



A Mediterranean Recipe Collection

by Ray Darken

The Mediterranean Food Pyramid, which represents the optimal, traditional Mediterranean diet, is based on the dietary traditions of Crete, Greece, Spain and southern Italy. The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid underlines the importance of the foods making up the principal food groups. Each of these individual food groups offers some, but not all, of the nutrients one needs. Food from one group cannot replace that of another group in every case. All the groups are necessary for a healthy diet.

It is essential to understand that some type of regular exercise is required in addition to any diet to help achieve maximum health.

Before we get started I should say that these are some of my favorites because of their wonderful qualities and taste. However, not all are easy to cook and ingredients may be difficult to find depending on where you live. Unlike the [monthly Mediterranean recipes club](#) where recipes are specifically chosen due to their accessibility, taste and ease of cooking.

The basic elements of the Mediterranean diet are:

GRAINS: These form the base of the majority of meals in Mediterranean countries – bread (wholemeal or otherwise), pasta, couscous and rice.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: Meals are more flavorsome when in-season products are selected and they are cooked very simply. In most Mediterranean countries the dessert is generally fruit.

LEGUMES AND NUTS: A wide variety of legumes and nuts, such as chickpeas, lentils, haricot beans, pine kernels, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, etc. are used in cooking.

OLIVE OIL AND OLIVE: "Olive oil" and "Virgin olive oil" are used throughout the Mediterranean. The former is normally used for cooking. The latter, which is appropriate for all uses, is excellent when consumed raw to best appreciate its aroma and flavor and to benefit fully from all its natural components.

DAIRY PRODUCTS: Cheese, yoghurt and other dairy products, with no special mention of milk.

FISH: Offered as a first class protein, before eggs and poultry.

1. The highest point of the Pyramid, meaning that its consumption is least advised, is occupied by red meat and just slightly below, but also of little importance, are sweets and pastries.

2. Wine can be consumed in moderation, primarily with meals (1-2 glasses/day). It is optional and should be avoided whenever it puts individuals or others at risk.

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Le Paste Spaghetti Aglio e Olio (Spaghetti with garlic and olive oil)

One of the most famous and easiest dishes of the Italian cuisine. It is said that if you want to uplift your spirits, then this dish is prepared. The curative power of garlic is well known.



Serves 4 or 6

- 1 cup GIOVA extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound spaghetti
- 4 large garlic cloves finely chopped
- 1/2 cup parsley finely chopped Freshly ground or, cracked black pepper

1. Put some GIOVA extra virgin olive oil in a pan with some garlic and cook slowly until golden. In another pot cook spaghetti al dente, drain and put back into the still hot pot. Add parsley to the garlic in the oil, add all to the spaghetti and mix well. Sprinkle with freshly grated pepper and serve very hot. Do not add cheese.

Bucatini all'Amatriciana (Macaroni with bacon and tomato)

Typical dish from Central Italy. It takes its name from the city of Amatrice but is more famous as a typical Roman dish.



Serves 6

- 2 tablespoons GIOVA olive oil
- 1 pound bucatini
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- 6 ounces bacon diced small
- 5 small fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- A good pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup grated Romano cheese

1. Heat GIOVA olive oil in a frying pan. Add bacon and onion, cook until golden. Add the chopped tomatoes and cook on medium heat. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook pasta al dente, drain and place in a warm pot, together with to sauce and red pepper. Mix well. Add Romano cheese and mix again. Serve in hot plate with additional cheese.

Spaghetti alla Carrettiera (Spaghetti coachman-style)

This dish is for those who need an energy boost. It is a variation of the pasta with garlic and oil.

Serves 3 or 4

- 1/2 cup GIOVA extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup chopped parsley
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 12 ounces spaghetti
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Romano cheese



1. Fry garlic in GIOVA extra virgin olive oil, taking care not to burn the garlic. Add parsley, red pepper and salt to taste. Cook pasta al dente. Drain and mix everything, adding grated Romano cheese. Serve in a very hot plate.

Pasta e Fagioli (Pasta and beans)

This a famous dish can be prepared many ways it is particularly enjoyed in the winter.



Serves 8

- 1/2 cup GIOVA olive oil
- 2 cups dried white cannellini beans
- 1 ounce prosciutto including skin
- 1 large onion, medium diced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and well mashed
- Salt to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Cold water to cover the beans
- 1 pound small short macaroni

1. Place all the ingredients except the pasta into a small pan. Cook slowly until beans are soft but not overcooking. Add boiling water. Add boiling water if necessary. Remember that the pasta will also absorb some of the water. Add pasta and cook until done. Do not overcook. Serve in a hot plate. Grate fresh pepper over dish as desired.

NOTE: Add one tablespoon of GIOVA extra virgin olive oil when serve this plate.

Frittata di Spaghetti col Pomodoro (Spaghetti omelette with tomato)

This dish is good for pasta leftovers, and is suitable for a picnic or for a midnight snack.

Serves 4 or 5

1 cup GIOVA olive oil
1 pound cold cooked spaghetti
3 eggs
8 ounces tomatoes crushed
1 little onion
1/2 cup grated Parmegano or Pecorino cheese
Salt and pepper to taste



1. Make sauce by browning onions in GIOVA olive oil. Add tomato paste, basil and salt. Cook until thick. Cook spaghetti in salted water, drain al dente and mix with sauce. Add cheese, beaten eggs, and pepper. Mix well. Heat GIOVA olive oil to smoking point then add spaghetti mixture.
2. Lower heat and brown omelette on both sides.

Trenette al Pesto (Pasta with pesto sauce)



This is everybody's favorite dish, good to look at and good to eat. It's a beautiful green color and enticing aroma seduces everybody's taste buds.

Serves 4 or 6

1/2 cup GIOVA olive oil
1 cup pesto sauce
1 pound trenette pasta
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmegano
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Cook pasta al dente, drain but reserve a little bit of the cooking water which will help to thin the pesto. Put pasta in a hot pan, add GIOVA olive oil and mix well. Add pesto, thinned with the pasta cooking water. Mix well again. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with grated Parmegano cheese.

Salsa di Pomodoro (Quick tomato sauce)

This fresh-tasting sauce is suitable for all types of pasta.

Makes 2 or 3 quarts

1/2 cup GIOVA olive oil
1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
1 pound, 12-ounces cans tomatoes, finely chopped
2 medium size garlic cloves finely chopped
Fresh oregano or 1/2 teaspoons dried
4 leaves fresh basil



1. Salt and a pinch of crushed red pepper to taste Use fully ripe San Marzano tomatoes, grown in the Mediterranean sunshine. The taste will sweet and delicate. Chop the skinned and seeded tomatoes. Put sliced onions in a pan and add GIOVA olive oil. Sauté until translucent, add garlic and cook for additional three minutes. Add other ingredients and cook on lively heat for 15 minutes, stirring frequently to avoid scorching.

Spaghetti alla Puttanesca (Hookers' pasta)

A very delectable dish. The origin of this name unknown. Perhaps it is because "THOSE WOMEN" ate it cold during their business hours.

Serves 4 or 5



3 tablespoons GIOVA extra virgin olive oil
1 pound spaghetti
2 ounces or more Itri black olives pitted and coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon coarsely chopped capers
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 fresh tomato peeled and coarsely chopped
5 anchovy fillets coarsely chopped
1/3 cup finely chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Sauté the garlic with GIOVA extra virgin olive oil. When the cloves are golden add unsalted capers, pitted olives, anchovy fillets, some parsley and two tablespoons of water in which the pasta is boiling. Drain spaghetti when done al dente and pour them into the pan with the sauce, letting it absorb the flavor for a few minutes. Do not use cheese with this dish.

Le Carne Vermicelli alle Vongole (Pasta with clams)

A delicious dish of the neapolitan cuisine. Very popular and quickly prepared.



Serves 4 or 5

1/2 cup GIOVA extra virgin olive oil
1 pound vermicelli pasta
22 ounces freshly tomatoes finely chopped
3 pounds small clams in their shells
Plenty of freshly ground black pepper
Salt to taste
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

1. Sauté garlic in GIOVA extra virgin olive oil. Open clams and place in a small pan. Filter water of the clams and pour into a pot with chopped tomatoes, a pinch of pepper and half the minced parsley. Cook for 15 minutes, then add shelled clams and let cook for 2 or 3 minutes. Add drained vermicelli, cooked al dente and add remaining parsley.

NOTE: To make the clam sauce even better tasting, take 2 or 3 small crabs, mash them and place them in a cheese-cloth. Tie securely and immerse in the sauce during cooking. Do not use cheese on this dish.

Vegetable and Bean Soup

Serves 8

1/2 cup dry fava beans	3 cabbage leaves
1/2 cup dry haricots or other white beans	1 bunch beet or Swiss chard leaves or 1 pound spinach leaves
2 medium onions, cut into eighths and separated	3 Belgian endive leaves
1 carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped	Salt and Pepper
1 celery stalk, coarsely chopped	1 cup Arborio rice, washed Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling
1 bay leaf 1 bulb fennel, coarsely chopped	Grated parmesan cheese, for serving (optional)
1 bunch dill chopped (about 2 pounds)	

1. Soak the dry beans for 1 hour in cold water; drain. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the beans, onions, carrot, celery, and bay leaf.
2. After the water returns to a boil, reduce the heat so that the soup slowly simmers. Check the beans after 45 minutes, and if they are still hard, continue cooking until they are almost soft.
3. Add the bulb fennel and dill, cabbage, beet leaves, and endive leaves. Taste for salt and pepper. Simmer for 25 minutes, uncovered.
4. Add the rice, Cover and cook for 15 minutes. Serve with a generous amount of extra-virgin olive oil drizzled on each serving. You can also sprinkle some parmesan cheese on top.



Antipasto Checklist



Serves 6-8

- | | |
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| 1 ice berg lettuce | 1 can of albacore tuna chunks |
| 1 jar of artichoke hearts | 1/4 lb prosciutto, roll each slice |
| 1 heart of celery, washed and quartered | 1 can anchovies |
| 1 bulb fennel, washed and quartered | 1/4 lb mild provolone |
| 1/2 lb black olives | 1/4 lb aged provolone pimiento ceci |
| 1/2 lb green Sicilian olives | |
| 1 tomato, sliced(optional) | |
| 1/4 lb salami and other | |
| 2 hard boiled eggs, quartered (optional) | |

1. Put a bed of lettuce on a large platter. Arrange 4 or 5 groupings of Black and green Sicilian olives.
2. Distribute artichoke hearts, celery and fennel stalks, rolled prosciutto, salami, tomato slices, ceci, anchovies, provolone, and pimento. Drizzle on a light vinegar and oil dressing. The dressing in the jar of artichoke hearts does nicely. Serve with small plates, sliced baguette or Italian bread and breadsticks.

Caponata di Melanzane

Serves 4 persons

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| 600 g. eggplant | 1 Tb of capers |
| 300 g. potato | 4 carrots |
| 4 red or green peppers | 1 large onion olive oil grated |
| 6 cloves of garlic | Toasted breadcrumbs |
| 1/2 head of celery without the leaves | Red and black pepper |



1. Peel and dice the eggplant and fry. Peel and dice the potatoes and lightly fry until golden. Cut the peppers crosswise in rings and place in frying pan. Add the chopped celery, carrots, garlic, onion, and the capers and when cooked, mix in the eggplant and the potatoes.
2. Stir for some minutes with a wooden ladle. Add the red and black pepper and continue stirring; then turn off the heat. At this point sprinkle on the toasted breadcrumbs.

Penne alla Marinara



Serves 4 persons

1 Kg. small octopus, well cleaned
550 g. mussels
350 g. pennette rigate
2 cloves of garlic
1 tuft of parsley
4 Tbs of olive oil
1 lemon salt
black pepper

1. Slice the octopus crosswise into small circlets and cook them for half an hour in salted water. After having carefully brushed the mussels, let them open in a pan of water on high heat. Remove the shells, discarding those that have not opened. Filter the water and set it aside.
2. Drain the octopus and then cook the penne in the same water al dente. Prepare a salmoriglio sauce using the finely chopped parsley, two cloves of garlic, the olive oil, three or four table spoons of the water the mussels were cooked in, the juice of a lemon, and a generous splash of black pepper.
3. Pour the penne into a big bowl, add the octopus and the mussels, season with the salmoriglio sauce.
4. Mix and wait a bit before serving to allow the pasta to absorb the flavors.

Fusilli con insalata di mare (Seafood Fusilli)

Serves 4 persons

400 g. Fusilli	100 g. of olive oil packed tuna
500 g. mussels	500 g. tomato sauce
300 g. of clams	50 g. of parsley
150 g. of seppioline (squid)	6 Tbs of olive oil
150 g. of small calamari	1 Tb of oregano
100 g. of alici (anchovies)	2 cloves of garlic salt as needed
100 g. small shrimp	



1. Cut the squid into strips; brush the mussels clean, shuck the clams and put them both in a baking tin and let them open on a fast flame; select only those that have opened and contain a mollusk; filter the remaining liquid.
2. Mince the parsley and the garlic; parboil the tomatoes, peel them, remove the seeds, and cut them into small pieces.
3. In a casserole, use a fork to break up the tuna, get rid of the oil, and add the olive oil and parsley.
4. Let it brown for a few minutes, add the tomatoes and a little salt; let it cook for 20 minutes on a quick flame adding some of the filtered liquid from the mollusks from time to time. At this point add the calamari, squid, shrimp, and anchovy and monitor the simmering for another 5 minutes.

5. In the meantime cook the fusilli al dente, drain and add to the casserole, then add the mussels and clams. Thoroughly mix, checking the salt; flavor with oregano and serve.

Fettuccine con Pesto di Carciofi (Fettuccine with Artichoke Pesto)

6 large or 8 small artichoke hearts, sectioned and steamed or 2 lb baby artichokes steamed or 9 oz frozen artichoke hearts, thawed and steamed five minutes or 14 oz canned artichoke hearts packed in water or oil, (no vinegar) drained
2 oz salted roasted cashews
2 sprigs Italian parsley
1 clove garlic
2 Tb grated Parmesan cheese squirt of lemon juice dash of cayenne pepper
3/4 cup olive oil
1/4 lb prosciutto, thickly sliced then diced
1/4 inch grated Parmesan cheese, for the table
1 lb fettuccine



1. In a blender or food processor, place the prepared artichokes, cashews, parsley, garlic, cheese, lemon juice, and cayenne pepper. Turn on and add the olive oil slowly, a bit at a time, until the blender blades spin freely, creating a hollow in the center. Add more oil if necessary. Transfer the pesto to a bowl and keep warm on the stove.
2. Meanwhile, cook the fettuccine until nearly al dente. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup of the pasta water on the side. Return the pasta to the pot and sprinkle in the diced prosciutto.
3. Spoon in the pesto, adding a tablespoon or two of the reserved pasta water as necessary to assure that the sauce coats the pasta evenly. Stir over low heat. Make sure it doesn't stick to the pot; use all the reserved water if necessary. When the ingredients are well mixed and the fettuccine coated with pesto, the dish is ready. Serve with freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

Riso alla Marinara (Rice with Seafood)

Serves 4



Pinch of saffron
20 mussels, scrubbed and debearded
20 littleneck clams, scrubbed
1 small (1 lb) live lobster or 1/4 lb lobster meat
4 Tb finely chopped parsley
4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1/2 cup olive oil 1/4 lb squid, cleaned and cut into small pieces or rings
2 cups Arborio rice, washed
Salt
Pepper

1. Put the saffron in a small cup with 3 tablespoons of tepid water to steep. Steam the mussels and clams until they open. Discard any mussels or clams that do not open. Remove the clams and mussels from their shells. Reserve 3/4 cup of the clam and mussel juice for this recipe and save the rest for another use. Set aside. Steam the live lobster for 12 to 15 minutes. Drain. When it is cool, remove the meat, chop, and set aside.
2. In a large pan, sauté the parsley and garlic in 1/3 cup olive oil for 2 minutes over medium heat. Add the squid and reduce the heat to low. Continue cooking, uncovered, for 12 minutes.
3. In a heavy pot with a tight fitting lid, sauté the washed rice in the remaining olive oil for 1 minute. Add the reserved clam and mussel juice and 1 1/3 cups of water.
4. Check the clam and mussel juice to see how salty it is, then add salt to taste. Stir and bring to a boil.
5. Reduce to a low simmer and cook until al dente, about 12 minutes, but check before that time. Add a few tablespoons of boiling water if the rice is too hard.
6. Add the lobster meat, clams, and mussels to the pan with the squid. Stir and add pepper to taste.
7. Pour the saffron water over the seafood. Stir again and cook over low heat for 10 minutes.
8. Pour the rice into a mixing bowl and mix with half the seafood. Spread the mixture on a serving platter and cover with the remaining seafood. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Capuliatu in crudo (Spaghetti with Fresh Tomato)

Serves 4

600 g. dense tomatoes, not too mature

4 cloves of garlic

3 Tb olive oil

50 g. grated piccante pecorino

finely chopped basil red or black pepper salt as needed

1. Put the tomatoes in boiling water; remove them after a few minutes, peel and cut them into small pieces by hand. Get rid of the water and the seeds.
2. In an earthenware bowl put the chopped tomatoes, finely diced garlic, oil, and basil. Cover with a cloth towel and let everything marinate for an hour. When the marinade is almost ready, cook the spaghetti, drain it and add it to the earthenware bowl.
3. Add the grated pecorino. Sprinkle black or red pepper as you choose. Serve and accompany with a robust red wine not exceeding 12%.



Biscotti



1/2 cup whole wheat flour	1 1/2 t baking powder
1 t grated orange zest	1/4 t almond extract
2 cups bleached flour	1/2 t salt
2 eggs (3 if eggs are small)	1 cup chopped almonds
2 t anise seeds	1/4 lb butter, room temp
1/2 t vanilla extract	1 cup sugar

1. Heat oven to 325. Combine flour, anise seed, baking powder and salt and set aside. Beat butter, sugar and zest until fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time, and the vanilla and almond extracts. Gradually beat in flour mixture just until smooth. Stir in almonds. On a baking sheet, form the dough into two logs about 1 1/2" wide by 14" long about 3" apart. Partially cut or score into diagonal slices about 1/2 inch apart. Bake until golden brown, about 45 minutes. Cool. Reduce oven to 250. Cut logs through on the previous scoring and put cut-side up on baking sheets. Bake until dried, 30-40 min.

Arancine (Deep-Fried Rice Croquettes)

Makes 12

Pinch of saffron	1/4 lb ground beef, cooked and drained of fat
2 cups Arborio rice, washed	1 small tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped very fine
2 cups chicken stock	1 Tb fresh rosemary leaves
Salt	Pinch of pepper
2 Tb butter	1/2 cup cooked peas
1 1/2 cups grated caciocavallo or pecorino	1/4 cup white wine Flour, for coating
2 eggs, separated	Breadcrumbs, for coating
1 small onion	Olive oil, for deep frying
2 Tb olive oil	

1. Steep the saffron in 1/2 cup of warm water for 30 minutes.
2. Place the rice in a pot with the chicken stock. Add the saffron solution, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and the butter. Stir and bring to a boil. Once the stock is boiling, lower the heat and cook the rice, tightly covered, until it has absorbed all the water, about 20 minutes. Spoon the rice onto a platter and mix in the cheese and egg yolks. Spread the rice out to cool.
3. Sauté the onion over medium heat in 2 Tb of olive oil for about 7 minutes, or until translucent.
4. Add the cooked ground beef, tomato, rosemary, 1/4 t of salt, and the pepper and cook, covered, for about 8 minutes. Add the peas and the white wine. Cook until the wine has evaporated. The mixture will look like a thick ragoût.



5. Spread some flour for coating on a piece of wax paper. Lightly beat the egg whites in a shallow bowl. Spread breadcrumbs for coating on a piece of wax paper.
6. To form the rice balls, spread some rice flat in the palm of your hand, then cup your hand slightly, using the thumb of your other hand to make an indentation. To keep the rice from becoming sticky, keep a plate of cold water nearby to dip your hand into each time you form a rice ball. Place about 1 Tb of the meat mixture into the indentation and fold the edges over. Cover with some more rice and shape it with both hands into a ball the size of a lemon, about 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Squeeze just tightly enough to make a firm ball, but not so hard that it falls apart.
7. Roll each ball in the flour, dip it in the beaten egg white, and roll it in the breadcrumbs, coating it evenly. Refrigerate the rice balls for 30 minutes before frying.
8. Heat the oil for deep frying to 360 oF. 8. Deep-fry the rice balls for 4 minutes or until golden. Do not fry too many at once. As the arancine finish cooking, drain on paper towels. Arancine are usually served warm or at room temperature.

Asparagi con uova (Asparagus omelette)



Serves 4 persons

6 eggs
800 g. asparagus
olive oil
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
salt
pepper

1. Cut the tender part of the asparagus into small pieces. Put them in a frying pan and let them par boil in a small amount of water for a few minutes. As soon as the water is consumed add the olive oil and brown them.
2. Prepare the six eggs in a bowl with a pinch of salt and a pinch of black pepper; beat them and add the finely chopped clove of garlic; beat them some more and pour everything into the frying pan with the asparagus. Fry until the bottom is golden brown and then turn it upside down. When both sides are golden brown turn off the heat and serve.

Sarde a beccafico (Stuffed Sardines)

Serves 4 persons

800 g. of big fresh sardines	50 g. of pine nuts
1 large onion	50 g. of grated cheese
200 g. of breadcrumbs	2 eggs
2 Tb finely chopped parsley	2-3 lemons, juiced
50 g. raisins	Salt and Pepper as needed



1. Clean the sardines, carefully removing the head spine. Finely chop the onion and sauté, then add the breadcrumbs, parsley, raisins, pine nuts, and the grated cheese. Season with salt and pepper and combine with two eggs (white or brown).
2. Spoon the stuffing into each sardine and gently place them in a baking dish; bake for about 20 minutes at medium heat. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with the lemon juice.
3. They can be served either hot or cold and they can also be cooked in a tomato sauce.

Galletto con le Mandorle (Chicken with almonds)



Serves 4

1 chicken, cut into	2 Tbs sugar
8 pieces (3 to 3 1/2 pounds)	1 t salt
6 Tbs olive oil	1/2 t pepper
1 Tb tomato paste	3/4 cup blanched almonds, crushed
4 Tbs white or red wine vinegar	1/4 cup blanched whole almonds, toasted

1. Brown the chicken in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over low heat. This will take about 15 minutes. Drain the chicken and set aside.
2. Pour the remaining olive oil into the pan with the tomato paste dissolved in 1 cup warm water. When the sauce begins to boil, add the vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, and crushed almonds. When the sauce returns to a boil, add the chicken pieces, lower the heat, and cook, uncovered, for 45 to 50 minutes, adding a little water if the sauce starts to get too thick. Turn the pieces of chicken over at least once.
3. Arrange the chicken on a platter covered with some sauce. Sprinkle the toasted almonds on top.
4. Serve warm in winter and at room temperature in summer.

Pallini di mazzapani (Marzipan Balls)

Makes about 75 Marzipan Balls

Oven proof paper cases, about 1 1/2 inches across the bottom

- 1 lb. 1 ounce shelled almonds
- 2 cups sugar
- grated zest of 1 large lemon
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg white sugar for garnish



1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees In a small food processor, chop and pulverize the almonds in batches while gradually adding sugar.

2. Place in bowl and add lemon zest. Beat the eggs with vanilla and add to mixture, mixing well with hands. Note that the mixture must be soft and moist, but not wet.
3. Form tiny balls to fit paper cases and place on cookie sheet. Bake about 15 minutes until slightly browned. Remove from oven and while still hot, sprinkle sugar over the marzipan. Cool on cake racks.
4. When completely cooled and hardened, peel off paper cases. If too browned on bottom, scrape off gently with fine grater. They can be stored in tin boxes for some weeks.

Anise Liqueur (Zammù)



This liqueur, now quite famous as sambuca, was originally an Arab-Sicilian invention for medicinal and disinfectant purposes. The taste is similar to Pernod or Ouzo.

Makes 1 Quart

- 1 Quart 100-proof vodka
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup aniseed Grated peel of 1 lemon

1. Combine the vodka, sugar, aniseed, and lemon zest in a sterilized 2-quart juice jar or other bottle.
2. Mix and let stand for 30 days, shaking it from time to time. Filter it and bottle it, and it is ready to use. When serving, mix the liqueur with lots of ice water and sugar.

Latti di Mennuli (Almond milk beverage)

- 6 oz. (150 grams) almond paste
- 1 liter fresh water

1. Blend the almond paste and the water in a Blender. Refrigerate before serving.
Note: During the summer months you can use half of the mixture to create "almond ice cubes" to refresh the drink.



Gaddina Catanisi (Catania-Style Chicken)

- | | |
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| 1 chicken, 3-1/2 to 4 pounds | 1 nutmeg, to grate |
| Salt | Extra virgin olive oil |
| Fresh rosemary | Scallions, use only the white ends, chopped |
| Marjoram (or oregano) | 1 cup of orange juice, unsweetened |
| Garlic, chopped | 4 Tbs cognac Pepper |

1. Cut chicken into eight parts. Sprinkle each part with salt, fresh rosemary, marjoram, chopped garlic to taste, and a good three scrapes of nutmeg. Choose a baking dish that will accommodate the chicken in one layer and can be used on top of the stove as well as in the oven. Place a small amount of extra virgin olive oil in the pan, turn heat to high, and brown the chicken.
2. When the chicken is well browned on all sides, add the chopped scallions, the cup of orange juice, pepper and 4 tablespoons of cognac. Transfer to a preheated oven at 375 degrees. Bake for 1-1/4 hours. Base the chicken with the pan juices from time to time. When cooked, serve it in the baking dish in which it was baked.

Spezzatinu di Viteddu (Veal Stew with Onions)

Serves 4



- 3-1/2 pounds lean stewing veal, cut into 1-inch pieces with gristle and excess fat removed
- 3/4 cup Olive Oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- 2 vegetable bouillon cubes
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 2-1/2 tablespoons flour

1. Put the olive oil, veal, and onion into a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, mix together, and turn the heat to high. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring often.

Pollo alla Marsal (Sicilian Style Recipes Chicken Marsala)

This dish was made famous with the growing Marsala wine industry during the nineteenth century. Veal Marsala probably originated among western Sicily's English families. Real Sicilian Marsala is the only wine we recommend for use in preparing Chicken Marsala.



Serves 4 to 6

- 2 large chicken breasts sliced into thin pieces
- 1 bottle of marsala wine
- whole or white flour
- refined olive oil for cooking
- 50 grams of capers
- 1 large lemon, juiced
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and Pepper

1. Over medium heat, warm several tablespoons of olive oil in a large pan for a few seconds, being careful not to burn the oil. Generously coat chicken pieces with flour and place in pan, turning occasionally. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add juice of one lemon. When the chicken is essentially cooked, carefully pour a half bottle of marsala wine over it, stirring the mixture gently. Allow alcohol to evaporate as sauce thickens.

2. This may take about two minutes. Add the parsley when it's almost done. If you prefer a thicker sauce, add a little flour. Add capers last or sprinkle them over the chicken as a garnish.

Caponata (Eggplant and Caper Salad)



Reflecting Sicily's Arab heritage, this classic recipe (but without the tomatoes, a New World discovery) probably dates from the ninth century, when it is believed that the eggplant (aubergine) was introduced in Sicily by the Saracens. Culinary historians debate whether eggplants were grown in Sicily earlier, perhaps in Roman times, but hardly anybody disagrees that caponata is delicious.

It should be served chilled as an antipasto (appetizer). There are popular variations of this recipe; some versions call for the addition of artichokes, sweet peppers or more sugar.

8 medium size aubergines (eggplants)	200 grams of capers
400 grams of peeled mature tomatoes	extra virgin olive oil
2 medium size sweet white or yellow onions	white vinegar
the heart of a large celery	sugar
200 grams of pitted large cured firm green olives	salt

1. Cut the eggplants into chunks about one inch or two centimeters square. Do not peel. Cook these by steaming covered in a large pot until completely cooked but firm. (Don't boil them.) Drain well and set aside. Chop the tomatoes into small pieces or a thick pulp, without discarding the juice or seeds. Chop the onions into medium pieces or thin slices. Cut the celery stalks into pieces about one inch long. Discard leaves.
2. Halve the olives. In a large pan, sauté the onions and celery pieces in olive oil. The celery should be lightly cooked, firm but not raw. Add the tomato pulp and bring the mixture to a boil, then simmer for a few minutes until the sauce changes color to a lighter red. At this point, simmer over low heat for another 4-6 minutes. Add the eggplants, olives and capers to the mixture. Also add a few tablespoons each of olive oil, vinegar and sugar. Stir gently and allow to simmer covered (steaming) for about five minutes over medium-low heat until mixture thickens but doesn't burn. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Salt to taste. Then chill for at least three hours before serving.

Triglie di Scoglio (Red Mullet in Onion Sauce)

In Sicilian waters, the best mullet is caught in the Spring. This dish, famous in Sicily's seaside communities, was a favorite of the aristocracy, with which it is strongly identified. The link is probably due to the rarity of good mullet during certain seasons. The use of cane sugar (introduced into Sicily by the Saracens) and onions in this way is essentially a North African touch the Sicilians call *cipollata*.



Serves 2

2 red mullets (about 250 grams each)	refined olive oil
200 grams of sliced white or yellow onions	virgin olive oil
whole grain or white flour	2 well beaten eggs
1/2 cup of white wine vinegar	salt
50 grams of white sugar or refined brown sugar	mild white pepper
2 tablespoons of finely chopped fresh parsley	

1. Clean the mullets but leave the heads attached. Liberally coat the fish with flour, dip them in the beaten eggs, and dredge them in flour again. Fry the mullets in olive oil over medium heat, turning as necessary, until fully cooked. (Do so carefully; olive oil has a very low burning point.) Remove mullets from pan and drain oil by placing fish on absorbent paper. Discard frying oil. Very slowly sauté onions in virgin olive oil in a separate pan. When cooked, add about a half cup of vinegar. Add sugar and stir mixture. When sugar begins to thicken or crystallize, add salt and pepper to taste. Remove pan from heat. Add parsley.
2. Add cooked mullets, or place fish on a plate and pour sauce over it. Serve with a large slice of lemon. Traditionalists believe this dish is best served slightly chilled or at room temperature.

Pasta con le Sarde (Pasta with Fennel and Herring)

When Sicilians talk about this dish, they never mention the finocchio (fennel) that makes it special.

Dating from early medieval times, this classic Sicilian recipe is delicious when made with the right ingredients - that's the secret to successful preparation of all these recipes - which are sometimes difficult to find outside the Mediterranean region. (You may have to try a specialty fish market for fresh herring. If you don't find the fennel at a specialty grocer or large supermarket, try an Italian specialty store. If they don't have the ingredients, they may be able to recommend a source.) In preparing this recipe, there's really no substitute for fresh ingredients. The herring described here are large sardines (by definition the sardine is any small herring rather than a particular species of fish). Even if you don't like the canned variety, you may enjoy the fresh ones. Remember that Italians don't sprinkle cheese over pasta dishes made with fish or other seafood.



Serves 4

1 kilogram (about 2.2 pounds) of fennel	50 grams of small raisins
500 grams of fresh small herring fillets	50 grams of pine nuts
500 grams of long pasta such as thick spaghetti	3 large anchovy fillets (salted or in oil) finely chopped
2 medium-size sweet white onions	salt
extra virgin olive oil	pepper
1 teaspoon of powdered saffron	sugar

1. Clean the sardines (herring), removing the head, tail and bone. Cut the fish into pieces about 4 centimeters (2 inches) long. Thoroughly rinse the fennel and chop it into fine pieces about 2 centimeters long, removing any thick stalks. Dice the onions and anchovies into very small pieces.
2. Steam the fennel for 3 or 4 minutes and then strain it thoroughly, but save the greenish water for the pasta. Boil this water (strain it first) and add the pasta. Meanwhile, sauté the onions in a large pan for a minute or two in olive oil until almost transparent. Then mix in the anchovy and herring. Cover the mixture, occasionally stirring gently. Flaking of the herring is natural. When the rather liquid mixture is cooked (which should only take a few minutes) minutes, remove from heat and stir in the saffron, raisins and pine nuts. Add a teaspoon of sugar if desired. Mix the fennel into the mixture, taking care that the fennel strands don't stick together too much.
3. The mixture should be as uniform as possible. By now, the pasta may be ready. Strain the pasta and carefully stir a teaspoon or two of olive oil into it. Then add the fennel- herring mixture, thoroughly stirring it into the pasta until it is more or less uniformly distributed. Let the entire mixture set for a minute or two. Then mix it again, adding a dash of pepper and, if you prefer, salt, and serve.

Calamari in Umido (Stewed Squid)

This is one of the many simple yet delicious seafood dishes for which Sicilian cuisine is famous. It can be served alone or as a sauce with long pasta such as spaghetti. (Remember that Sicilians do not sprinkle grated cheese over seafood pasta dishes.) This is actually similar to a Neapolitan recipe.

The success of this recipe depends on the freshness of the ingredients (fresh squid rather than frozen ones, fresh tomatoes rather than canned ones). It's healthy and easy to prepare.



- 1 kilogram (about 2.2 pounds) small to medium squid
- 1 kilogram of mature plum tomatoes
- 6-8 large anchovy fillets (in oil) finely chopped
- one-half cup chopped parsley
- 1/2 medium size white or yellow onion very finely chopped
- 1/2 cup white table wine
- extra virgin olive oil
- ground red pepper
- salt
- 1 large lemon

1. Steam or boil the tomatoes for a minute to remove the skins ("blanching" them) and then chop the tomatoes into medium sized chunks. Set aside. Clean the squid well, removing the backbone. Remove and save the heads with the hard "jaw" removed but the eyes and tentacles attached. Cut the squid bodies into ring segments about two centimeters (or one-half inch) in width.
2. Set aside.

3. In a small pan, sauté the onions in olive oil. Then add the anchovies (chopped), pepper and parsley. Allow these to simmer for a minute or less, forming a paste. Add the wine and allow the mixture to simmer for a minute or two until most of the alcohol has evaporated.
4. Then add the squid rings and heads (drained well so that you add as little additional water as possible). Allow these to cook over a low to medium flame, stirring occasionally, for a few minutes. Then add the chopped tomatoes. Salt to taste.
5. Cook the complete mixture over medium to low heat for five to ten minutes. When it reaches a boil, lower the heat to a simmer, stirring occasionally.
6. Serve with lemon. As we mentioned, the stewed squid may be served over pasta.

Ripieno alla Nissena (Caltanissetta Poultry Stuffing)

The residents of Caltanissetta, a small city in central Sicily, are called Nisseni, and their mountainous region is famous for meat and poultry dishes. This simple recipe offers a pleasant alternative to meat-based chicken or turkey filling. Since the size of poultry, and measurements by volume, can vary, we'll describe these by proportion. (Whether you're in the UK, the US, Brasil, Australia or Japan, this makes the precise size of a measuring cup irrelevant.)

- 1 cup finely chopped white or yellow onions
- 1 cup grated hard Italian cheese (pecorino, made from sheep's milk, is preferred)
- 1 cup "southern style" bread crumbs (including the ground crust; "northern style" Italian bread crumbs are made without the bread's crust)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 medium-size eggs (or 1 extra large one)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper (black pepper may be substituted)
- 1 teaspoon virgin olive oil
- salt to taste

1. Mix the ingredients in a large bowl, kneading the mixture until it's uniform in consistency. Add a little water if necessary to make it more workable. Then stuff the mixture into the cavity of the chicken or turkey before roasting. In Sicily, the chicken is sometimes garnished with fresh rosemary, and Marsala wine is poured over it at several points during the baking.

Coniglio con Salsa di Mandorle (Rabbit Amantine)

Once favored among Sicily's aristocratic hunting set, roasted rabbit isn't as popular as it once was. Then again, neither is hunting, but today's farm-raised rabbit is no match for wild rabbit or hare, which has the unique taste of wild game. In Sicily, some rabbit or poultry is fed a traditional diet rather than commercial feed, and this "raspante" meat has a slightly gamier flavour.

- 1 large rabbit quartered (a skinless quartered chicken may be substituted if your sensibilities don't favor eating rabbit)
- 100 grams of shelled toasted blanched ("white") almonds

2 tablespoons low alcohol almond extract (the kind used in baking)
1/2 bottle (about two cups) dry white wine
a sprig of fresh laurel (bay leaves)
a sprig of fresh rosemary
a few small leaves of sage
50 grams of pine nuts
50 grams white or golden raisins

1 white or yellow onion
2 anchovy fillets (may be canned)
50 grams capers
extra virgin olive oil
white pepper
salt

1. If it's not already quartered, cut the rabbit (or chicken) into pieces. Remove the herb leaves from the stalks. If you're preparing this recipe with rabbit, marinate the meat in the white wine with the rosemary, bay leaves and sage for 3-4 hours before cooking. Then chop the onion into thin slices and place it in the bottom of a roasting pan with a tablespoon of olive oil. Add the rabbit and other ingredients, including the wine and herbs. Roast the rabbit in the oven for an hour or more
2. as you would roast a chicken, occasionally basting it with the wine and oil mixture.
3. The rabbit should be covered during half of the baking time, and turned over when it is about half cooked. Add wine if necessary if the liquid sauce seems as if it will evaporate. Meanwhile, chop the almonds and pine nuts into a fine granular consistency, almost powdery if possible.
4. Chop the anchovy fillets into a paste. In a mixing bowl, thoroughly combine the almond-pine nut mixture with the anchovy paste, almond extract, the juice of one lemon, the capers and raisins. When the rabbit is completely cooked, remove it from the oven and quickly stir in this combined paste before serving, adding a little olive oil and water if it seems too liquid. You may wish to remove the bay leaves. Salt and pepper lightly to taste. Italian arborio rice, prepared as risotto, makes a nice complement to Rabbit Amandine.

Risotto coi Carciofi (Artichoke Rice)

Risotto seems a Northern Italian dish, but in fact white arborio rice has been consumed in Sicily for a very long time, being imported from Lombardy and Piedmont since medieval times. This dish is a good complement to the meat and fish recipes presented on this page.

400 grams arborio rice (There's no substitute for this uniquely Italian rice; buy it in an Italian specialty store if necessary.)
100 grams grated cheese (Sicilian caciocavallo is best but parmesan or pecorino are suitable)
6 large artichokes
1 yellow or white onion
1 clove of garlic
1/2 cup dry white wine
virgin olive oil

1 lemon
about 50 grams (a small bunch) of fresh parsley
salt
pepper

1. Clean the artichokes, leaving the tender inner leaves attached to the hearts, and chop into spoon-size chunks. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Boil in a large pot. When they're tender and almost cooked, add the rice. Cooking arborio rice sometimes seems an art in itself.



2. Prepare it as you would other rice, but remember that it should be allowed to absorb more liquid. When served, this dish should be almost creamy. While the rice begins to cook, chop the garlic and onions and slowly sauté these together in olive oil. Then add these, with the wine, to the boiling rice mixture. Finely chop the parsley. (True Italian chefs achieve this with scissors, cutting tiny segments from the bunch until only a few short stems remain.) When the rice is cooked, remove from heat and allow it
3. to set for a few minutes to absorb any remaining liquid. However, it should not be too dry. Just before serving, mix in the cheese and chopped parsley, and salt and pepper to taste.

Fritella or Fritedda (Fava with Artichokes)



This Spring dish is prepared with fava beans (green broad beans), artichokes and peas. It is essential that all the ingredients be absolutely fresh because that's what makes fritella tasty. Nothing frozen or canned! The fava beans should be real fava beans (*Vicia Faba Linnaeus*), a food consumed for thousands of years found in archeological sites in the Middle East dating from 6000 BC. We suggest wild artichokes (the kind with thorned leaves) and real unfiltered, fresh, extra-virgin olive oil such as that sold by Titone (near Trapani in western Sicily). Fava beans are a healthy food.

However, people who suffer from the rare but potentially fatal condition called "favism" (hemolytic anemia or G6PD deficiency) should not consume fava beans, which may also affect individuals suffering from certain forms of thalassemia. This recipe serves 6-10 and may also be used as a condiment (sauce) for pasta.

2 pounds fresh fava beans	6 tablespoons raw
1 pound artichoke hearts and tender leaves	unfiltered extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 pound fresh peas	salt

1. Chop up hearts and tender (edible) leaves of artichokes. Separate the beans and peas from their pods. Boil the artichokes for five minutes before adding the fava beans and peas, then boil the complete mixture for another fifteen minutes or until well-cooked and tender, and perhaps even slightly mushy. Strain the ingredients, sprinkle with olive oil and salt to taste.

Insalata d'Arance (Orange Salad)

This typically Sicilian salad is excellent as a side dish, or a separate course leading into dessert.

Serves 6

4 large naval oranges	1 tablespoon white sugar
1 large fresh anise bulb (the crisper the better)	1 tablespoon sweet Marsala wine
1 small lemon	1 head of lettuce, dried coconut shavings
1/4 cup shelled almonds	a branch of fresh peppermint leaves
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil	

1. Separate mint leaves from stalk. Clean the anise well. Peel the oranges and lemon, and remove the tough heart of the anise, as well as the stalk and leaves. Cut the anise, oranges and lemon crosswise into thin slices. Toss together with almonds and mint leaves in a large bowl.
2. Sprinkle with sugar, olive oil and Marsala wine, and toss again. Chill for a few hours. Toss again before serving. Serve on a bed of lettuce leaves. Sprinkle dried coconut shavings over the top.



Zabaglione (Egg Nog)

This is the Sicilian version of this traditional winter drink usually made with rum or strong brandy. Marsala, as this fortified wine similar to Port exists today, evolved in the early years of the nineteenth century. Nowadays, zabaglione is usually served cold, but this drink can also be served warm. It goes well with cookies. Egg nog itself has English origins, and it was the English who developed the Marsala wine industry in Sicily.



3 cups of whole milk
1/2 cup heavy cooking cream
5 large egg yolks
1 whole egg
6 tablespoons refined white sugar
14 tablespoons or 1/2 cup of sweet Marsala wine
nutmeg

1. Beat the sugar into the eggs, then adding milk and cream for a smooth mixture, whisking constantly. Whisk the Marsala into the mixture, adding a pinch of nutmeg to taste. Heat for 4-5 minutes over a very low flame in a double boiler, whisking occasionally, being careful not to cook the eggs. Continue to beat the mixture occasionally, increasing the volume slightly so that it is creamy. Here's an alternate preparation method which we prefer. After whisking the Marsala into the mixture, eliminate the heating phase and simply whip up the ingredients in a blender. This can be served cool or, if you prefer, heated just before serving.

Granita (Ices)

Outside Italy the lemon version of this delightfully refreshing treat is the best known flavor, but in Sicily you'll find traditional Sicilian flavors like strawberry, mulberry, peach and almond.

Nowadays, there is even pineapple and kiwi fruit flavor. Like gelato (ice cream), granita probably traces its origins in Sicily to Roman times, though it was popularized by the Arabs.

1 cup chopped and crushed fruit (including juice)
1 cup of white granulated refined sugar
4 cups of water



1. Chop and crush the fruit. An electric blender is practical for this. Heat the sugar in two cups of water over medium-low flame for a few minutes, until the mixture is completely liquid and the sugar dissolved. Remove from heat and place into a bowl. Allow to cool. Add the remaining water and the crushed fruit.
2. Freeze for about forty minutes, then remove to thoroughly mix the granita with a large fork or other heavy utensil before replacing it in the freezer. As its name implies, the dessert should be "granulated." Continue to remove it to quickly mix it and replace it in the freezer for further freezing every twenty minutes.
3. The preparation phase should require about two hours, depending on the temperature in the freezer. (In Italy there are special machines for making granita.) You want to avoid the granita forming into heavy lumps or a block. The texture should resemble grains or flakes. The mixing method is the most important phase of preparation, as the granita should be granular but not liquid.
4. Add the tomato paste, vegetable bouillon cubes, and sugar, and mix very well. Pour enough cool water into the pan to almost cover the top of the veal. Bring the stew to a boil. Sprinkle the flour over the top of the veal. Immediately reduce the heat to a low simmer and cook, partially covered, for about 30 minutes without stirring. Then remove the cover, stir, and simmer uncovered for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
5. Transfer the spezzatino to a warmed serving dish and serve with mashed potatoes.

Cucumber and Yoghurt dip

Made from thick, rich sheep's milk yoghurt, this tangy sauce is part of the meze table in every Greek tavern. For a similar consistency with cow's milk yoghurt, you must first drain it of excess water. The sauce is delicious served with fried eggplant and zucchini, lamb chops or meatballs, or as a dip for pita bread.



Preparation time: 15 minutes

Serves 10 or more

2 medium size cucumbers

400g strained yoghurt

4 garlic cloves

2 tbsp. olive oil

2 tbsp. wine vinegar

a little salt

fresh chopped fennel

1. Peel cucumbers and grate each one length-wise with course grater.
2. Salt, allow to drain and press out excess liquid from grated cucumbers.
3. Peel garlic cloves, remove sprout if it exists and crush them.
4. Mix cucumber, garlic, vinegar and salt.
5. Fold the yoghurt and the olive oil into the mixture.
6. Add the chopped fennel to garnish.

You may use fresh chopped mint or fresh chopped dill, instead of fennel.

...enjoy!

Ray Darken

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