

Organic Italian Recipes

*from
Fontanaro*



**by Alina Pinelli,
edited by Rick Zullo**

Organic Italian Recipes at Fontanaro, by Alina Pinelli; Forward and Editing by Rick Zullo.

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Please consult a physician or registered dietician before making any changes to your normal diet.

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Introduction

In May of 2014, I spent some time at Fontanaro, Alina Pinelli's agriturismo that straddles the border of Tuscany and Umbria. I thought I was just there to relax, eat some great food, drink some great wine, and take in the celestial panoramas.

Of course I did all that, but I also left with a new appreciation of what it means to eat well in Italy, the country that invented the "buongustaio," long before the term "foodie" was ever coined.

Among other things, I learned that terminology matters—although it can be misleading. These days, the word "organic" as it relates to food choices exemplifies this confusion. The implication is that organic food is of higher quality—and yes, it should be. But you still need to know something about the source of that food, because just sticking an organic label on package has become nearly meaningless.

I know, nobody wants to hear all of this. We want healthy food choices to be made easy for us. But our motivations and those of the marketing forces are not aligned. Therefore we have to do our own research and get in the habit of studying the labels and such.

One of the biggest perpetrators of this deception is the olive oil industry. And since olive oil is the key ingredient in almost every Italian dish, I thought that this would be the best place to start the discussion. I asked Alina if she could clear this up for me, and here's what she said:

Unfortunately, the truth is that in Italy we don't produce enough olive oil even for our own consumption. We import olive oil from Spain, Greece, Morocco, and then it's bottled here, and sold world-wide with the brand "OLIO ITALIANO!"

The most common fraud in the oil sector is to mix seed oil with olive oil and pass it off as extra virgin olive oil. In some cases, it was found that seed oil artificially colored with chlorophyll and beta-carotene was sold for extra virgin.

So it is really important to read carefully the label and if you read "miscela di oli" or "di origine comunitaria" please pay more attention. These are oils to be avoided.



Of course it is always better to buy certified products that are safer in terms of chemical treatments, such as fertilizers and pesticides. This is the most important organic achievement.

The trademark is two olive leaves with the record number and the name of the [Control institute lice ICEA](#).

Tips for Consumers:

- Established a trusting relationship with a reliable supplier. Double check the origins. Better always to buy products that are produced and bottled in the same place (it is easy to adulterate a product when you move it from one company to another)
- Choose qualified companies that, for their professionalism and image, ensure their quality (in most occasions were discovered ghost companies, without charge or head office, who had entered the market very considerable quantities of extra virgin olive oils sophisticated);
- Read the label, although not always guarantee the origin of the oil, does provide a “identity card” of any food;
- Beware of anonymous packages lacking the proper labeling;
- Keep in mind the value for money. In Italy, a good olive oil cost *minimum* of 8-10 Euros per liter. Last year, the worst year of our olive oil production history, the cost was from 12 euro per bottle!



Perhaps the takeaway here is that we can't really take anything at face value. This goes for the quality of the olive oil, but we should extend that philosophy to everything that we put into our recipes. Typical Italian cuisine embraces simplicity, because too many spices and sauces and extraneous manipulation only mask the natural flavor of quality, wholesome foods. By keeping things simple, you let the ingredients speak for themselves. And if they are local, seasonal, organic products, they won't need much coaxing to bring out their full flavor.

OK, let's take a look at some of Alina's recipes. If olive oil is the most important ingredient in the Italian kitchen, I think we can all agree that the most important recipe involves that staple of Italian cuisine. Yes, that means fresh pasta!

TAGLIATELLE

Ingredients:

- 100 g (3 oz) of Organic Flour per person. The best flour to use is durum wheat flour, but plain (all-purpose flour) works fine too.
- 1 organic egg per 100 g of Organic flour (e.g. for 4 people, use 400 g (12 oz) of flour and 4 eggs).
- A drop of very good wine (“MY Wine,” which is “Vino della Passione il Fontanaro,” 100% Grechetto from our vineyard)
- Some water if you prefer the pasta to be lighter.



Directions:

- Make a cone with the flour and flatten the cone at the top to make a well.
- Break the eggs into this well.
- Work the eggs and the flour together with a fork, adding the flour from just around the eggs little by little, until you have a smooth dough, adding just a drop of water if necessary. As soon as you can, use your hands.
- Knead the dough for 10 to 15 minutes, until it is smooth, firm and quite elastic. Don't skimp on the kneading or the dough will tear while you're rolling it out. Leave to rest for 60 minutes in the fridge.
- Divide the dough into two balls. With a rolling pin, roll the ball of dough out into a strip.
- Pass this dough through the rollers of the manual pasta machine until it reaches the proper thickness (usually the next to the last setting). **IMPORTANT:** between using numbers on the machine, allow the dough to rest for a minute or two on dish towels.
- Once you have the desired thickness, allow the dough to rest once more (dusting with a little flour if it seems at all sticky), before you cut it using the machine cutters.
- Dust the cut pasta with flour and allow to dry on dish towels for 1-2 hours, making sure the strands are well separated and not stuck together.
- Cook for 1-2 minutes in plenty of salted boiling water. Keep tasting until you taste a texture which is a little harder than the desired one (the pasta will keep cooking while you are dressing it).
- Drain, keeping some of the cooking water aside.



- Dress the pasta with your sauce (see our bolognese ragù recipe), mixing well and adding some cooking water little by little to help blend it with the sauce. Serve immediately!



LASAGNA

We love to cook lasagna when the fall starts, and every time we create a new version. Here is the basic way to make it, but at our cooking class we do variations with zucchini, artichokes and more!

Ingredients:

- fresh pasta (same as tagliatelle)
- sea salt
- 2 jars of organic plain tomato sauce from Italy or better from our organic kitchen garden
- freshly ground black pepper
- 600 g hand-made béchamel
- 600 g of smoked cheese and fresh *caciotta* cheese from Pienza
- 2 handfuls of 2-year old vintage parmesan cheese, freshly grated

Directions:

- In a large casserole-type pan, slowly fry with 4 tablespoons of olive oil, and finely chopped onions until they are golden, then add the tomato sauce
- Cook for about 30 minutes
- Place on a baking tray a sheet of lasagna pasta, one of béchamel with the tomatoe sauce, then pasta, and repeat the process (we like minimum 3 layers of the ingredients, but it is up to you). Add parmesan and bread crumbs.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6. Roast in the oven for the last 20 minutes
- At the end, add pepper or fresh organic basil

PICI

Pici is a type of pasta with Etruscans origins that is popular in Umbria and Tuscany (sometimes known by different names). Similar to spaghetti (that are dry pasta), *pici* is a fresh pasta, thicker, more roughly textured, and more irregularly shaped than the common household pasta.

Ingredients:

- 400 grams flour
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- pinch of salt
- semolina (one cup)
- water, room temperature
- large working counter/table

Directions:

- Pour the flour on the kneading surface, then add the oil and the salt, and enough water to obtain a homogeneous and elastic dough (one egg can be added).
Add a little water at a time and knead thoroughly before adding more to prevent making the dough too sticky.
- Form a ball with the dough, oil it lightly with olive oil and your hands, and let it rest on the kneading table covered with a tablecloth for two hours.
- After the two hours, flatten the dough with a rolling pin. The dough must be smooth and non-sticky (add more flour and knead a little more if it is), then let rest for two more hours.

- Once you have shaped a disc about 3/4 of an inch or 2cm thick, cut it in strips that are 25 cm (10 inches) pieces and 1 cm wide (less than half-inch).
- Now the hard part!
- Grab one end of each strip with one hand, and with the other start rolling the strip of dough. Meanwhile, with the first hand pull away the string that is forming from the rolling hand, you will obtain your long pici.
- While each one is ready, set it in a large tray where you have previously set abundant white flour mixed with semolina (half and half). This will prevent the pici from getting stuck together.



POTATO DUMPLINGS (Gnocchi)

Our original recipe we share at our classes with Miss Annetta.

Ingredients – for 4/5 persons:

- 1 kg of organic potatoes
- 300 gr. soft natural flour not enriched in vitamins (note that this recipe works only with plain simple flour)
- 1 organic egg yolk
- pinch of salt



Directions:

- Boil potato (with skin) until cooked
When ready, peel them, press through a potato ricer into a large bowl, and wait until it's completely cold.
- Mix together the riced potatoes, the flour and the egg yolk, and a bit of salt. The dough should be well mixed and easy to handle.
- Roll into a sausage-shape, and cut into even pieces
The size and shape can be different (which we introduce during the class)
- Cook the dumplings in salted water until they come to the surface of boiling water then serve with meat ragout or butter and parmesan cheese or pesto.



SAFFRON RISOTTO

Ingredients – for 4 persons:

- 28 ounces chicken stock (better if it's homemade, of course!)
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup carnaroli or arborio rice
- 1 cup white wine
- Large pinch of organic saffron (powder is usually made with chemicals)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus shavings for garnish (optional)
- Black Pepper for garnish (optional)

Directions:

- Bring stock to a low simmer in a medium pot.
- Heat olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat for 1 minute.
- Cook onion until translucent, about 10 minutes.
- Add rice and a pinch of salt. Sauté until rice is translucent, 1 to 2 minutes.
- Add wine and saffron; bring to a simmer, stirring, until rice has absorbed most of the wine.
- Add 2 ladles of stock to rice; simmer, stirring, until rice has absorbed most of stock.
Continue adding stock, allowing rice to absorb it before adding the next ladleful.

- Cook until rice is al dente and mixture is a little loose. Stir in butter.
- Turn off heat.
- Stir in grated cheese.
- Cover and let sit 2 minutes.
- Divide among 4 bowls.
- Garnish each with parmigiano cheese



SPAGHETTI SCIUE' SCIUE'

Sciué Sciué (sciu'é sciu'é) in Neapolitan dialect is an adverb which can be translated as, “soon, soon!” It’s a pasta dish that is made quickly and is very tasty. We think that this recipe landed in Napoli from Elba Island, thanks to some fishermen, which then spread the recipe all over Italy.

It contains good ingredients for a good Mediterranean Diet—but only in the summer because in Italy we don't have organic tasty tomatoes in other seasons.



Ingredients:

- Extra Virgin Organic Olive Oil
- organic tomatoes
- anchovies fillets or paste
- garlic
- salt, pepper, and chili as you like
- For an extra touch, add some capers!

Directions:

- Wash organic cherry tomatoes from our vegetable garden.
- Sauté garlic, basil with stem (if you tear it, it is better, as basil contains a very aromatic oil), some chili if you like.
- Add the whole tomatoes as they are (don't cut).
- In a big cooker, boil 2 litres of water. Add a spoon of salt when it boils. Add spaghetti from gragnano.
- In another sauce pan, sauté the bread crumbs in olive oil, when the color becomes a dark brown, it is ready.
- A minute before the time written in the spaghetti box, drain the pasta and add it to the tomatoe sauce and cook 1 more minute.
- We suggest to add 2 spoonfuls of pasta water to make the sauce creamier.
- To each dish, add a nice sprinkle of bread crumbs and 2 basil leaves.

AGLIONE

Aglione means garlic. Aglione means bigger and better garlic! This is the typical tomato sauce for pasta picci in Tuscany and Umbria.

Ingredients:

- 4 large ripe tomatoes or a large can of peeled tomatoes, chopped
- 6-8 cloves of garlic (or more if you like), finely minced
- 8 fresh basil leaves
- extra virgin organic olive oil
- salt + red pepper
- grated Parma parmesan cheese



Directions:

- Pour 4 tablespoons of oil into a large pan, heat the oil gently, then add the garlic and let it sit in the oil for 1 minute, stirring and preventing it from burning.
- Lower the heat to a minimum if needed.
- Add the crushed red pepper, the tomatoes and the basil leaves (never use dries basil as it tastes bitter and spoils the whole recipe).
- Bring to a boil and add the salt. Stir frequently and, once the whole sauce is boiling, lower to a simmer and partially cover with a lid, stirring every now and then.
- When the tomato has darkened, remove from heat, and adjust salt if needed.
Put them together!
- Bring a large pan of water to a boil, add a pinch of salt, then add the picci pasta all at once, shaking off the excess flour first.
- Let cook 10 minutes, then strain and add the tomato sauce you have previously prepared.
Enjoy

CARBONARA

The origin of carbonara is mysterious, maybe comes from the Umbrian *Carbonari* that taught this dish to the Romans in the Nineteenth Century, while others argue that the inventor is Ippolito Cavalcanti, a Neapolitan noble man who published this recipe in one of his books.

It is also known that spaghetti carbonara was popular during the Second World War when the Americans brought in large quantities bacon and powdered eggs, which were part of military meals, by the inspiration of Roman cooks this dish was born so simple and yet very, very tasty.

Ingredients:

- 1 fresh organic egg per person
- 90 gr spaghetti per person (the best from italy is gragnano).
- pecorino and parmesan cheese 30 gr. per person
- 100 gr. of guanciale (pork cheek) from Norcia. please do not use bacon that is
- skimmed milk or, if you like, cream, or even better, use only the hot pasta water
- pepper and sea salt
- spoon of wine vinegar

Directions:

- Put a saucepan containing plenty of moderately salty water to boil, because our carbonara pasta is created with a very tasty sauce already with bacon and cheese.
- Cut the guanciale into small cubes or strips, put them in a pan without adding oil. Leave it on the fire until the fat becomes transparent and slightly crisp, then add the spoon of vinegar to make it crispier. Remove from heat and let cool slightly.
- Pour away the oil from the guanciale (otherwise pasta will be too heavy).

- Meanwhile, beat the egg yolks in a bowl. Then beat the parmesan and pecorino cheese with the skimmed milk or cream or water from the pasta that is boiling.
- Add more salt and pepper if you are using the milk or milk cream.
- Mix all well, with the aid of a whip, then add the bacon.
- Drop in the pasta and, when it is ready without skipping over the fire, drain and pour into the bowl and mix it together with the previously prepared sauce, then add the yolks.
- Serve the spaghetti carbonara immediately and if necessary add more cheese and freshly ground black pepper.

CACIO E PEPE

This is a classic Roman pasta sauce. Though it is very simple, it does require care. Just pasta, cheese and pepper, and the creaminess of the sauce comes from a few tablespoons of starchy pasta water.

Ingredients:

- 400 g spaghetti
- 200 g freshly grated *pecorino romano*
- abundance of freshly ground black pepper
- Salt, for the pasta water

Directions:

- Set a pot of water to heat. When it boils, salt it and cook the pasta.
- When the pasta is done transfer it to a heated bowl before the pasta water has drained completely from the colander.
- Briskly stir in the grated cheese. There should be enough liquid for the cheese to become creamy.
- Add the pepper, and it's done.
- Should it lack liquid, do not add oil, but rather a tablespoon or two of boiling water.

MEAT RAGÙ



Ingredients – for 10 persons:

- 700 gr. minced beef
- 300 gr minced pork
- 3 sausage
- 100 gr bacon (pancetta) from the butcher off course (not cubes at the supermarket)
- 2 onion
- 1 carrot
- 1 stick celery
- 1 clove garlic, some chili, as you like it spicy
- Parsley



- 3 jars of organic tomato puree
- broth or hot water
- organic olive oil
- half glass of good dry wine (Sangiovese is the best for us)
- salt and pepper
- 3 bones (marrow bones are best)

Directions:

- Put vegetables in a blender and chop finely, then soften in the organic olive oil in a wok or a big frying pan. (heavy not the uncostly ones from the supermarket). (10 minutes).
- Add bacon after cutting with a knife.
- Turn heat and add the minced vegetables and bacon, stirring in until all browned.

- Add the meat and when it turn brown (10 minutes) add the half glass of a good dry red wine.
- When the wine dry add the tomato puree.
- Cook for 2 hours minimum.
- Add hot broth as necessary and cook over low flame until rich.



ONION & SAGE PIZZA

The onion and sage is the typical in Perugia province and ... in Paciano!| PIZZA BASE
BREAD

Ingredients – for 4 people:

- 500 grams of organic flour 00
- 25 grams of yeast (beer)
- 2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup of lukewarm water (better to use mineral water)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

- In a bowl, place the flour, yeast dissolved in 1/2 cup of lukewarm water, salt, sugar, oil and mix well with your hands so energetic for 15 minutes and if necessary add other lukewarm water.
- Make a bread roll and with a knife engrave above with the sign of the cross, and then, for two hours, leave it to rise in a floured bowl covered with a napkin in a place protected from draught.
- In an oiled baking dish, stretch the bread base forming a thin layer.
- Now pizza is ready to be garnished to your taste.
- Put it into an oven for 15 minutes at 220°C.

PORK RIBS WITH SAUCE (*Il sugo con le spuntature*)

Here we are with *il sugo con le spuntature*, an original Roman recipe.

“Spuntature” means pork ribs, and “sugo” is sauce. We use only the ribs from *il maialino di cinta senese*, our local wild pork (the best in the area). Best match is with polenta, tagliatelle or rigatoni dry pasta.

Ingredients – for 10 persons:

- 1 kg of rigatoni dry pasta
- 5 sausages
- 7 pork ribs
- 2 golden onions or 6 shallot
- Organic extra virgin olive oil (to sauté)
- 2 kg peeled organic tomatoes
- 1 bay leaf if you like
- 1 glass red wine
- salt and pepper
- grated pecorino cheese

Directions:

- Sauté the onions chopped coarsely with organic extra virgin olive oil
- When they are golden, add the ribs (chopped) and sausages (without skin).

- When they turn brown, add a glass of red wine and let it cook about 10 minutes over high heat to reduce the alcohol.
- Add the tomatoes and simmer, season with salt and pepper, add the bay leaf, cook at low temperature until finished.
- The sauce should have visible fat. Cook at least 90 minutes.
- Then cook the pasta in salted water, drain and dress with the sauce.
- At the end, sprinkle with a generous amount of cheese.

PORK ROAST WITH APPLE SAUCE

(Chef Luigi Buitoni)

Ingredients:

- 1 kg pork loin
- extra virgin olive oil
- twigs of rosemary
- garlic, wine, salt pepper

For the sauce:

- 5 apples
- water
- wine
- mustard

Directions:

- About 30 minutes before you plan to start roasting, take the pork loin out of the fridge and let it sit at room temperature.
- Preheat oven to 170°.
- In a small bowl, combine the oil, garlic, salt, pepper and herbs – mix until a paste forms.
- Dry the pork loin with paper towels and rub it all over with the seasoning paste. Then set it on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Insert a meat thermometer on a slight angle into the very center of the roast, and transfer it to the oven.
- Roast the loin for 30-40 minutes.
- Take the roast out of the oven and cover it with foil. Let it rest 10-15 minutes.

CHICKEN LIVER CROUTON

(Lucia's way)

This dish is both an excellent hors-d'oeuvre and a good accompaniment for roasts and wild game.

Ingredients – 6 servings:

- 4 chicken livers
- 1 knob of butter
- 1 spoon of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 chopped spring of parsley
- ½ cup of chopped capers
- fresh juice of lemon

Directions:

- Mince the chicken livers until mashed. Then cook them with 1 chopped spring of parsley, butter and extra virgin olive oil. Cook them at a low temperature, so they do not become dry.
- Out of the flame squeeze ½ lemon onto, add the finely chopped capers, check salt and pepper.
- Spread this mixture generously on toasted or fried slices of bread and decorate the dish with lemon crescents and small spring of parsley.

VEGETARIAN CARBONARA

Ingredients:

- 1 fresh organic egg per person
- 90 gr spaghetti per person (the best one is the Italian gragnano pasta).
- 30 gr. pecorino and parmesan cheese per person
- 300 gr. fresh organic zucchini
- 1 shallot or onion
- skimmed milk or cream if you like or even better use only the hot pasta water
- pepper and sea salt
- a spoon of wine vinegar

Directions:

- Put a saucepan containing plenty of moderately salty water to boil. Our carbonara pasta has a very tasty sauce already with bacon and cheese.
- Meanwhile, cut the zucchini into small cubes or strips, put it in a pan and sauté with organic olive oil and shallot (or onion). Let cool slightly.
- Beat the eggs yolks in a bowl. Then beat parmesan and pecorino cheese with the skimmed milk or cream or water from the pasta that is boiling.
- Add more salt and pepper if you are using the milk or milk cream.
- Mix all with the aid of a whip, then add the bacon.
- When the pasta is ready, without skipping over the fire, drain and pour into the bowl and mix it together with the previously prepared sauce, then add the yolks.

Serve the vegetarian carbonara immediately and if necessary add more cheese and freshly ground black pepper.

PARMIGIANA DI MELANZANE

Ingredients – 4 servings:

- 2 eggplant
- flour for covering all slices of eggplant to fry
- extra vergin olive oil for frying
- 500 ml of tomato sauce
- 1 onion and 1 shallot
- some basil leaves
- 150 g of mozzarella cheese
- 150 gr of provolone cheese
- 100 g of grated parmesan cheese



Directions:

- Tomato sauce: put onions, basil and some pieces of carrot in a saucepan with 4 tablespoons of extra vergin olive oil.
- Fry for few minutes, until they become golden.
- Add 2 jars of organic tomatoe suace.
- Cut the eggplant into circles, in slices less than 1 inch thick, and put them in a bowl big enough to hold them all, arrange them in layers, sprinkling each layer with coarse salt. Let the eggplant sit for at least 1 hour, so they can expel a good part of the bitter liquid that characterizes them. Or dry them with cotton.
- Prepare a pan with extra virgin olive oil, and fry the eggplant until they are golden on both sides, and let them dry on a paper towel (you can add some salt, but we don't).

- Butter a baking dish and arrange a first layer of eggplant – with slices arranged side by side without overlapping.
- Slice provolone cheese and deal a few slices on the sauce leaving a little between them.
- Now prepare the second layer, placing the eggplants, and continue covering them with tomatoe sauce, then parmesan and finally of slices of mozzarella cheese, until all of the ingredients.
- Cover the last layer with a good parmesan cheese.
- Put the eggplant parmigiana in the oven at 200 degrees for 40 minutes until the tomatoes will not present the characteristic “crust” golden.
- You can serve your eggplant parmigiana very hot, just pulled out of the oven, at room temperature, or even cold! The day after it is even better!!

PASTA CON MELANZANE

Ingredients 4 persons:

- 2 eggplants
- Flour for covering all slices of eggplant to fry
- extra vergin olive oil for frying
- 500 ml of peeled organic tomatoes
- 1 onion and 1 shallot
- some basil leaves
- 150 g of mozzarella cheese or smoked ricotta cheese
- 100 g of grated Vintage original Parmesan cheese

Directions:

- Cut the eggplant into cubes less than 1 inch, and put them in a bowl big enough to hold them all – arrange them in layers and sprinkle each layer with coarse salt. Let this sit for at least 1 hour, so the eggplant cubes can expel a good part of the bitter liquid that characterizes them. Or dry them with cotton.
- Meanwhile, prepare the tomato sauce by putting onions, basil and some pieces of carrots in a saucepan with 4 tablespoons of extra vergin olive oil.
- Fry for few minutes, until they become golden.
- Add 1 jar of organic peeled tomatoes.
- Prepare a pan with extra virgin olive oil, and fry eggplant cubes until they are golden on both sides and let them dry on a paper towel. (You can add some salt, but we don't.
- Slice the cheese and grated parmesan and put them together in a bowl.

- Now cook the pasta al dente. Heat the sauce with the condiment in a sauce pan and add the pasta al dente (cooked 2 minutes less than required time),
- Add some basil leaves at the end. Serve hot.

TIRAMISÙ

Tiramisù—Italian for “pick me up!”

This typical Italian dessert is very easy to do, even for kids. It comes from Treviso in the Veneto Region where they used to say: “tirame su”



Ingredients – 6 servings:

- 400 g pavesini or gentilini biscuits or general butter biscuits
- 500 g mascarpone cheese
- 300 ml coffee (or 8 little espresso cup)
- 150 g sugar

- 6 organic eggs
- unsweetened cocoa powder and chocolate chips

Directions:

- Separate the egg yolks and whites into two bowls.
- Add 70 grs of sugar to the yolks.
- Put the other 10gr of sugar into the coffee and put it in the fridge.
- Whisk the egg yolks with sugar until the mixture is light and creamy.
- Add mascarpone cheese and mix until you will have a homogeneous blend.

APPLE STRUDEL

Ingredients (6 to 8) servings:

For the dough:

- 200 gr. flour
- 80 ml warm water
- 20 ml. extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon white vinegar
- pinch of salt

For the filling:

8 to 10 apples – select juicy apples
such as golden or pink lady

30 ml rum

50 gr raisins soaked in the rum

40 gr pine nuts

80 to 100 gr white sugar

100 gr unsalted butter

50 gr bread crumbs

1 or 2 lemons yielding at least one teaspoon of lemon rind, plus the lemon juice

1 1/2 teaspoons of cinnamon powder



Directions:

Dough: Put all of the ingredients together in a food processor.

Mix well until a ball of dough is formed.

Coat the ball of dough with some oil & let it rest between 2 warm plates (blocked from the air) for at least 1 hour.

Filling: In a small bowl, soak the raisins in the rum for at least ½ hour, then drain the rum and set the liquid aside for later use.

Peel the apples and cut them into thin slices.

Squeeze lemon juice over the apples, add the rum which was used to soak the raisins and add the lemon zest. Set aside for at least 10 minutes.

Mix the pine nuts, sugar and cinnamon in a bowl.

Brown 60 gr of butter and mix with the bread crumbs.

Add everything into the apple mixture.

Roll out the dough to obtain a very thin sheet of pastry and lay it on a tea towel. The diameter of the pastry should be at least 50 cm. Pour the filling on the pastry. Drop small pieces of the remaining butter on the filling.

Roll the pastry into a jelly roll by lifting one side of the tea towel and using it as a guide.

Once rolled, pinch the ends of the pastry so that filling will not escape.

Place the strudel on a cookie sheet which has been covered with a piece of parchment paper .

Brush the dough with a mixture of 2 teaspoons of melted butter & 2 teaspoons milk

If you wish, sprinkle some cane sugar over the strudel one half hour into the baking.

Preheat oven to 180C. Bake for approximately 1 hour.

CHOCOLATE SOUFFLÈ

Ingredients (serves 10-12 in individual 3 ½ inch molds):

- 9 oz dark organic chocolate for melting
- 4 oz organic butter
- 3 organic whole eggs
- 1 ½ oz of sugar
- 1 ½ oz of organic flour

Directions:

- Melt dark chocolate in a double boiler (or microwave).
- Let chocolate cool to lukewarm, then add butter.
- In a separate bowl mix 3 eggs, sugar and flour.
- Fold into chocolate mixture.
- Butter the molds (aluminum molds, 3 ½ or 4 inches diameter are the most practical).
- Powder the molds with powdered dark chocolate (this is important because that way the mixture doesn't stick to the mold).
- Fill the molds with chocolate mixture up to ¾ full.
- FREEZE the filled molds.
- When ready to cook, do not defrost. Cook in a 350-400 degree preheated oven for about 12 minutes.
- Remove from mold, dust with powdered sugar and decorate as you like with raspberries, ice cream, gelatin, mint leaves, etc.).

CAPRESE CAKE

(Chef Luigi Buitoni)

Ingredients:

- 300 gr. blanched almonds
- 300 gr. di plain chocolate
- 250 gr. butter
- 200 gr. sugar
- 5 eggs
- pinch of salt
- almonds

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 160Â°
- Beat the sugar and butter until pale and creamy, add 1 egg yolk at time, mixing well after each addition.
- Add the melted butter, ground almonds and hazelnuts, the liqueur and the melted chocolate. Mix well.
- Beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt until stiff, and add to the mixture, folding gently.
- Line a cake tin with wet greaseproof paper, pour the cake mixture into it and cook for 40 minutes.
- When cooked, cool on a cake rack and dust with icing sugar

LUCIA'S DELICIOUS LIMONCELLO

Limoncello is an Italian liqueur produced mainly in southern Italy. Lucia adapted a recipe used by her friends in Sorrento. It is made from the zest of Sorrento lemons, so Lucia keeps many lemon trees in her garden (covered in the greenhouse in winter). Limoncello should be served chilled as an after-dinner drink.

Ingredients :

- 8-10 organic lemons: peel them taking only the yellow part of the skin.

Directions (Lucia's way):

- Soak the lemon peel in a glass jar containing 1 liter of grain alcohol (90%) for 3 weeks.
- Add 400 g of sugar to 1.2 liters of water, stir well and boil for 5 minutes.
- When the water and sugar blend is cold, add it to the filtered alcohol from the lemon skin (it will look like paper).
- Place in bottle and keep in a cool and dark place for 1 or 2 months (if you can resist) and it is ready!



Conclusion

I hope that you will try some of these recipes at home and make them part of your family, too. With Alina's instruction, I've been able to make fresh pasta in my own kitchen, along with a few of the sauces in this book. And believe me, if I can do it, anybody can.

The growing consciousness on healthy eating is a good thing, but unfortunately many people associate eating healthy with complicated, restrictive diets. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, our job is made more difficult by all the misinformation out there, but if you just stick to some basic time-tested principles from the traditional Italian kitchen, you'll be eating very well, and the health benefits will naturally follow.

Remember, too, that when learning from the Italians, perhaps we should try to emulate *how* they eat as much as *what* they eat. It's not only about their specific ingredients or recipes, but their dietary habits and overall approach to food and life.

Alina's best cooking advice to me was exactly this: "*Cook with love and be slow! One of the most common mistakes that we all make is to 'run' too much—even in the kitchen.*"

Let's also strive for smaller portions, saying "no" to mindless snacking, and taking pleasure in the social aspects of sitting at the table together. Let's enjoy our meals, by all means. Fretting over your diet and constantly trying to re-tweak the formula to keep up with the latest pseudo-science trends can't possibly be good for you.

Instead, take the time to actually prepare most of your own meals, and if you can, start a little herb garden in your backyard or on your balcony. This in itself can have health benefits, and it will connect you more directly to what you're eating—and to your own body. And for goodness' sake, we need to turn off the television and go for a walk once in a while. In Italy, the evening *passeggiata* (stroll) is just as fundamental to the meal as the pasta and wine.

If you're planning a trip to Italy and want to truly experience the culture beyond the historic monuments and famous art, plan some time to slow down and reconnect with a more natural pace of life. Stop by and say "ciao" to Alina at Fontanaro. She'll welcome you with something delicious from her organic farm. And by the end of the meal, you'll be part of the family, too.

Glossary of Italian Food and Cooking

Acciuga: anchovies

Acerbo: sour; unripe

Aceto: vinegar

Aceto balsamico: balsamic vinegar

Acido: sour, acidic; sharp-tasting

Acqua: water; (acqua minerale is mineral water)

Affettati: cold cuts, sliced meats

Affumicato: smoked

Aaglio: garlic

Agnello: lamb

Agrodolce: sweet/sour

Agrumi: citrus fruits

Al dente: firm; literally, “to the tooth”

Alici: anchovies

Amaretti: crisp cookies made with bitter almonds

Amaretto: a sweet liqueur flavored with almonds

Amaro: bitter; also after-dinner drinks

Ananas: pineapple

Anguilla: eel

Anguria: watermelon

Anice: anise

Anisette: a colorless liqueur flavor with anise

Antipasto: literally “before the meal;” appetizer course

Aragosta: lobster

Arancia: orange

Arancine: fried rice balls with ragù and peas

Arborio: a medium-grain rice used for making risotto

Arrostito: roasted

Arrosto: a roast

Asparagi: asparagus
Asprigno: somewhat tart or sour
Assaggio: a taste
Baccalá: salt cod
Barbabietola: beets
Basilico: basil
Ben cotto: well done
Bere: to drink
Bevande: beverages, drinks
Bibita: beverage, drink
Bicchiere: drinking glass
Birra: beer
Biscotti: cookies (lit: twice cooked)
Bistecca: beefsteak
Bocconcino: any bite-sized food, a little mouthful
Bollicine: bubbles
Bosco: woods; forest
Botte: (wine) barrel
Bottega: shop
Braciola: chop of cutlet, usually pork but also lamb, beef, or game (and even fish)
Bracirole: stuffed rolls; can be meat or sometimes fish
Brasato: braised beef or pot roast
Brioche: generically breakfast pastries; (pronounced as in French)
Brodo: broth
Bruschetta: toasted bread rubbed with garlic and drizzled with olive oil
Bucatini: long thick spaghetti with a small hole
Bufala: water buffalo
Buongustaio: someone with good taste; gourmet
Burro: butter
Caffè: coffee, espresso
Calamari: squid

Calice: wineglass
Cameriere: waiter
Cannella: cinnamon
Cannellini: white kidney beans
Cannoli: pastry filled with ricotta
Capasante: scallops
Capocollo: a hot spiced ham
Caponata: eggplant side dish
Capperi: capers
Capra: goat
Carciofi: artichokes
Carne: meat
Carote: carrots
Carpaccio: sliced raw beef
Cassata: a Sicilian cream-filled layer cake
Cavolfiore: cauliflower
Cavolo: cabbage
Ceci: chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
Cena: dinner
Cibo: food
Cicoria: chicory
Ciliege: cherries
Cinghiale: wild boar
Cioppino: shellfish stew
Cipolla: onion
Colazione: breakfast
Coniglio: rabbit
Conserva: preserves
Cotolette: cutlets
Cotto: cooked
Cozze: mussels

Crema: egg custard
Cremoso: creamy or thick
Crespelle: crepes
Crostata: a sweet or savory tart
Crudo: raw; cured
Cucina: kitchen; cuisine, style of cooking
Cuoco: cook, chef
Dolce: sweet
Dolci: sweets and pastries
Dragoncello: tarragon
Equino: equine as in horse, donkey, or mule meat
Fagiano: pheasant
Fagioli: beans
Fame: hunger, appetite
Farcita: stuffing or filling
Farcito: stuffed, topped
Farina: flour
Farro: a whole grain similar to spelt
Fegato: liver
Fico: fig
Filetto: tenderloin, filet mignon
Finocchio: fennel
Fior di latte: mozzarella cheese made from cow's milk
Focaccia: flatbread
Formaggio: cheese
Forno: oven; bakery
Fragole: strawberries
Frantoio: olive press
Frittata: an omelet
Fritto: fried
Frutta: fruit

Frutti di mare: seafood
Funghi: mushrooms
Fuori stagione: out of season
Gamberetti: little shrimp
Gambero: shrimp
Gardiniera: mixed pickled vegetables
Garofani: cloves
Gassato: carbonated
Gnocchi: pasta dumplings served with a sauce or in broth
Grana Padano: a cow's milk hard cheese
Granchio: crab
Grappa: liqueur made from the must of grapes
Grissini: breadsticks
Grano: grain; wheat
Griglia: grill
Gusto: flavor
Imbottito: stuffed
Impanato: breaded
Indiviola: a wild endive
Insalata caprese: sliced tomatoes and mozzarella with fresh basil and olive oil
Invecchiato: aged, seasoned
Lamponi: raspberries
Lardo: cured pork fat
Lauro: bay leaf
Lenticchie: lentils
Lepre: hare
Lesso: boiled
Limoncello: lemon liqueur
Limone: lemon
Lombata: loin
Lumache: snails

Maccarello: mackerel
Macinato: ground; minced
Maiale: pig; pork
Mandorle: almonds
Manicotti: baked pasta tubes with a ricotta filling
Manzo: beef
Marinara: a plain tomato sauce
Marinare: to marinate
Mascarpone creamy, soft, mild cheese
Melanzane eggplant
Mela apple
Melagrana pomegranate
Menta mint
Mercato market
Merluzzo cod
Miele honey
Minestra soup (usually thick)
Minestrina thin soup
Minestrone thick mixed vegetable soup
Mortadella a large cured and spiced pork sausage
Mozzarella a pure white soft cheeseMandorle almonds
Nocciole hazelnuts
Noci nuts; walnuts
Odori herbs; (syn. erbe)
Olio di Oliva olive oil
Origano oregano
Ostriche oysters
Orzo: barley; small barley-shaped pasta used in soup
Pancetta: saltcured pork; bacon
Pane: bread
Panella: fried chickpea bread

Pangrattato: bread crumbs
Panna: cream
Panna Cotta: literally “cooked cream,” served for dessert
Parmigiano: a hard cow's milk cheese
Pasta Frolla: pastry dough
Pasticcio: pie, pastry, or cake
Pastella: batter
Pecorino sheep's milk cheese
Peperoni sweet peppers
Peperoncini hot peppers
Pesto a sauce from grinding ingredients, such as basil, pine nuts, parmesan, oil
Pepe black pepper
Peperonata stew of sweet peppers, onions, and tomatoes
Persa marjoram
Pesca peach
Pesce serra bluefish, mackerel
Pesce spada swordfish
Piccante spicy
Pinoli pine nuts
Piselli peas
Pizelle pressed wafer cookies, like a waffle cone
Pollame poultry
Pollo chicken
Polenta a type of cornmeal
Porchetta whole roast pig cooked with herbs and garlic
Porcini meaty wild mushrooms
Polpette meatballs
Polpettone meat loaf
Polpo, polipo octopus
Pomodoro tomato
Pomplemo grapefruit

Porco pig
Porro leek
Pranzo lunch
Prezzemolo parsley
Prosciutto cured ham
Provola fresh buffalo's milk cheese; scarmorza
Prugna prune, plum
Puttanesca literally = whores' style; spicy tomato sauce for spaghetti
Rabarbaro rhubarb
Ragù meat sauce for pasta
Razza – skate; ray
Rapini broccoli rabe
Ribollita Tuscan bread and vegetable soup
Ricotta a fresh, mild cheese
Ripieni stuffed
Riso rice
Risotto rice cooked and stirred with broth until creamy
Romano a hard Pecorino (sheep's) cheese
Rosmarino rosemary
Ruspante free-range
Rustico rustic, simple
Salami ground meat cured, seasoned and shaped like a sausage
Salsa sauce
Salsiccia sausage
Sale salt
Saltari sautéed (literally “jumped!”)
Salumi collective name for cured meats
Salvia sage
Sambuca a liqueur made from anise
Sardecche sardines

Scaloppine thinly sliced meat
Sedano celery
Scorfano an ugly Mediterranean fish often used in soups
Sepia cuttlefish
Sgroppino a Venetian after dinner drink made from sorbet and vodka or other alcohol
Sgusciato shelled
Sfogliatelle pastry filled with flavored ricotta
Soppressata a type of salami
Spiedini anything cooked on a skewer
Strega a yellow liqueur made from herbs
Stufato stew
Sogliola sole
Speck a typed of smoked prosciutto
Spezie spices
Spigola sea bass, striped bass; syn: branzino
Spinaci (pl.) spinach
Spuntino snack
Testoni young eels
Timo thyme
Tonno tuna
Torta cake; tart
Totano squid
Triglia red mullet
Trotta trout
Unto oily, greasy
Uove eggs
Uva grapes
Uvetta raisins
Vaniglia vanilla
Verdure green vegetables

Vongole clams

Vitella, vitello veal

Zabaglione a dessert of egg yolks, sugar, and Marsala wine.

Zafferano saffron

Zampone sausage-stuffed pig's hooves

Zenzero ginger

Zeppole a fried pastry

Zuppa soup

Zucca pumpkin; squash, winter squash;

Zucchero sugar

Zucchine summer squash, zucchini