle a little larger than the cookie sheet, trimming the edges to make a rectangle. (If you have a hard time rolling out such a large piece of dough, roll between layers of parchment paper.)

Fit the dough into the prepared pan, letting the excess dough hang over the edges. Spread the onions on the dough, and sprinkle with the grated cheese. Fold the hanging dough back over the onion to form a border crust around the edges.

Bake until crust is crisp and golden, about 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool on a rack at least 15 minutes before cutting into squares to serve.





Italian American favorites

Spaghetti and meatballs can easily be defined as the quintessential Italian American comfort food. The genesis of Italian American dishes can be found in early Italian American immigrant dishes that evolved over time and adapted to available ingredients that were found in the U.S. Often times the Italian American dishes feel like an American cousin to dishes found in Italy, particularly in southern Italy, from where there was a large influx of immigrants.

Italian American cuisine is one that was born from a need to cook food that evoked memories of home but with ingredients found in a new land. Cooking family recipes is always a good opportunity to relive memories and stories that have been handed in the family for generations. To trace the origins of this dish, we must go back to the early 20th century. Many Italian immigrants were able to increase their financial stability and consequently, enriched their diet with more precious meats that were readily available in America. Spaghetti with tomato sauce was a prized dish in the homeland, but the American tomatoes were not as sweet as those found back home. They added garlic, onions and more herbs and spices to



Meatballs

Although we might not be able to find an original recipe for meatballs in tomato sauce in Italian history, we can certainly find various ones now since every home has taken this favorite and created their own family tradition. I will show you mine.

add some flavor. They then made the meatballs from the less expensive cut of meats and added them to the dish and created one of America's Italian American classics.

In Italy, the closest dish to the Italian American spaghetti and meatballs is the ragù alla napoletana or Neapolitan style meat sauce.

In this dish, a few pieces of meat were added to the sauce in order to make use of the leftovers from the weekday meals. However, it only bears a vague resemblance to our Italian American favorite! Spaghetti and meatballs is actually a combination of two different dishes that are known in Italy. Grandma's traditional meatballs were served by themselves. Spaghetti with tomato sauce was and still is an Italian classic.

Other reinterpretations of Italian dishes that are common in Italian American cuisine include sausage and peppers and chicken parmesan. From necessity to virtue: Italian immigrants were mindful of home flavors and nostalgia of their land. Since they were unable to find the same ingredients, they unknowingly created their own new cuisine – Italian American – which is actually known all over the world now.



Spaghetti and meatballs

SPAGHETTI CON POLPETTE DI CARNE

This is one of the most popular and recognized Italian dishes in America that is not eaten in Italy. Strange, you might say, but it is a dish that evolved from the kitchens of the early Italian immigrants in America. It has become one of the favorite recipes in Lidia's Family Table. Here in America meat was abundant, unlike in Italy, so on Sunday the day of families gathering at the table, the sauce for the spaghetti was enriched with meatballs. What more can I say, except for mangia!

 **Yield**
Serves 6

Ingredients for the sauce

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 (28-ounce) cans Italian plum tomatoes
(preferably San Marzano), crushed by hand
1 medium onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
2 bay leaves
Kosher salt and peperoncino

Ingredients for the meatballs

¾ pound ground pork
¾ pound ground beef
1 cup fine dried breadcrumbs
1 cup freshly grated Grana Padano
¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 large egg
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup vegetable oil
1 pound spaghetti

Recipe

For the sauce, heat ¼ cup olive oil in a 4 to 5 quart Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in the onions and cook, stirring, until wilted, about 4 minutes.

Pour in the tomatoes and slosh out the cans with 1 cup water. Add the bay leaves and season lightly with salt and peperoncino. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat so the sauce is at a lively simmer.

Cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 30 minutes. Crumble the beef and pork into a mixing bowl. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs, ½ cup of the grated cheese, the parsley and garlic over the meat. Beat the eggs with the salt and several grinds of pepper in a small bowl until blended, then pour over the meat mixture.

Mix the ingredients by hand until evenly blended, and shape the meat mixture into 1 ½ inch balls. Dredge the meatballs in the flour until lightly but evenly coated.

Heat ¼ cup olive oil and the vegetable oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Slip as many meatballs into the skillet as will fit without crowding. Fry, turning as necessary, until golden brown on all sides, about 6 minutes.

Adjust the heat as the meatballs cook to prevent them from overbrowning. Remove the meatballs and repeat if necessary with the remaining meatballs. Add the browned meatballs to the tomato sauce and cook, stirring gently with a wooden spoon, until no trace of pink remains at the center of the meatballs, about 30 minutes.

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil for the pasta. Stir the spaghetti into the boiling water. Add the spaghetti and cook until al dente. Drain the pasta, reserving 1 cup pasta cooking water, and return it to the empty pot. Spoon in about 2 cups of the tomato sauce, tossing well until the pasta is coated with sauce, adding a little pasta water if it seems dry.

Remove from the heat and sprinkle with the remaining ½ cup grated cheese. Check the seasoning and add salt and pepper if necessary. Serve the pasta in warm bowls or piled high on a large warm platter. Spoon a little more of the sauce over the pasta and pass the remaining sauce separately.

Pass the meatballs, family style in a bowl, or top the bowls or platter of spaghetti with them.

#PureGoodness

Follow us @LoackerUSA



Made with love, craftsmanship and only the finest ingredients, deep in the heart of the Italian Alps.

For nearly a century our founder's values have remained; a love for nature, a passion for baking, and time well spent with family and friends. Loacker contains zero colorings, preservatives, hydrogenated fats or added flavoring...just "Pure Goodness."

www.loackerlove.com

Pure goodness!
Che bontà!



Loacker



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ITALIAN

Italian cuisine is a culinary adventure that begins with tradition and authentic products. It continues to evolve and becomes enriched with memories that are made at the table. Grandmothers' recipes focus on simple, healthy and flavorful ingredients and techniques that continue to inspire children and adults for generations.

Italians are known for their love of food and good cooking; some feel it's even a trait that is present in their DNA. In order to cook like an Italian, one needs to learn three basic principles: choose the best and most seasonal of ingredients; learn and understand basic Italian cooking techniques; acquire a knowledge of how to plate and present your dishes beautifully.

Each time I am behind the stove, it evokes childhood memories for me. These memories are always vivid, yet are often renewed every time I prepare a traditional recipe. As a result, the recipes evolve and change over time and become a part of my personal experiences. When I share a recipe with others, memories and experiences come to life, and it never fails to surprise me how pleasing it is to share them.

There is much more to each delightful recipe than meets the eye. The delicious "palacinke", a typical Istrian dessert linked to my childhood, is a delicacy that I always used to eat as a child. Palacinke are actually crêpes. However, this dish is so much more to me, as they are enriched with memories of my childhood in Istria. Watching my children and grandchildren continue to prepare them and eat them together is an unparalleled emotional experience for me.

When my family moved to America, I brought an emotional suitcase of memories of my homeland with me. Over the years, I have tried to convey my story and where I come from through the recipes that I prepare. Cooking is an incredible way to gracefully pass on history and enrich one's personal existence. Some of my recipes are very Istrian in origin; others are quite Italian American, while many more are very regional Italian. After so many decades of cooking and learning about the history of Italian and Italian American food, I feel like each recipe has a secret ingredient that makes it even tastier and more tantalizing – a great story. My grandchildren love the simplicity and great taste of the palacinke, the same flavors

that I adored as a child. I love the fact that this experience gives continuity to a tradition that continues to evolve.

Italian recipes are based on rich traditions and classic techniques. They have generations of wisdom that come before them; by cooking them we keep them alive and make them our own.

Roasted chicken with potatoes is a classic. It's one of those main courses that says family, holidays and happiness. I encourage everyone to close their eyes, smell the aromas and savor the moment at the table together. For

years, roasted chicken with potatoes has been considered the ultimate Sunday dish of Italy's families.

Italian grandmothers love to serve food to their loved ones. They are the ultimate custodians of tradition, the people who satisfy their family's stomach and hearts at the same time.

I like to do the same thing for my own grandchildren here in America, and it is quite easy since popular Italian flavors are so irresistible in America as well. Fresh pasta, dry pasta, chicken dishes, vegetable based sides and fresh seafood dishes are all welcome at my Sunday family lunch table. Chicken dishes vary considerably throughout the various regions of Italy. Rome boasts a tasty chicken with peppers while Northern Italy's fried chicken is well-known throughout the peninsula. My classic chicken dish is "Grandma's chicken and potatoes." It has extra flavor with a pinch of spice

and the crunch – crispy bacon. It's my signature on a great classic.

The great game of cooking involves experimenting, tasting, exploring and often requires several attempts before feeling completely satisfied with a dish.

Italians are excellent players at the game of cooking and are known not to betray the fundamental values behind choosing ingredients and following closely the techniques.

Even Italian children, at a young age, begin to recognize the beauty of a good family meal.



Grandmothers know

Italian grandmothers hold a secret; they simply cannot wait to satisfy the stomachs and hearts of their loved ones.

Photo credit Michael Heintz



Baked lasagna, egg pasta with Bolognese sauce, risotto, soups and savory broths are all loved by Italians. It is really easy to fall in love with the warmth and bounty of Italian cuisine. Italian cuisine is one that starts from the heart but also gratifies our stomachs. It's about ingredients but also about love – the love of those mothers, fathers and grandmothers who prepared great dishes – and the shared memories that are created at the table while eating them. Roasted chicken and potatoes, veal roasts, meatballs, baked fish, rabbit cacciatore style are much more than meet the eye: they mean home, family, happiness. Recipes of the Italian tradition are closely linked to past memories, and they are a perfect excuse to create new ones. Italian food can be considered a true friend. Those who are already acquainted with it can count on quality and wholesomeness and never be let down.

Those who have not tried it yet will find themselves finding comfort once they are at the Italian table where community, friendship and companionship is all felt. Italian food, especially that of grandmothers like me, is like a hug and an experience of affection to be tried. Buon Appetito!



Italian food, my friend

Italian food is like a true friend; those who know it already know they can count on its quality and wholesomeness. Those who have not tried it will simply surrender to it.





“LIFE IS A
COMBINATION
OF MAGIC
AND PASTA.”

Federico Fellini, Director



Crêpes with chocolate and walnuts

PALACINKE

Truly no different from crespelle or crêpes, palacinke is the name I first used to ask for these delicious thin pancakes. My mother would whip them up for dinner, she often served them with only a sprinkle of sugar, or adorn them with preserves like rosehip jam, apricot marmalade or prune butter. As a child I loved them with any of those fillings, but the most luxurious—and always our favorite—were palacinke topped with melted chocolate. This is hands-down the favorite dessert of my grandchildren. They can eat, roll and fill them faster than I can cook them, and I usually lose count.



Yield

Serves 6 (12 Palacinke)



Ingredients for the palacinke

2 large eggs
1 tablespoon dark rum
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon kosher salt
2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more if needed
8 tablespoons melted unsalted butter
Finely grated zest of 2 lemons



Ingredients for the topping

10 ounces excellent bittersweet
or semisweet chocolate, chopped
1 ½ cups toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped
1 cup heavy cream, chilled



Recipe

For the palacinke, whisk together the eggs, 2 cups water, rum, vanilla, sugar and salt in a large bowl, until well blended. Sift the flour on top, a bit at a time, whisking each addition until smooth.

Drizzle in 4 tablespoons melted butter, whisking until the batter has slightly thickened, with the consistency of melted ice cream (if it's too thin, add a tablespoon or 2 more flour). Finally, whisk in the lemon zest.

Put the remaining butter in a small cup and keep it warm. Put the chocolate in a bowl set in a pan of hot (not boiling) water. When the chocolate begins to melt, stir until completely smooth, and keep it warm, in the water, off the heat.

Heat an 8 inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. When hot, brush with some of the remaining melted butter. Pour in a scant ½ cup batter, rotating the skillet as you do, to evenly coat the bottom.

Lower the heat to medium and cook the palacinka for a little less than a minute, until the underside is lightly browned in a lacy pattern. Flip it over with a spatula and fry for a half minute or longer, until the second side is lightly browned, then remove it to a plate. Repeat with the remaining butter and batter, covering the plate with foil to keep them warm.

Pour the cream into a large bowl and whisk until thick. Sprinkle in the confectioner's sugar, to taste, and whisk to soft peaks. Stir the melted chocolate and reheat it if necessary so it is smooth and warm.

Take one palacinka off the stack and place it with its lacy-patterned side down. Spoon a generous tablespoon of warm chocolate in the center of the pancake and spread it over the palacinka, leaving an inch wide border uncoated. Scatter a spoonful of chopped walnuts on the chocolate layer then fold the round in half, fold again into a quarter-round.

Fill and fold all the palacinke the same way. Serve drizzled with more chocolate, any remaining walnuts and a dollop of whipped cream.





Grandma's chicken and potatoes

POLLO E PATATE DELLA NONNA

Grandma's chicken and potatoes is a favorite meal at our house, but sometimes I want to add another dimension to this, and who doesn't like crispy bacon? To counter the richness of the bacon, I add a little acidity and spice, and that comes from the pickled cherry peppers. This classic is delicious either with or without my special touches.

 **Yield**
Serves 4

Ingredients

2 ½ pounds chicken pieces (use your favorites)
½ cup canola oil
½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
1 pound small red-skinned potatoes, halved
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil,
plus more as needed
2 small onions, peeled and quartered lengthwise
through the root end
2 sprigs fresh rosemary

OPTIONAL INGREDIENTS

4 to 6 ounces sliced bacon (5 or 6 slices)
1 or 2 pickled cherry peppers, sweet or hot,
cut in half and seeded

Recipe

Rinse the chicken pieces, and pat them dry with paper towels. Trim off excess skin and fat. Cut the drumsticks from the thighs. If using breast halves, cut each into two small pieces.

Make the bacon roll-ups (if using): cut the bacon slices in half crosswise, and roll each strip into a neat, tight cylinder. Stick a toothpick through the roll to secure it; cut or break the toothpick so only a tiny bit sticks out (allowing the bacon to roll around and cook evenly).

Pour the canola oil into a deep skillet, and set it over high heat. Sprinkle the chicken on all sides with half the salt. When the oil is very hot, lay the pieces, skin side down without touching, in the skillet.

Don't crowd the chicken: if necessary you can fry it in batches. If using the bacon rolls, drop them into the oil around the chicken, turning and shifting them often.

Brown the pieces until crisp and golden on all sides, about 7 minutes for dark meat, 5 minutes for breasts, removing to a plate as they are golden. Let the bacon rolls cook and get lightly crisp, but not dark.

Toss the potatoes in a large bowl with the olive oil and the remaining salt. When all the chicken and bacon are cooked and out of the skillet, pour off the frying oil. Return the skillet to medium heat, and put all the potatoes, cut side down, in a single layer in the hot pan, pouring the olive oil into the skillet, too.

Fry and crisp the potatoes for about 4 minutes to form a crust, then move them around the pan, still cut side down, until they're all brown and crisp, 7 minutes or more. Turn them over, and fry another 2 minutes, to cook and crisp on their rounded skin sides.

Add the onion wedges, rosemary, and, if using, peppers. Return the chicken pieces—except the breast pieces—to the pan, along with the bacon rolls; pour in any chicken juices that have accumulated.

Raise the heat slightly, and turn the chicken, potatoes, and onion (and bacon and/or pepper pieces) so they are coated with pan juices, taking care not to break the potato pieces. Spread everything out in the pan—potatoes on the bottom as much as possible, so they will keep crisping up—and cover. Lower the heat to medium, and cook for about 7 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally; then uncover, and tumble everything again.

Cover, and cook another 7 minutes or so, adding the breast pieces at this point. Give everything another tumble. Now cook, covered, for 10 minutes more.

Remove the cover, turn the pieces again, and cook in the open skillet for about 10 minutes, to evaporate the moisture and caramelize everything.

Turn the pieces now and then, when they are all glistening and golden, and the potatoes are cooked through, remove the skillet from the stove, discard the rosemary sprigs, and—as I do at home—bring it right to the table.





DISCOVERING ITALY CALABRIA

In order to understand Italian cuisine, it is important to start from the country's regions. The true value of an entire culture is hidden within each single territory. In this issue, we are focusing on the region of Calabria. I visited this wonderful area recently and discovered so much; there is a rustic beauty and a variety of flavors that left me yearning for more. Calabria is a region of different faces, natural beauty and a myriad of artisanal and delicious ingredients to be discovered. When one arrives in Calabria, it is easy to feel right at home thanks to the welcoming nature of the people and the passion they have for their land. There is a dynamic play between "sea" and "mountain" here as the sea breezes to the shadow of the "Giants" of the Sila, the majestic centuries old pine trees that line the long paths and form natural tunnels. Climbing up the mountains and driving down the Tyrrhenian coast, while crossing the Riviera dei Cedri and the Costa degli Dei is a tour that I recommend everyone take into consideration. Allow yourself to be guided by the distinct and unmistakable flavors that are only found in Calabria.

If we choose to start in the mountains when taking this culinary journey, the undisputed protagonist is the Caciocavallo Silano PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), one of the most famous cheeses of the southern Italian food scene. It's a semi hard, pulled cured (pasta filata) cow's milk cheese. Hidden behind its taste is its territory, sweet but savory and, thanks to prolonged seasoning, slightly spicy. Caciocavallo is a cheese that you cannot do without once you taste it also for its extraordinary versatility: it is a meal, a condiment or an aperitif depending on the use one makes of it. It is excellent if grilled or seared in a pan covered with a slice of prosciutto, and to get that touch of melted goodness as well as flavor, you can even try to melt it in pasta or in a 'parmigiana'.

When crossing the mountain, it is impossible not to notice the potato fields that stretch along the Sila, another product that distinguishes Calabria. This potato is appreciated for its excellent culinary qualities, and frying is undoubtedly the most appreciated preparation. The silane potatoes are indeed suitable for this type of cooking due to their pulp which is compact and rich in starch, thus ensuring crispness. It was enough for me to cut the potato in half and view the consistency and color to understand the flavor.



Caciocavallo

The origin of the name is still uncertain, but it is likely that it derives from the fact that the caciocavallo forms are hung in pairs "horseback" a horizontal wooden beams.





Licorice

Some of the best licorice plants in the world grow spontaneously in the areas of Rossano and Corigliano, and this prized ingredient is often used in kitchens throughout the region. If you get the chance, also try the much appreciated licorice liqueur.

Crossing the Sila, you can descend along the Crotona Valley: I have a pleasant memory even from that area, both for the view and for the flavors it offers. There I had the pleasure of eating on the farm of Caterina Ceraudo, a young and innovative chef who has the ability to conserve the flavors of her beloved Calabria, while enriching them and creating exquisite dishes which are never ordinary. This part of Calabria offers pecorino from Crotona, a cheese with a strong flavor, soft and slightly acidic with a thin crust. It is best paired with one of the oldest wines of the area, the Cirò, a robust wine that perfectly accompanies the true flavors of the Calabrian tradition.

Here too I felt the true character of that region, along with the warmth of the people, so passionate and welcoming. In fact, in Calabria the principle of hospitality reigns, especially when sitting at the table, without formality. It is not necessary to program a lunch or dinner, just open your pantry and prepare a table of tradition and genuine cuisine, without too many additions. The luxury of Calabrian food is that it does not need condiments to emphasize the flavors since the products are so unique and delicious by themselves.

Queen of this flavor is definitely the 'nduja, which you will find everywhere in Calabria, but is only





produced in the territory of Vibo Valentia, mainly in the area of Spilinga, a territory that thrives on agriculture, livestock and pastoralism. This unusual name indicates a soft sausage made of pork, spices and hot chili pepper and can be eaten alone, spread on toast, or as a condiment for different dishes, whether pasta or pizza, but also for tomato sauce or on semi-mature cheeses. I guarantee that you will enjoy this specialty and its potential in the kitchen. 'Nduja has been discovered by cooks and chefs worldwide; in fact, it is not unusual to find it on menus in New York restaurants. Calabria shines in so many flavors and smells of the region. All I had to do was to keep going south for further confirmation: when stopping in Tropea my attention – both visual and olfac-









‘Nduja

‘Nduja is a “poor” food that was born for practical needs. Since meat needed to be preserved, the powerful Calabrian chili pepper was used, and ‘nduja was eventually born.

tory - was immediately captured by the onion braids which hang from hooks everywhere. The red Tropea onion has an unmistakable flavor, whichever way you use it: raw to enhance salads, or cooked, in pastas or in main dishes and even for pies and jams. If you want to fully appreciate the flavor of the onion and learn the many ways to use it, visit Calabria in August. Perhaps the temperatures will be high, but it will be worth it because you will appreciate the Tropea Onion Festival, which is held in the square of Ricadi, a small town near Tropea, every summer since 1978. Events like these, called ‘Sagra’, are frequent in Calabria, especially in the summer, and are an opportunity to learn about the excellence of this territory and get in touch with a world of flavors and smells that have been preserved for centuries.

As you travel beyond Tropea further south, you approach Reggio Calabria, the final tip of the boot. It is here that one identifies the scent of bergamot, the “green gold” of the region. Bergamot has a reputation for being difficult to use; in reality, it is very versatile. It is good with fish, tasty meats and in many traditional desserts. I chose to use in a risotto, a recipe that you will find in the following pages. I found so much in Calabria, a place whose history stems from the table and from the flavors that are purely Calabrian. You will find some of my favorite recipes that use these ingredients in the next few pages.

Eggplants, onions, and potatoes

MELANZANE, CIPOLLE E PATATE

When summer is in full swing and there are mounds and mounds of beautiful purple eggplants available, here's a wonderfully tasty and refreshing salad you can make with them. And since the eggplant is poached rather than fried, it is a light and healthful dish. The flavors and textures of this vegetable trio - eggplant, onion, and potato - are quite harmonious. However, if you are really watching the starches, you can cut the volume of potatoes in half, or omit them altogether, and double the amount of eggplant.



Yield

Serves 6



Ingredients

2 small firm eggplants (about 1 pound)
1 pound small red onions
1 pound russet potatoes
1½ cups plus 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon packed fresh mint leaves, shredded
½ teaspoon dried oregano



Recipe

Trim the ends from the eggplants, and shave off some lengthwise strips of the skin with a vegetable peeler, leaving some strips on, creating a striped appearance.

Slice the eggplants on the bias into 6 or more long wedges, about 1 inch thick. Peel the red onions, and slice them lengthwise into quarter-round wedges, not cutting at the root; you want the wedges attached.

To poach the eggplants and onions: put 1½ cups of the vinegar and 2 quarts cold water in the shallow saucepan, and heat to a boil.

Add the eggplant and onions, cover and simmer very tender, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, put the whole potatoes in another pot, with water to cover them by about 2 inches, and cook just until the potatoes are easily pierced with knife, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Drain the potatoes, and let them cool briefly. Peel off the skins, and cut them in half lengthwise, then crosswise into ½-inch-thick half-rounds. Put the potato pieces a large bowl, and cover to keep them warm.

When the eggplant and onions are fully cooked, drain carefully and set on a kitchen towel to drain. While still warm, remove any large clumps of seeds, then cut them crosswise into 2-inch chunks. Separate the onion wedges, and then the layers.

Put all the vegetable pieces in the bowl with the potatoes. Drizzle with the olive oil, remaining 2 tablespoons vinegar, salt, mint and oregano. Toss to coat and serve warm.



Calabrese salad

INSALATA CALABRESE

Peppers play a central role in this Calabrian version of potato salad. Fresh green peppers are fried as a main salad ingredient; and peperoncino, dried crushed red-pepper flakes, serves as an essential seasoning. The peppers you want for this are the slender, long ones with sweet, tender flesh, which I have always just called “Italian frying peppers.”

These days, with the greater popularity of peppers and chilis here in America, markets sell a number of varieties that are suitable for frying, such as banana peppers, wax peppers, Hungarian peppers, and Cubanelle peppers. In addition to this delicious salad with potatoes, you’ll find many wonderful uses for fresh peppers, fried Italian-style. Season them with olive oil and slices of garlic, let them marinate, and enjoy them as part of an antipasto or layered in a sandwich. Or sprinkle a little wine vinegar on the peppers (with the olive oil and garlic) for a condiment like salad that is just perfect with grilled fish or chicken.

Yield

Serves 6

Ingredients

1 pound russet potatoes
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
6 Italian frying peppers (also called banana peppers and Cubanelles), preferably 5 inches or longer
12 plump garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
1 small red onion, halved and very thinly sliced
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon peperoncino, or to taste
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Recipe

Put the whole potatoes in a pot with water to cover them by about 2 inches. Bring to a simmer and cook until tender and easily pierced with a knife, about 25 to 30 minutes. Drain, peel and halve lengthwise. Cut into 12 inch half moons and put in a large bowl to keep warm.

Pour ¼ cup of the olive oil into a large skillet and set over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, lay in the peppers and cook for a couple of minutes, until they’re sizzling and starting to color on one side, then turn them and brown the other side. Keep turning and moving the peppers around so they cook and color evenly.

After 5 minutes, when the peppers have been turned a couple of times and are sizzling nicely, scatter the garlic cloves in between them. Weight the peppers with another heavy skillet for more thorough browning.

Cook for another 5 minutes or more, rotating the peppers a couple of times, until browned and blistered on all surfaces. Remove from the heat, and let the peppers cool for a few minutes, with the weight still in place.

When the peppers can be handled, stem, seed, peel and cut into 1 inch strips.

Put the warm peppers in the bowl with the tomatoes.

Add the red onions and sprinkle with the salt and peperoncino.

Drizzle the remaining ¼ cup olive oil and the vinegar on the vegetables, and toss well.

Remove garlic and serve right away.

Pork chops shepherd-style

MAIALE ALL'USO DEI PASTORI

Juicy pork chops, smothered with slowly cooked onions and topped with melted cheese, are certain to make mouths water. You can prepare these in advance—browning the chops and cooking the onions—then complete the skillet cooking and baking as your guests are seated. Thick chops from the pork loin are my favorite, and the ones used in the recipe.

Leaner rib chops will work as well but should be cooked a few minutes less.

Yield

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 bone-in pork loin chops, about 1 inch thick,
about 8 ounces each
2 teaspoons kosher salt
All-purpose flour, for dredging
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 medium onions, halved and thinly sliced
(about 4 cups)
3 plump garlic cloves, sliced
6 ounce chunk provola or provolone,
preferably imported from Italy, thickly sliced
1 cup dry white wine
½ cup grated Grana Padano

Recipe

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Trim excess fat from the pork chops, leaving only a thin layer on the edges. Season both sides of the chops with 1 teaspoon of the salt. Spread the flour on a plate, and dredge the chops, lightly coating both sides with flour.

Pour the olive oil a large skillet over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the chops and cook until well browned on both sides, about 3 minutes per side. Remove to a plate.

Scatter the onions and garlic in the skillet, stir and season with the remaining salt, and cover. Cook the onions slowly, stirring occasionally, and scraping the pan bottom to mix the crusty browned bits with the onion juices.

After the onions have cooked for 15 minutes or so, and are quite tender and colored with the pan scrapings, uncover, and push them all to one side of the skillet. Lay the pork chops back in, spooning a layer of onions on the top of each chop. Lay the provola slices over the onions. Raise the heat, and when the meat is sizzling again, pour the wine into the skillet (in the spaces between the chops). Swirl the pan so the wine flows all through it, and bring to a boil. Sprinkle the chops with the grated cheese.

Bake until the chops are cooked through and the cheese is browned and bubbly, about 10 minutes.







Bergamotto risotto

RISOTTO AL BERGAMOTTO

I love using Calabrian bergamot in this risotto because of the intensely flavorful and fragrant oils in its rind. (It's also prized in the perfume industry for this same reason!). If you can't find bergamot, use sour orange or a combination of lime and regular orange juice/zest.

Yield

Serves 6

Ingredients

7 cups chicken or vegetable broth
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 sweet onion, finely chopped
2 shallots, finely chopped
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Zest of 1 bergamot, plus ¼ cup juice
2 cups short-grained Italian rice, either Arborio, Carnaroli or Vialone Nano
½ cup dry white wine
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 cup freshly grated Grana Padano
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Recipe

Pour the stock into a large pot and bring it to a boil. Cover and keep it hot over very low heat, on a burner close to the risotto pan.

Put the oil, onions, shallots and half of the salt in a large pan and set over medium heat. Cook the onions slowly, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, as they sweat and soften, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Ladle ½ cup of the hot stock into the onions, stir well, and continue to cook the onions over low to medium heat, for another 5 minutes, until the stock has evaporated.

When the onions are completely devoid of stock, add the rice and stir with the onions. Cook for about 3 minutes until the rice grains have been toasted.

Pour in the wine all at once and cook with the rice for 2 to 3 minutes, over medium heat. Stir constantly all around the pan, until the wine has evaporated.

Add the bergamot juice to 2 cups of the hot stock, and add to the rice, stir it well all around the pan. Add another ½ teaspoon of salt, lower the heat, to maintain a gentle perk and continue stirring.

Continue adding stock as needed to keep the rice covered, stirring frequently until the rice is cooked but still al dente. The total cooking time for the rice should be around 18 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in half of the grated bergamot rind then the butter. Stir in grated cheese and freshly ground pepper to taste, whisking all with a wooden spoon.

When nice and creamy, serve the risotto immediately in heated bowls, sprinkled with remaining grated bergamot rind.





It's summertime!

We await its arrival throughout the winter, and once it arrives, summer definitely makes its presence felt. Although the heat can be unbearable at times, light and fresh summer dishes provide a great mood that goes along beautifully with sunny days. Fresh and delicious light foods have a special, flavorful quality that often does not involve lengthy cooking. At the same time, they still provide those fun filled and joyful moments in the kitchen. Barbecue is a tradition of America that I adore. I enjoy barbecues on a sunny afternoon or at dusk. Barbecue is ideal for those who love to transform nature's delicious ingredients into wonderful food. The occasion is perfect to get the whole family and guests involved. You can simply place all the necessary ingredients on a table so that the guest may dress his or her burger according to taste. Everyone can also add their own touch to the setting of the table. It goes without saying that even when addressing a universally known and appreciated dish, I



The season of flavors

Every dish can also be perfect in the summer, with the right creative touch.

I'll give you a tip for hamburgers.

like to bring my own style and tricks to it. My advice for getting a hamburger to just the right consistency is to start by choosing the right choice of meat. Fat is a fundamental element for obtaining a succulent result, so look for a burger that is not too lean. Take care when assembling your burgers. Shape them by slightly moistening your hands so that the meat doesn't stick to them. Then process quickly in order to prevent the mixture from heating up and the fat from melting. Bread also plays a major role in the perfect hamburger. It should be soft and compact so that it properly absorbs the dressing and does not crumble at the first bite. It should be lightly toasted before adding the meat to it, but at the last minute when the meat is almost ready. A barbecue is a perfect excuse for being outdoors. However, we can also prepare everything in advance in the kitchen and then take it all outside to eat and enjoy the summer weather.

Stuffed hamburgers

HAMBURGER IMBOTTITI

Even the Italians love hamburgers. But in the Italian culture it cannot be only about meat. The Italian meal needs to have balance, so the addition of a green salad rounds out this meaty meal. For the record, the Italian Mediterranean diet is the ideal diet because of its diversity and moderation.

Yield

Serves 6

Ingredients

1 ½ pounds ground beef
½ cup finely chopped sundried tomatoes
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon kosher salt
4 ounces low moisture mozzarella, cut in small cubes
6 large basil leaves, chopped
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Sliced toasted crusty buns, for serving

Recipe

In a large bowl, combine the ground beef, sundried tomatoes, vinegar and salt. Mix the ingredients together with your hands to combine.

Form into 6 equal-sized balls.

In a small bowl, toss together the mozzarella and basil. Make an indentation in each ball and press in some of the mozzarella/basil mixture.

Seal the mozzarella in and press to form patties, about an inch thick.

Heat a large cast iron skillet over medium high heat. Add the olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the patties and cook until cooked through and the cheese inside is melted, about 8 to 10 minutes in all.

To check if the cheese has melted inside, stick a toothpick into the center; if the cheese has melted it will stick to the toothpick. Serve with the homemade ketchup/hamburger sauce on toasted buns.

Hamburger sauce

SALSA ALL'AMERICANA

Ketchup is the all-American condiment, but instead of squeezing the bottle, try making your own version. Note that this recipe can easily be doubled and the ketchup will keep in the refrigerator for a week or so.

Yield

Makes about 2 cups

Ingredients

1 cup finely chopped onion
½ cup shredded carrot
½ cup finely chopped celery
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, chopped
1 teaspoon dry mustard
½ teaspoon cayenne
⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 (28-ounce) can San Marzano tomatoes, crushed by hand
¼ cup red wine vinegar

Recipe

In a medium saucepan, combine the onion, carrot, celery, thyme, mustard, cayenne, cinnamon, tomato paste, honey and salt.

Stir in 1 ½ cups of water and bring to a simmer. Simmer until the vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes.

Add the crushed tomatoes and vinegar. Simmer until the sauce is very thick and flavorful, about 20 to 30 minutes.









Festivities are always linked to good food. There are fireworks, celebrations and lots of good times during the Fourth of July. Food plays a big role in these celebrations and has the power to unite people, create dialogues and create an overall sense of community. Food is one of the secret to harmony; it's also the secret to the great American story. America opened its arms to many who have asked for help, including myself, and has accepted them and allowed them to live by celebrating their identities everyday. There is no better occasion than the Fourth of July for each of us to share our story. Over the years I have been fortunate to witness many people arrive in this country and follow their hopes and dreams. Mine began when I was twelve years old when we left Italy with my parents. At eighteen, I became an American citizen and in my early 20s, I opened my first restaurant in Queens. I continue to dream and move forward with new projects and locations even now!

In summary, this country never ceases to give back the love and sacrifices of its new arrivals. Every day is a new beginning. My American dream was born from food. It was fundamental for me to travel across the United States to realize and understand that everyone interprets Independence Day in his or her own unique way, supplementing and enhancing it with habits which stem from family roots that eventually make their way to the table. The key ingredients in my own Fourth of July celebration are meat and pasta, naturally prepared in my own special way.

Pan-seared steak with pizzaiola sauce

BISTECCA ALLA PIZZAIOLA

 **Yield**
Serves 4

 **Ingredients**

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch strips
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch strips
2 cups sliced white button mushrooms
1 ¼ teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon dried oregano,
preferably Sicilian on the branch
One 14-ounce can Italian plum tomatoes,
preferably San Marzano, crushed by hand
Four 8-ounce bone-in shell steaks, about 1 inch thick

 **Recipe**

Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the sliced garlic. Let the garlic sizzle a minute, then toss in the bell peppers and mushrooms.

Season with 1 teaspoon of the salt and the oregano. Sauté until the mushrooms and peppers are caramelized on the edges, about 5 minutes.

Pour in the tomatoes, slosh out the can with ½ cup hot water, and add that to the skillet as well. Bring it to a simmer, and cook, uncovered, until the sauce is thickened and the peppers break down, about 12 to 15 minutes. Season the steaks with the remaining tablespoon of olive oil and ¼ teaspoon salt. Heat a large cast iron skillet over high heat. Add the steaks and sear on both sides until cooked to your liking about 3 to 4 minutes per side for medium rare. Let the steaks rest for a few minutes while the sauce finishes cooking.

To serve, put the steaks on plates and top with the pepper sauce. Serve immediately.



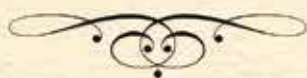


ROVAGNATI.IT



THE NUMBER 1 PROSCIUTTO COTTO IN ITALY*

The selection of the best fresh whole pork thighs, worked by hand, flavored with a family's secret recipe of herbs and spices, slowly massaged and oven steamed: this is how we get prosciutto cotto Gran Biscotto and its unique taste, fragrance and consistency.



**TRUST
THE MARK**



ROVAGNATI
PROUD FRIENDS
OF LIDIA



*IRI market data, prosciutti cotti segment, YTD March 2018





Time to eat

Preparing a meal for guests can be a challenge that every home cook has experienced.

We all hope to make a good impression and leave everyone happy and satisfied.

A great tip is to start with something light that will conquer the palate without excessively burdening the stomach. Seafood makes a great appetizer and does just this.

Juicy skewers of sweet and sour swordfish or shellfish like mussels and clams sautéed with white wine or enhanced with a savory filling are some of my favorites.

The secret is choosing extremely fresh and top quality products. In my recipes, you will find all the instructions to offer delicious dishes that will leave your guests asking for more.

Swordfish skewers glazed with sweet and sour sauce

SPIEDINI DI PESCE SPADA ALL'AGRODOLCE

Swordfish is marvelous this way, but you can substitute other firm fish, such as tuna or grouper; just be mindful each fish has a different cooking time. I had these for the first time at an outdoor grigliata near the sea in Trapani, Sicily.

Yield

Serves 6 as an appetizer

Ingredients

1 cup balsamic vinegar, preferably aged at least 6 years
16 red or white pearl onions
2 pounds skinless swordfish, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
16 fresh bay leaves

Recipe

Preheat an outdoor grill or an indoor grill pan to medium-high heat. Soak 8 wooden skewers in water for 15 minutes (or use metal skewers). Bring the balsamic vinegar to a boil in a small saucepan. Lower the heat to a gentle boil, and cook until the vinegar is reduced to about ½ cup, about 5 to 6 minutes. Set aside.

Drop the pearl onions into a medium saucepan of boiling water, and cook until softened but still quite firm, about 4 minutes. Drain, and let stand until cool enough to handle. Slip off the skins, leaving the roots intact and the onions whole.

In a large bowl, toss the swordfish cubes and onions with the olive oil. Season lightly with salt and pepper, and toss again.

Thread the fish, onions, and bay leaves onto the skewers, dividing the ingredients evenly among the skewers and alternating them as you like. Grill the skewers until the swordfish is just cooked through, about 2 minutes on each side (4 minutes total). Serve with a drizzle of the balsamic reduction, and pass remaining reduction separately.





Spicy stuffed clams

VONGOLE RIPIENE

Ask your fishmonger to shuck the clams for you, leaving them on the half shell, and tell him to reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the clam juice. Then all you have to do when you get home is stuff and bake them. These are best served hot out of the oven, but you can lower the temperature and keep them warm for a limited time before serving (no more than 15 minutes, or the clams will get dry and tough) if needed. If you're not a fan of spicy peppers, you can substitute roasted red peppers or sweet pickled peppers for the hot ones. I warn my eager guests to go slowly: straight out of the oven, the clams can be quite hot if eaten too quickly.



Yield

Serves 4 as an appetizer, or more as part of an anti-pasto buffet



Ingredients

- 24 shucked littleneck clams on the half shell, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ cup clam juice
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped scallions
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Grana Padano
- 2 hot pickled cherry peppers, seeded and finely chopped, plus 2 tablespoons brine from the jar
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dry white wine



Recipe

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Set the clams on a rimmed sheet pan.

In a medium bowl, combine the panko, scallions, grated cheese, pickled cherry peppers, parsley, and salt, and toss with a fork. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons oil, and toss again to make a moist stuffing.

Press some stuffing over each clam, dividing evenly and leaving a couple tablespoons filling in the bowl. Stir the reserved stuffing and the pepper brine into the white wine, and pour this into the bottom of the pan. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the reserved clam juice. Drizzle the clams with the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Bake until filling is crisp and golden, about 15 to 18 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Steamed mussels in savory wine sauce

COZZE AL VINO BIANCO



Yield

Serves 6



Ingredients

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
1 large onion, sliced ½ inch thick
4 fresh bay leaves
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon peperoncino, or to taste
½ cup dry white wine
3 pounds mussels, scrubbed, debearded, and drained
¼ to ½ cup dried bread crumbs, or as needed
3 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley



Recipe

Pour 4 tablespoons olive oil into a large saucepan, drop in the crushed garlic, and set over medium heat. When the garlic is fragrant and sizzling, stir in the onion slices, bay leaves, salt, and peperoncino. Cook for a couple of minutes, tossing and stirring, just until the onion begins to wilt but still has some crunch. Pour in the wine, and bring to a boil. Immediately dump all the mussels into the pan, tumble them over quickly, cover tightly, and turn the heat up. Steam the mussels for 3 minutes, frequently shaking the covered pan, then stir. Cover and cook until the mussels have opened, 2 to 3 minutes more. (Discard any that don't open.)

As soon as the mussels have steamed open, sprinkle ¼ cup bread crumbs all over the pan. Stir over high heat to thicken the juices. Adding more crumbs if needed. Drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and the chopped parsley and toss. Serve immediately.





iDedicati

EACH DISH, ITS OWN
EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL



OLIVE OIL IS NOT ALL THE SAME

Olitalia puts at your service knowledge and innovation and brings to your table always new and unique solutions. Olitalia oils "iDedicati" are the first line of extra virgin olive oils especially designed to meet the different cooking needs and created in strict collaboration between Olitalia and the best cooking professionals.

www.olitalia.com







What a wonderful pasta

Pasta is perhaps the most famous Italian word in the world. I'm not at all surprised since it is difficult to find a more nutritious, versatile and tasty food.

Pasta comes in many forms. We have long, short, twisted, smooth and rough pastas. Pasta can be made of durum wheat or whole wheat or even egg, and the list goes on.

Pastas also have their preferred sauces. Spaghetti goes well with tomato sauce, creamy sauces and fish sauces. Short shapes like penne and tortiglioni are perfect for baking and dense sauces.

The beauty of pasta lies in its adaptability to work with everyone's preferences. Exploring new shapes and combinations can be a culinary game.

But when cooked al dente and seasoned to perfection, pasta will never disappoint. There will always be a combination suitable to whet your palate.



Gemelli with baked cherry tomatoes

GEMELLI E POMODORI AL FORNO

The deep flavor and delightfully varied textures of this pasta dressing develop in the oven, where you bake the cherry tomatoes coated with bread crumbs just before you toss them with pasta. Roasting them this way intensifies their flavor, and the bread crumbs become crunchy.

It is a lovely dish to make when sweet cherry tomatoes are in season, but it is also good with the lesser cherry tomato varieties you get in winter; these can be used successfully here because of the concentration of taste and texture during baking. This dressing is suitable for almost any pasta, but I particularly like it with spaghetti, gemelli, or penne. But because the tomatoes are at their best as soon as they come out of the oven, the dressing and pasta should be cooked simultaneously, and I have written the recipe to ensure that you will have your pasta and baked tomatoes ready for each other at the same time.

Yield

Serves 6

Ingredients

3 pints cherry tomatoes, halved
½ cup plus 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
⅓ cup fine dry bread crumbs
1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for the pasta pot
¼ teaspoon peperoncino, or to taste
1 pound gemelli
10 plump garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley
1 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves, shredded
½ cup freshly grated Grana Padano
4 ounces ricotta or ricotta salata

Recipe

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Toss the cherry tomato halves in a large bowl with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil. Sprinkle with the bread crumbs, salt, and peperoncino; toss well to coat the tomatoes evenly.

Pour the tomatoes onto a rimmed baking sheet and spread in a single layer. Bake until the tomatoes are shriveled and lightly caramelized (but not dried out), about 25 minutes in all.

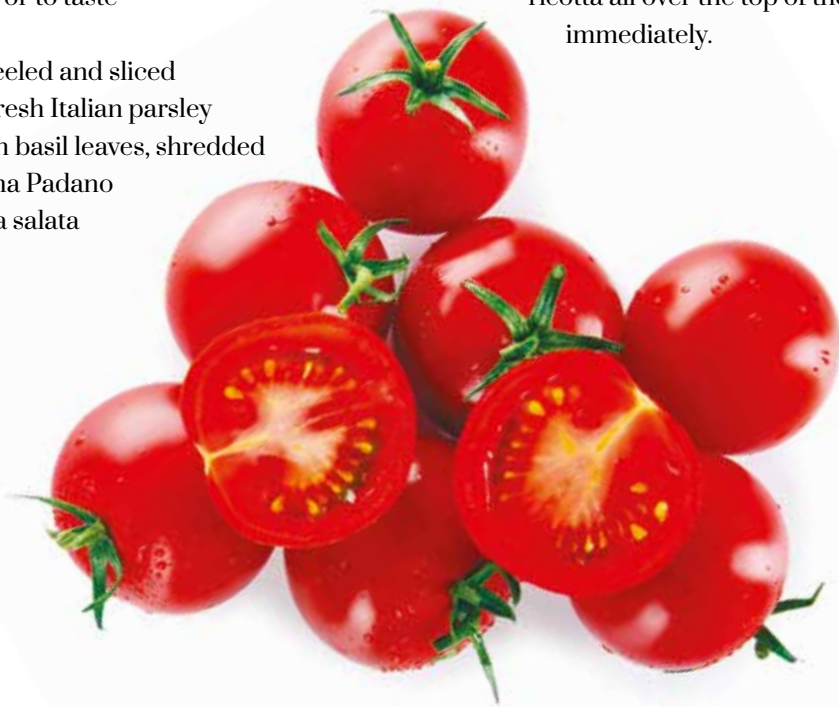
Meanwhile, fill the large pot with salted water, and heat to a rolling boil. When the tomatoes are nearly done, drop the pasta into the pot, stir, and return the water to a boil.

As soon as the pasta is cooking, pour the remaining olive oil into the big skillet, set it over medium-high heat, and scatter in the sliced garlic. Cook for a minute or two, until it is sizzling and lightly colored, then ladle in about 2 cups of the pasta cooking water, and bring to a vigorous boil, stirring up the garlic.

Let half the water evaporate, then lower the heat, stir in the chopped parsley, and keep the sauce barely simmering.

When the pasta is al dente, lift it from the water, drain for a moment, and drop it into the skillet, still over low heat. Toss pasta quickly with the garlic-and-parsley sauce in the pan, then slide the baked tomatoes on top of the pasta.

Scatter the basil shreds all over, and toss. Turn off the heat, sprinkle on the grated cheese, and toss once more. Mound the pasta in a warmed serving bowl. Shred the ricotta all over the top of the pasta, and serve immediately.



Tortiglioni with tuna

Ascoli-style

TORTIGLIONI ALL'ASCOLANA

Ascoli is a city in the Marche region known for its big green olives. They add a distinctive local flavor to this sauce of tomatoes and canned tuna, a pasta dressing found in many regions of Italy. If you can't find Ascolane olives, other green Italian olives will do. Do not be afraid to alter some of the other ingredients to make your own version of this tasty sauce. For example, anchovies add complexity, but you could omit them if you choose. And though chopped parsley is fine, a little mint and or a little oregano could go far.



Yield

Serves 6



Ingredients

Kosher salt for the pasta water

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

3 plump garlic cloves, peeled and sliced

½ cup green brine-cured Italian olives, such as Ascolane, Castelvetro, or Cerignola, pitted and chopped

3 anchovy fillets, chopped (about 1 tablespoon)

½ teaspoon peperoncino, or to taste

One 28-ounce can canned Italian plum tomatoes, preferably San Marzano, crushed by hand

One 6-ounce can tuna in olive oil, preferably imported from Italy

1 pound tortiglioni or ziti

¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley



Recipe

Bring a big pot of salted water to boil for the pasta. Pour the olive oil into a large skillet, and set it over medium heat.

Scatter in the garlic, and cook, stirring, for a minute or so, until sizzling, then add the olives, anchovies, and peperoncino. Cook and stir for a couple of minutes, as the anchovies melt in the oil. Pour in the tomatoes, rinse the can with 1 cup water, and pour that in.

Bring the sauce to a bubbling simmer, and let it perk, uncovered, for about 10 minutes.

Drain the tuna, and break it up into bite-sized chunks. When the sauce has been bubbling a while, stir in the tuna without breaking up the pieces. Simmer the sauce another 5 minutes, or until it is nicely thickened and full of flavor.

Start cooking the pasta about the same time you add the tuna to the skillet. When the pasta is al dente, lift it from the pot with a spider, let drain briefly, and drop it into the sauce.

Toss together until the pasta is evenly coated with sauce, sprinkle with the chopped parsley and toss again.

Serve immediately in warm bowls.





Spaghetti with calamari, scallops and shrimps

SPAGHETTI DI TORNOLA

Just about every region that is touching the sea in Italy (fifteen out of twenty regions!) has a rendition of a seafood sauce to dress a quick plate of pasta. This recipe is from the region of Calabria, which has quite a bit of coast to fish upon, and where the best spicy pasta in Italy can be found. I visited Calabria during my travels for “Lidia Cooks from the Heart of Italy”, and was so happy to bring this dish back with me as a souvenir.

Yield

Serves 6

Ingredients

1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for the pasta pot
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
6 plump garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
4 cups cherry tomatoes, halved; or 2 cups
canned Italian plum tomatoes, crushed
¼ teaspoon peperoncino, or to taste
1 pound spaghetti
8 ounces medium calamari, cleaned,
bodies cut into ½ inch rings
8 ounces dry sea scallops, side muscle or “foot” removed
1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
¼ cup chopped fresh basil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley

Recipe

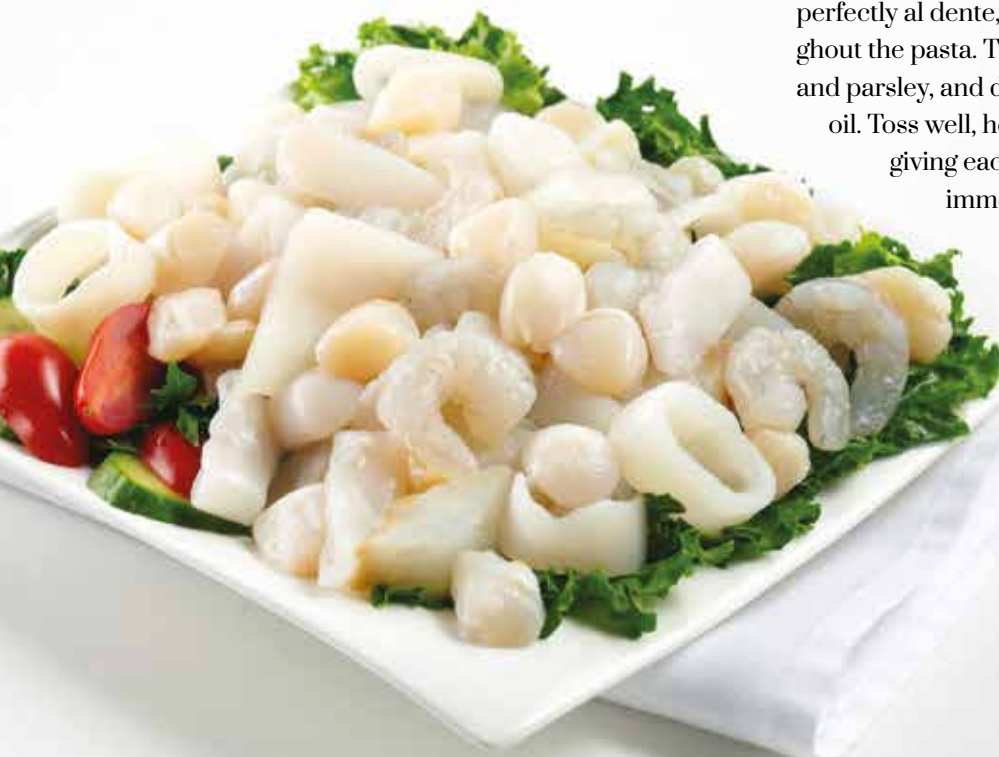
Bring a large pot of salted water to boil for the pasta. Heat the olive oil in a skillet set it over medium-high heat. Scatter in the sliced garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until it begins to sizzle and color, about 1 to 2 minutes.

Dump in the cherry tomatoes, sprinkle on the teaspoon salt and the peperoncino, and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring and tossing the tomatoes, until softened and sizzling in their juices but still intact. Start cooking the pasta first and the seafood right after, so they are ready at the same time.

Drop the spaghetti into the boiling water, stir, and return the water to a boil. As it cooks, scatter the calamari rings and tentacles in the pan with the tomatoes, and get them sizzling over medium-high heat. Let the pieces cook for a minute or two, then toss in the scallops, and spread them out to heat and start sizzling quickly.

After they've cooked for a couple of minutes, toss in the shrimp, ladle in a cup of boiling pasta water, stir the seafood and sauce together, bring to a steady simmer, and cook just until the shrimp turn pink and begin to curl, about 3 minutes.

As soon as the spaghetti is barely al dente, lift it from the pot, drain briefly, and drop into the skillet. Toss the pasta and the simmering sauce together for a minute or two, until the spaghetti is nicely coated with sauce and perfectly al dente, and the seafood is distributed throughout the pasta. Turn off the heat, sprinkle on the basil and parsley, and drizzle on another 2 tablespoons olive oil. Toss well, heap the spaghetti into warm bowls, giving each portion plenty of seafood, and serve immediately.







My grocery list

Life today is often too hectic, and it can affect how one shops for a meal. I personally look forward to enjoying a tasty and carefully prepared meal at the end of any day, and in order to do this, we must search for trusted grocers who can guide us with our purchases. I tend to visit one of the larger grocery stores for some of my staples but never skip a visit to the butcher and the fishmonger who can point me towards the most tender meats and the freshest of seafood.

For vegetables, I love a good farmer's market but will also rely on specialty stores that are consistent and reliable with an array of local and seasonal ingredients. There is nothing like fresh bread from a local bakery, but often the specialty grocers will have a nice selection as well.

By learning to shop more like the Italians, we manage to take home true culinary delights to be prepared in the most diverse and appetizing ways.

Asparagus gratin

ASPARAGI GRATINATI

You can assemble this gratin ahead of time and just broil it at the last minute.

If it's refrigerated, return it to room temperature before broiling. The recipe can be multiplied easily for a large group. It looks beautiful on a platter served family style, or on a buffet table.

I like it hot out of the oven, but it is also delicious at room temperature. You can easily turn it into a lunch or brunch by topping the baked asparagus with a poached or fried egg.



Yield

Serves 6



Ingredients

- ½ teaspoon kosher salt,
plus more for the cooking water
- 2 bunches medium-thick asparagus
(about 2 pounds)
- ½ stick unsalted butter, melted
- ½ cup grated Grana Padano
- ¼ cup fine dried bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest



Recipe

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Trim the woody ends from the asparagus, and peel the lower half of the stalks.

Add the asparagus to the boiling water, and simmer until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain, and cool under running water. Pat very dry.

Preheat broiler. Brush a gratin dish just large enough to hold the asparagus in one layer with 1 tablespoon of the melted butter.

In a small bowl, toss together the grated cheese, bread crumbs, lemon zest, and salt. Brush asparagus tops with half of the remaining melted butter.

Sprinkle with an even layer of the crumbs. Drizzle with the remaining melted butter.

Broil until the crumbs are golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes, watching carefully so the crumbs don't burn.





Halibut with tomato and spinach

IPPOGLOSSO CON POMODORI E SPINACI

This dish is best when the tomatoes are fresh and ripe, but it will be almost as good with canned plum tomatoes. It makes a complete one-pot meal, including vegetables and proteins. I used spinach, but escarole is a good Italian American substitute.

 **Yield**
Serves 6

Ingredients

2 pounds fresh plum tomatoes,
halved and cored (about 4 cups)
2 pounds skinless halibut fillet, cut into 2-inch chunks
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
All-purpose flour, for dredging
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
6 garlic cloves, sliced
¼ teaspoon peperoncino
6 ounces fresh spinach,
trimmed (about 12 packed cups leaves)

Recipe

Put the tomato halves in a food processor and process to make a smooth purée. Set aside.

Season the halibut chunks with ½ teaspoon salt. Spread the flour on a plate, and lightly dredge the halibut, tapping off the excess.

Pour ¼ cup of the olive oil into a large skillet, and set over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the fish and brown on all sides, until just cooked through, about 5 minutes in all. Remove the fish to a plate and keep warm.

Add the sliced garlic to the skillet. Let the garlic sizzle for a minute, then pour in the tomato purée. Slosh out the food processor's work bowl with 1 cup hot water and add that to the skillet. Season with the peperoncino. Bring to a rapid simmer, and cook until thick, about 10 to 12 minutes.

Season the sauce with the remaining teaspoon of salt, and stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Increase heat to high, add the spinach, and cook until spinach is just wilted into the sauce, about 3 or 4 minutes. Divide the spinach and sauce among plates, and serve the halibut on top.



Scaloppine saltimbocca, Roman-style, with sautéed spinach

SALTIMBOCCA ALLA ROMANA, CON SPINACI SALTATI

Veal scaloppine is traditionally used in this recipe, but chicken breast or pork work just as well. The beauty of this dish is that it is easy, flavorful and is a complete dish, vegetables and proteins.



Yield

Serves 4



Ingredients for the sautéed spinach

1 pound spinach, stemmed
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, peeled
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



Ingredients for the scaloppine:

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
8 veal scaloppine, lightly pounded to about 1/8" thick
(about 24 ounces total)
4 slices (about 2 ounces for all four slices) imported
Italian prosciutto cut each slice in half crosswise
8 large fresh sage leaves
All-purpose flour for dredging
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, or as needed
6 tablespoons unsalted butter
¼ cup dry white wine
1 cup chicken stock
or canned reduced-sodium chicken broth



Recipe

Wash the spinach but don't dry them completely. The water that clings to the leaves will steam the spinach as it cooks.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Whack the garlic cloves with the side of a knife and toss them into the oil, cook, shaking the pan, until golden, about 2 minutes.

Scatter the spinach a large handful at a time into the pan, season lightly with salt and pepper and cover the pan. Cook until the spinach begins to release its liquid.

Uncover the pan and cook, stirring, until the spinach is wilted and its water has evaporated, 1 to 3 minutes. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper. Remove from heat and cover the pan to keep it warm while you prepare the saltimbocca.

Season the scaloppine lightly with salt and pepper (keeping in mind that the prosciutto is already cured with salt.) Cover each scaloppine with a half slice of the prosciutto.

Tap the prosciutto with the back of a knife so it adheres well to the meat. Center a sage leaf over the prosciutto and fasten it in place with a tooth pick, weaving the toothpick in and out as if you were taking a stitch.

Dredge the scaloppine in the flour to lightly coat both sides, then shake off excess flour. Heat the olive oil and 2 tablespoons of the butter in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat until the butter is foaming.

Slip as many of the scaloppine, prosciutto side down, into the pan as fit without touching. Cook just until the prosciutto is light golden, about 2 minutes.

Turn and cook until the second side is browned, about 2 minutes. Remove and drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining scaloppine, adding more oil if necessary.

Remove all the scaloppine from the skillet and pour off the oil. Return the pan to the heat and pour in the wine. Add the remaining butter and cook until the wine is reduced by about half. Pour in the chicken stock and bring to a vigorous boil.

Tuck the scaloppine into the sauce. Simmer until the sauce is reduced and lightly thickened, about 3 to 4 minutes. Taste and season with salt and pepper, if necessary. To serve, spoon the spinach in a mound in the center of each plate.

Arrange 2 pieces of the saltimbocca over the spinach.

Spoon some of the pan sauce over the scaloppine and serve immediately.





Eat different

The idea that healthy eating means giving up flavors is an outdated belief. We can take care of our health with flavorful, delicious dishes; in fact, Italians have always favored the Mediterranean diet, which supports this idea.

They favor a greater consumption of vegetable proteins than animal ones and use olive oil, an invaluable condiment.

At home, Italians cook numerous vegetable based dishes, and I assure you that you can prepare a mouth-watering vegetable based lunch with just the right recipe.

Zucchini, eggplants, olives and potatoes can make every meal tasty and genuine – either as a single dish like a “parmigiana” or as a condiment. In both scenarios, healthy and flavorful menus are the result.

Rice and zucchini crostata

TORTA DI RISO E ZUCCHINE

This is a generously proportioned version of the delicious rice and zucchini crostata, or tart, that my cousin Lidia prepared when our family first visited Genova, nearly fifty years ago. She made hers in a small baking pan, and mine is the same, only bigger! I use a half-sheet baking pan (a jelly-roll pan will work, too) lined with the olive oil based dough that has no leavening, is easy to make, and fantastic to roll. The large size of this crostata is necessary, I find, because the crostata disappears right away.

Whether I put it on a buffet in bite-sized party pieces, bring it to a picnic, or serve it as a plated appetizer or main course with salad, everyone loves it—and has to have another piece. And in the unlikely event you do have leftovers, they can be frozen and reheated—just as good as when freshly baked.

The procedure is straightforward and quick, though there's one important (and interesting) step you must leave time for: steeping the uncooked rice with the shredded zucchini. Since squash is a watery vegetable and rice is dry and starchy, this steeping allows the rice to extract most of the vegetal water from the zucchini. In this way, the grain is softened enough to cook during the baking time, and without absorbing all the liquid from the ricotta and milk. The result is a moist, creamy, and flavorful filling.

Yield

Makes 15 or more appetizer slices or several dozen hors d'oeuvres



Ingredients for the dough

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil



Ingredients for the filling

1 pound small zucchini, shredded on the coarse holes of a box grater

½ cup Italian short-grain rice, such as Arborio, Carnaroli, or Vialone Nano

2 cups ricotta, preferably fresh, drained overnight

1 cup grated Grana Padano or Parmigiano Reggiano

2 bunches scallions, finely chopped (about 2 cups)

3 large eggs

2 cups milk

2 teaspoons kosher salt

Butter for the baking pan





Recipe

For the dough, put the 2 cups flour and the salt in the food processor fitted with the metal blade. Pulse a few seconds to aerate. Mix the oil with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cold water in a spouted measuring cup. With the processor running, pour the liquid through the feed tube and process about 30 seconds, until a smooth and soft dough forms and gathers on the blade. If the dough is not gathering on the blade, it is probably too dry.

Add more water, in small amounts, until you have a smooth, very soft dough. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead by hand for a minute, until it's smooth and soft. Pat into a rectangle, and wrap in plastic wrap. Let rest at room temperature for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. (The dough can be refrigerated for up to a day, or frozen for a month or more. Defrost in the refrigerator, and return to room temperature before rolling.)

For the filling, put the zucchini in a large bowl. Toss the rice and shredded zucchini together, and let sit for 30 minutes to an hour, so the grains absorb the vegetable liquid. Beat 2 of the eggs in a small bowl. Fold in the ricotta (breaking up any lumps), then the grated cheese, scallions, beaten eggs, milk, and salt, stirring until thoroughly mixed. When you're ready to bake the torta, preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Spread the butter on the bottom and sides of a jelly-roll pan.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough to a rectangle that's at least 4 inches longer and wider than the pan. Transfer the dough to the pan. When the dough is centered over the pan, then gently press it flat against the bottom and rim of the pan, leaving even flaps of overhanging dough on all sides. (If the dough tears as you are moving it, patch it with a bit of dough from the edges.)

Pour and scrape the rice-zucchini filling into the dough-lined pan, and spread it to fill the crust in an even layer. Fold the dough flaps over the top of the filling, pleating the corners, to form a top crust border that looks like a picture frame, with the filling exposed in the middle. Beat the remaining egg in a small bowl and brush over the crust.

Set the pan in the oven on the bottom rack and bake until the crust is deep golden brown and the filling is set, 45 minutes to an hour. About halfway through the baking time, turn the pan in the oven, back to front, for even color and cooking.

Cool the torta on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes to set the filling before slicing. The torta can be served warm or at room temperature, cut into appetizer or bite-sized pieces in any shape you like—squares, rectangles, triangles, or diamonds.

Roasted olives with orange and rosemary

OLIVE AL FORNO CON AGRUMI E ROSMARINO

Big green Castelvetro olives are delicious prepared this way, but any meaty olive will do well. Just change the baking time according to the size. These olives are perfect to accompany an aperitivo.



Yield

Serves 8



Ingredients

2 oranges

1 pound large green olives with pits
(such as Castelvetro)

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

3 sprigs fresh rosemary

2 sprigs fresh thyme

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

2 pinches crushed red pepper flakes

¼ teaspoon fennel powder



Recipe

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Grate the zest of one orange, remove the zest of the second orange with a vegetable peeler, and then juice both oranges.

In a 9-by-13-inch glass or ceramic baking dish, toss together the olives, olive oil, 2 sprigs rosemary, the thyme, the zest removed with a peeler, orange juice, garlic, and 1 pinch crushed red pepper.

Bake, tossing every 10 minutes, until olives are slightly shriveled and juices have reduced to a glaze, about 30 minutes.

While the olives are still hot, break the remaining sprig of rosemary over the top. Sprinkle with the finely grated orange zest, the fennel powder, and one more pinch crushed red pepper.

Toss, and serve while still hot.



Olive oil mashed potatoes

PURÈ DI PATATE ALL'OLIO



Yield

Serves 4 to 6



Ingredients

2 pounds russet or Yukon gold potatoes

Kosher salt

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Freshly ground black pepper



Recipe

Pour enough cold water over the whole potatoes in a large saucepan to cover them by 2 inches. Season the water with salt, and bring to a boil. Cook until the potatoes are tender but still hold their shape, about 20 to 30 minutes, depending on their size. Drain, and let stand until cool enough to handle.

Peel the potatoes, and pass them through a ricer or a food mill with a fine disk. Gently stir in the olive oil, and season them to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot. For a variation, toast three garlic cloves in olive oil in a large skillet, then let cool to room temperature before adding to the riced potatoes.



Eggplant parmigiana

MELANZANE ALLA PARMIGIANA

This dish conjures up memories of Grandma's house in the minds of many, and part of those memories is love that went into that. An all time favorite.

Frying the breaded eggplant is a traditional preparation, and it's become popular all over, as I discovered while researching "Lidia's Italy in America". But you can make this recipe by just grilling the eggplant slices; it is not as flavorful but it is much lighter and leaner. In Italy this dish has always been served as a main dish, while in America for years it was considered a side, although now you can find it served mainly as a main dish here as well.



Yield

Serves 6



Ingredients

3 medium eggplants or 5 to 6 smaller eggplants
(about 2 ½ pounds total)

1 tablespoon kosher salt plus ore for seasoning

3 large eggs

All-purpose flour for dredging

2 cups plain breadcrumbs

Freshly ground pepper

6 cups tomato sauce

½ cup vegetable oil, or as needed

½ cup olive oil, or as needed

2 cups grated Grana Padano

1 pound fresh mozzarella cheese or imported
Fontina cheese, cut into slices ½-inch thick

12 fresh basil leaves



Recipe

Trim the stems and ends from the eggplants. Remove strips of peel about 1-inch wide from the eggplants, leaving about half the peel intact. Cut the eggplant crosswise on the bias into ½ inch thick slices and place them in a colander. Sprinkle with the salt and let drain for 1 hour. Rinse the eggplant under cool running water, drain thoroughly and pat dry.

Whisk the eggs and a pinch of salt together in a wide, shallow bowl. Spread the flour and breadcrumbs in an even layer in two separate wide, shallow bowls. Dredge the eggplant slices in flour, shaking off the excess. Dip the floured eggplant into the egg mixture, turning well to coat both sides evenly.

Let excess egg drip back into the pan, then lay the eggplant in the pan of breadcrumbs. Turn to coat both sides well with breadcrumbs, pressing with your hands until the breadcrumbs adhere.

Pour ½ cup each of the olive and vegetable oils into a medium skillet. Heat over medium-high heat until a corner of one of the eggplant slices gives off a lively sizzle when dipped into the oil.

Add as many of the eggplant slices as fit without touching and cook, turning once, until well browned on both sides, about 6 minutes.

Remove the eggplant to a baking sheet lined with paper towel and repeat with the remaining eggplant slices.

Adjust the heat as the eggplant cooks to prevent the bits of coating that fall off the eggplant slices from burning. Add oil to the pan as necessary during cooking to keep the level the same.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Heat the tomato sauce to simmering in a small saucepan over medium heat. Ladle enough sauce into a 9 x 13-inch baking dish to cover the bottom. Sprinkle with an even layer of grated cheese and top with a layer of fried eggplant, pressing it down gently.

Tear a few leaves of basil over the eggplant and ladle about ¾ cup of the sauce to coat the top evenly. Sprinkle an even layer of grated cheese over the sauce and top with a layer of mozzarella or Fontina, using about one-third of the cheese.

Repeat the layering as described above two more times, ending with a top layer of cheese that leaves a border of about one inch around the edges of the baking dish.

Drizzle sauce around the border of the baking dish and sprinkle the top layer with the remaining grated cheese. Finish with a few decorative streaks or rounds of tomato sauce. Cover the baking dish loosely with aluminum foil and poke several holes in the foil with the tip of a knife.

Bake 30 minutes, until the cheese is bubbling and golden in places.

Uncover and continue baking until the top layer of cheese is golden in spots, about 15 to 20 minutes. Let rest 10 to 20 minutes, then cut into squares and serve.







It's always dessert time

Who said that in summertime sugar cravings can be only quenched with ice cream?

No doubt it is the coolest of desserts, but it is certainly not the only one capable of granting us flavorful moments of pleasure on searing days.

It is undeniable that the need for something sweet can be felt strongly at times, especially at the end of a generous meal, and this occurs regardless of the how many degrees the thermometer reads.

At the height of summer, however, I must admit I personally prefer preparing fruit-based desserts: in my opinion these are the most refreshing desserts, and they also succeed in the difficult task of getting the youngest to appreciate otherwise disdained foods.

For a hearty breakfast, a tasty snack or just to indulge when feeling peckish, you can try these successful combinations of plums, pineapples and berries.

Plum tart

CROSTATA DI PRUGNE

I absolutely love fruit tarts, any fruit tart; it is my favorite dessert. Prune tart in particular appeals to me—Grandma had several plum trees with plums that she dried into prunes for the winter; dried or fresh, they were one of my favorite fruit. But certainly this crostata can turn into a seasonal favorite every season by changing the fruit; cherries, peaches, apricots, pears and apples are only a few options.



Yield

Serves 8



Ingredients for the crust

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour,
plus more for rolling the dough
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder
Pinch kosher salt
1 stick cold unsalted butter, cut into bits
Grated zest of 1 lemon
1 large egg yolk



Ingredients for the filling

6 tablespoons smooth apricot jam
5 large purple plum, cut into ¾ inch wedges
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon water
1 teaspoon lemon juice



Recipe

Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in the work bowl of a food processor. Pulse to combine. Scatter in the butter pieces and pulse until the butter pieces are about the size of peas.

Add the egg yolk and a tablespoon of ice water and pulse until the dough just comes together (it should clump when pressed in your fingers, but shouldn't be wet).

If the dough doesn't come together, continue to add water, a tablespoon at a time and pulse quickly until it does (You may need up to 3 to 4 tablespoons of water all together).

Dump the dough onto the counter, press it into a disk and wrap in plastic. Let rest in the refrigerator for 1 hour. (The dough can also be made a day ahead, but let it sit out of the fridge for 10 minutes or so to soften a bit before trying to roll).

Dust the dough with flour and roll out to about a 12-inch round. Transfer to a 9-inch tart pan and press into the pan. Roll the rolling pin over the edges of the pan to trim any excess dough. Chill the tart shell 30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Line the chilled shell with parchment and fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake on the middle rack until set, but not colored, about 15 minutes.

Remove the parchment and weights and bake until the edges are just beginning to turn golden, about 5 minutes. Cool on a rack. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees.

Brush ¼ cup of the apricot jam over the bottom of the prebaked tart shell. Starting from the outside edge of the shell, arrange the plums in concentric circles until the shell is filled. Bake the tart 10 minutes, sprinkle the sugar over the plums, and return to the oven for an additional 25-30 minutes or longer, depending on the texture of the plums, until the pastry is nicely browned and the plums are well cooked.

Remove from the oven and cool.

Melt the remaining apricot jam in a small saucepan, stirring in the water and lemon juice. (Strain if the jam is lumpy). When the tart has cooled somewhat, brush the plums with the apricot glaze. Serve at room temperature.





Berry tiramisù

TIRAMISÙ AI FRUTTI DI BOSCO

Tiramisù is a common dessert on the menus of Italian restaurants and in Italian homes. It is certainly a favorite in our restaurants, but it is easy to make at home as well. This dessert is best made a day ahead, to allow the flavors to combine. Any combination of berries—or even just one kind—will make a marvelous tiramisù.

Yield

Serves 10 or more

Ingredients for the berries

4 cups blueberries
6 cups thickly sliced strawberries
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
Grated zest of 1 orange
2 cups orange juice
1 cup chunky blueberry jam
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dark rum
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup superfine sugar

Ingredients for the assembly

2 cups ricotta, at room temperature
Two 8-ounce containers mascarpone,
at room temperature
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup superfine sugar
1½ teaspoons pure vanilla extract
42 savoiardi (ladyfingers)

Recipe

For the berry sauce, in a medium saucepan, combine 2 cups blueberries, 2 cups strawberries, the granulated sugar, orange zest and juice, jam, and rum. Bring to a simmer, and cook to make a slightly syrupy sauce, about 10 to 15 minutes. Pour into a shallow pan (where you will be soaking the savoiardi), and let cool.

Put the remaining 2 cups blueberries, remaining 4 cups strawberries, and the superfine sugar in a medium bowl. Toss to combine, and let sit at room temperature 10 minutes.

In a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the ricotta and mascarpone at medium speed for a few seconds to combine, then add the superfine sugar and vanilla. Beat at medium-high speed until light and smooth, about 2 minutes.

To assemble, soak half of the savoiardi in the cooked berry sauce until moistened, rolling them around to coat thoroughly. Tightly fit these savoiardi in the bottom of a deep 9-by-13-inch glass or ceramic dish. Spoon a few spoonfuls of the remaining cooked berry sauce over the savoiardi. Spread half of the ricotta mixture in an even layer over the savoiardi.

Layer a little more than half of the uncooked berries (you just want an even layer) over the mascarpone.

Soak the remaining savoiardi in the cooked berry sauce, and arrange in a tight layer over the fresh berries.

Spread the remaining mascarpone over this in a smooth layer. Cover, and chill overnight for best results. Combine the remaining fresh berries and any cooked berry sauce left from soaking the savoiardi, cover, and chill overnight.

To serve, cut squares of the tiramisù and serve with a little of the leftover berries and sauce.





Baked pineapple

ANANAS AL FORNO

Most desserts are vegetarian, and this one is easily also vegan if you substitute vegetable or coconut oil for the butter and serve it without ice cream. The pineapple can be baked ahead of time, and rewarmed in the oven or on the stovetop in a skillet. Without the ice cream, this will serve four as a warm fruit dessert—my favorite.

Yield

Serves 8



Ingredients

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

1 cup loosely packed light-brown sugar

2/3 cup bourbon

Juice of 1 orange

1 pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into 8 rings

Vanilla ice cream, for serving



Recipe

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Spread the butter on the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, and sprinkle with half of the brown sugar.

Pour the bourbon and orange juice all around, to soak up the brown sugar. Arrange the pineapple rings on top, and sprinkle with the remaining brown sugar.

Bake on the bottom rack of the oven, basting the pineapple with the pan juices occasionally, and turning the rings once or twice, until tender and glazed, about 50 minutes.

(If the pineapple is cooked and the pan juices are still too runny, you can reduce them in a skillet while you keep the pineapple warm in the oven.)

To serve, put the pineapple rings in shallow serving bowls, and serve a scoop of ice cream over the top of each.





“One of the most unique privileges in the world
is to be able to make wine and experience
the life cycle of the vines.

It teaches humility, respect for life and the earth,
gives us perspective and allows us to discover who we are.”

BASTIANICH

Winery and Tasting Room
Via Darnazzacco 44/2 Frazione Gagliano
33043 Cividale del Friuli (UD)

T +39 0432 700 943
www.bastianich.com

winery@bastianich.com


 @bastianichwines

LA MOZZA

Winery and Vineyards
Monte Civoli - Magliano in Toscana
58051 Grosseto

www.lamozza.com


 @lamozzawines



Ingredient of the month

Italians use a grating cheese often in their kitchens, and so do I. It's not just for topping your pasta dishes; it's important to have on hand for gratins, salads and on a cheese platter. Grana Padano widely used in Italy, and depending on the region, you may see Pecorino Romano and Parmigiano Reggiano.

I like to create a cheese platter that contains a variety of Italian cheeses for my guests to taste. Some of the more popular combinations include Grana Padano, Montasio, Castelmagno, Gorgonzola and Taleggio. I like to serve them with honey and jams in order to create a perfect balance with the acidity of some of the selections. Sometimes I also include dried fruits, such as apricots and nuts, my favorite being almonds. Grating cheeses, like Grana Padano, can be extremely versatile in the kitchen, but we must learn to choose the most suitable aging and variety that is appropriate to the recipe.

Grana Padano is a Protected Designation of Origin cheese (PDO for short and DOP in Italian); a recognition the EU gives to products with outstanding quality and steeped with heritage.

Aged between 9 to 16 months, Grana Padano is a cheese with a rather sweet and creamy flavor, it is an excellent table cheese. Thanks to the moisture it retains in this phase, which guarantees uniform cooking, the cheese is perfect for dishes 'au gratin' in the oven, but also in the preparation of sauces and creams, enhancing the flavors. For the summer I recommend its use in cold dishes: cut into flakes over different salads, but also thinly sliced with 'carpaccio'.

Grana Padano aged more than 16 months is suitable for grating, and therefore an excellent table cheese. Use it for soufflés or even for the 'mantecatura' of pasta, or in risotto and soups. Its strong but not aggressive flavor is able to harmonize the ingredients with which it is paired, making it particularly suitable in the preparation of pizzas, focaccia and croutons, but also fillings for pies and stuffing for meat.

Grana Padano PDO Riserva, matured for over 20 months, has a rich aroma and strong character. Savoring it together with a full white or full-bodied red wine, you will perceive the light spicy note and a prolonged persistence of flavor.



*Our Lidia's family
would love to host your family
for an authentic Italian experience!*



243 East 58th Street,
New York, NY 10022
212.758.1479
felidia-nyc.com



1400 Smallman Street,
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412.552.0150
lidias-pittsburgh.com



101 West 22nd Street,
Kansas City, MO 64108
816.221.3722
lidias-kc.com



355 West 46th Street,
New York, NY 10036
212.397.7597
becco-nyc.com



I enjoy peppering in some Italian words in my recipes. I think it adds to the flavor of the recipes and some words are truly difficult to translate. Using Italian words helps convey the culture's charm and warmth.

The language is a perfect mirror of the complex identity of Italy and its different regions, each with its own special recipes and ingredients, but all of them united in thousands of years of tradition.

Here are some examples of words that are often used and have great depth to them.

Frittata

Depending on the region in Italy, a frittata can be high or quite flat. It can include meat, cheese, vegetables, or even pasta leftover from last night's dinner, as is a Neapolitan tradition.

The ingredients are bound together with scrambled egg. In Italian the word also signifies a problem or a mess, when things are all mixed up. A traditional dish, frittata was often consumed as a meal by those who worked manila labor and day laborers.

Erbazzone

A typical gastronomic speciality of the Emilia Romagna region, a region in central Italy, the name is derived from the chard (often called herbs or "erbe") that fills the dough for this savory vegetable pie.

Because of its ability to be easily transported, the erbazzone was carried as a meal by the rice field workers. Payment for their labor was in rice, which they added to the vegetable pie, erbazzone.

Al dente

Al dente literally translates as "to the tooth" or "on the tooth". Back in history pasta was mainly eaten in soup and probably overcooked for our tastes today.

The Neapolitans, however, used to eat their pasta quite hard, and it is from them that we have inherited this preferred way of cooking pasta today.

When you bite into it, the pasta remains slightly attached to the tooth (dente).

LIDIA'S

ALL NATURAL AND ORGANIC SAUCES & PASTAS

From my family table to yours
— Lidia Bastianich



SAUCES

All Natural
Gluten Free
Kosher
No Sugar Added
Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Made with Italian Tomatoes

PASTAS

All Natural
Kosher
Imported from Italy
GMO Free
Bronze Die Pasta Cut
High Protein Content



LIDIASPASTASANDSAUCES.COM

San Marzano Tomato

It seems that the first San Marzano seeds arrived in Campania in 1770 as a gift from the viceroy of Peru to the king of Naples. The seeds were planted in Campania in the municipality of San Marzano which rises on the Sarno river. They have continued to grow there for centuries in the fertile volcanic soil.

The tomatoes thin skin and compact and meaty flesh, which is not very watery and has few seeds, make it the best tomato for sauce making.

Pizzaiola

The name leaves no doubt. Before the famous Margherita, the classic Neapolitan pizza was the Marinara, which is seasoned with garlic, oil, oregano and tomato. Alla pizzaiola, therefore, means “as the pizza makers do”. It is a sauce that is always present in Italian homes, because it allows for a first and second course all in one: just let the meat cook in the sauce, and then use the sauce as a condiment for pasta.

Parmigiana

A dish that is delicious and has many areas of Italy claiming it as originally their own. Eggplant arrived in Italy when the Arabs imported it from India to Sicily, and the word parmigiana recalls the arrangement of fried eggplant in this dish. Surprisingly it has little to do with the city of Parma. Many variations now exist using chicken and veal as well.

Tortiglioni

Tortiglioni pasta derives its name from the design of the rotating piece, tortiglione, on the machinery that shapes the pasta. A versatile pasta that collects sauce in the interior of the pasta, but also in the slight indentations on the outside of the pasta as well.

Savoardi biscuits

“Biscotti di Savoia” date back to the Middle Ages, and were used by a court chef for a sumptuous lunch organized in honor of a visit by the French royals. Later, these biscuits were adopted “officially” by the Royal House of Savoy. How can we blame them, after all: Zuppa Inglese (similar to English Trifle), soufflé and Bavarians are just some of the desserts you can make with these biscuits fit for a king.

Saltimbocca

Saltimbocca literally translates as “jump in my mouth” and connotes a dish that can jump in your mouth or be enjoyed in one big bite. The best known saltimbocca is saltimbocca alla romana, but the more general saltimbocca seems to have first appeared in the city of Brescia, in Lombardy.



All about Italy. One brand, one mission.

All about Italy has been promoting Italian culture in the US and Germany ever since 1997.

Published in English and German, it is a one-of-a-kind periodical with many years of experience in the creation of synergies between the most prestigious Italian companies and a target readership who is sensitive to and enthusiastic about the excellent cultural, tourist, gastronomic and business characteristics of Italy.

www.allaboutitaly.net - info@allaboutitaly.net

Follow us

 @allaboutitaly
 @allabout_italy
 allaboutitaly_mag

La6 Group srl
Rome - Via Giovanni
Devoti, 28 - 00167

ISCOA GmbH
Munich - Kufsteiner
Str.4/a - 81679

ISCOA USA Corp.
New York City - 1375
Broadway, 15th Floor,
10018 NY

*I would love
to see
what you are cooking!*

Share your recipes and photos;
I look forward
to learning from you!

#Lidiasitalyathome



"My American Dream" is a book of my memories, my journey and my life, which I have chosen to share with readers. My life narrative is filled with food, family, and love of both. It contains my childhood memories, but also describe the path I took, recipe by recipe, making me feel at home in America, where I was given the opportunity to bring my flavors of Italian cuisine to those who wanted to experience it. I loved sharing my story, and I hope you find the flavors of my memories when you make my recipes.

www.lidiasitaly.com/books-products

Eataly is a place where you can...

EAT

SHOP

LEARN

*High quality food and the stories, people, culture
& traditions behind them*



VISIT US TODAY!

New York Flatiron | Chicago | New York Financial District | Boston | Los Angeles

EATALY.COM

AMERICA'S FAVORITE SAN MARZANO TOMATOES

Premium Quality · Sustainability · Traceability

 Mount Vesuvius



Find My Field[®]
Discover *Traceability*

Cento Certified San Marzano Tomatoes are grown in the Sarnese Nocerino area of Italy using traditional, sustainable methods to ensure authenticity and superior quality. At Cento, we understand the growing desire to be informed about the food you purchase, which is why we've partnered with PAC Traceability[®]. Now with Find My Field[®], you can discover where your tomatoes were grown in Italy using your can's lot code and GoogleEarth. Our quality assurance procedures ensure that our strict set of production practices have been followed and allow us to bring the authentic taste of San Marzano to your kitchen.



To learn more about our sustainability practices visit www.findmyfield.com