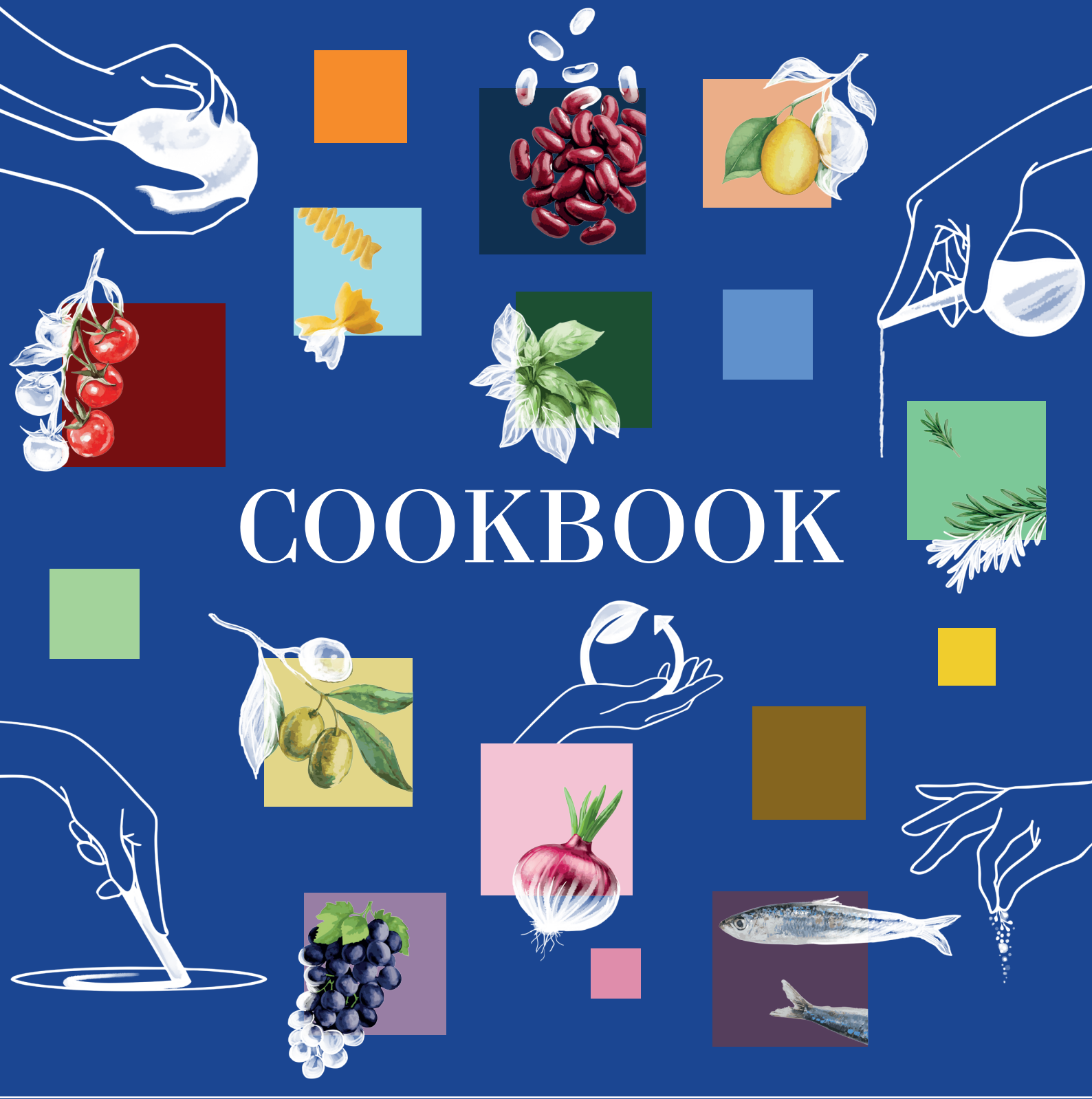
# IL GESTO *semplice*
# *di una storia* INFINITA

THE SIMPLE GESTURE OF AN ENDLESS STORY



# COOKBOOK

Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

ALMA
LA SCUOLA INTERNAZIONALE DI CUCINA ITALIANA

UNIVERSITÀ DI PARMA

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# THE SIMPLE GESTURE
## OF AN ENDLESS STORY

**Italian cuisine** is among the most cherished in the world, universally recognised as a living form of culture and collective language. It is a dynamic synthesis of **heritage and experimentation**, memory and future, taste and well-being, capable of combining knowledge handed down over time with processes of constant evolution. Today it is a **living heritage** that can narrate, through dishes and recipes, the **great plurality** of Italy's many regions and identities.

A tradition that **knows how to renew itself, a thriving heritage**, capable of **adapting to the challenges of** our time without losing authenticity. This is why Italian cuisine is a **never-ending story**: it is a dynamic system of **simple gestures**, in which the **sharing of diversity** is the true identity paradigm. This can be achieved thanks to the ability to leverage the many **resources and territories** from which new **gastronomic inventions** are born. The image that emerges is that of **a mosaic**: a collection of different pieces that make up a larger design.

The daily routine of Italian cuisine is marked by **rituals and cultural practices**: intimate and universal acts that, reinterpreted in a **contemporary key**, acquire a fundamental value for our time.

How did this project come about?

This **dissemination project** was created in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, University of Parma and ALMA - The School of Italian Culinary Arts. The contents of the panels, the recipe book, and the videos are based on an in-depth study of **over 1,500 dishes** listed in an **Italian cookbook** from the 1970s. The **environmental impact and nutritional value** of these recipes were assessed, using scientific methods.

The study of the recipe book has brought to life **gastronomic ideas** that **are still in keeping with the times**. Many dishes are rich in vegetable components, with good fibre content, and were adapted to the changing of life rhythms and seasons. Other preparations, however, just need **simple tricks** and a few variations to make them more appealing to contemporary tastes. They create **even healthier**, more **inclusive, environmentally friendly** dishes, in which **cultural sustainability** is not overlooked.

How is this recipe collection organised?

The recipes you will find on these pages are grouped around **five essential kitchen gestures**: *kneading, mixing, a pinch of, adding, reusing*. The five chapters of the cookbook contain **three recipes representative of each**.

We start with **kneading**, the intimate and profound gesture that unites the cereals - wheat, spelt, oats, rye, barley - that are part of the history of our country. Having rediscovered **ancient grains**, we can make recipes even more complete and enhance the **biodiversity** that is the basis of our food culture.

Then we move on to **mixing**: a perfect combination of **culinary pleasure and health**, which today translates into the nutritional need to combine **cereals and legumes**, rediscovering traditional soups.

The gestures that give the dish a final touch are no less important. **Adding raw extra virgin olive oil** customises and nutritionally enriches a recipe. Similarly, **using a pinch of spices and herbs** allows us to **reduce salt consumption**. These are good daily habits that speak to the heart and improve the quality of the diet.

Finally, the practice of **reuse**: seasonality dictates timing and teaches how to optimise resources. **No-waste** is the ultimate conscious gesture, a practice of skilful reuse of ingredients that is an integral part of Italian cuisine and deserves to be **valued and shared**.

**Simplicity and adaptability** make these gastronomic practices universal: **each gesture becomes a model** that, shared between generations and reinterpreted with appreciation, proves to be a useful key to open the door to a **healthier and more sustainable cuisine**.

This cookbook is therefore intended **as a starting point**. An incentive to take a fresh look, with **awareness and curiosity**, at home cooking, which continues to offer excellent ideas, with its **simple gestures**, about the cuisine of tomorrow.





# KNEADING
## CEREALS REDISCOVERED

Place a mound of flour on the table; use your fingers to create a hole in the centre - make a "fountain" - so as to obtain a volcano shape; add the liquid, making sure it does not spill over the edges, and gradually incorporate it with your hands, using circular motions, until **you obtain a dough**. These gestures, common to the most distant cultures, have given rise to many stories and family traditions that are renewed **from generation to generation**. The recipe is essential: **flour, liquid, and hands**. These three ingredients, in their infinite variations, open up a universe of gastronomic possibilities.

The art of mixing different flours, for example, is a tangible expression of **agricultural biodiversity**. In Italy, common wheat is the main cultivation in the north and durum wheat in the centre-south. Many varieties, forgotten for many years, now experience a new life thanks to their **rediscovery and recovery** by experienced growers. The **recovered grains** tell us about soil, territory, landscape, traditions and resilience.

These cereals are expression of a gastronomic heritage of extraordinary importance. They can also be the starting point for those nuances of crispness, flavour and colour that **make each dough unique**. Just think of a simple ***Pizza Margherita***, one of the symbols of Italy around the world: always recognisable, yet, every time, an unrepeatable experience.

The dough is folded, rolled, stretched, cut and twisted to create the **most varied shapes**: from Orecchiette made from remilled semolina to Spaghetti alla chitarra; from tiny Tortellini to the world of sweet or savoury pies. The **act of kneading**, from the **choice of grains** and raw materials to the final processing, offers endless possibilities. Handing it down means preserving and **promoting biodiversity**: a must-have ingredient for every recipe of the future.

Cereals are protagonists of Italian cuisine, yet not all grains tell the same story. We can divide them into **"modern" grains** - some selected since the last century to ensure high yields and strong flours, perfect for elastic and versatile doughs and **"ancient" grains**, varieties that have crossed time almost intact. Monococcus, Emmer, Spelt, Khorasan and cultivars such as Gentil Rosso or Senatore Cappelli are examples of agricultural heritage rooted in tradition. Often preferred by farmers who cultivate organically or with an agro-ecological approach, ancient cereals are important players in a kind of agriculture that values **biodiversity**, favours more sustainable practices and promotes **healthy soil and ecosystems**. Nutritionally, modern and ancient grains offer similar macronutrient profiles. Some old varieties have a higher concentration of bioactive compounds such as carotenoids and polyphenols, but variety remains the essential ingredient. **Alternating** modern and ancient **flours**, preferably **wholemeal**, increases the intake of fibre, micronutrients and phytoconstituents, promoting **psycho-physical well-being**.

# ERBAZZONE

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

**(DOUBLE THE QUANTITIES IF YOU WISH TO PREPARE ENOUGH DOUGH AND FILLING FOR A 32 CM BAKING DISH).**

**DOUGH:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Semi-whole wheat flour | 160 g |
| Warm water | 100 g |
| Khorasan flour | 30 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 15 g |
| Spelt flour | 10 g |
| Salt | 4 g |

**FILLING:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Swiss chard | 150 g |
| Spinach | 150 g |
| Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated | 50 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 15 g |
| Breadcrumbs | 30 g |
| Egg | 1 nr. |
| Parsley | 5 g |
| Spring onion | 1 nr. |
| Garlic clove | 1/2 nr. |
| Coarse salt | q.s. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Black pepper | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

DOUGH:
Dissolve the salt in warm water, then add the olive oil.

Place the flours on a pastry board or in a large bowl, pour in the salted water and oil and knead by hand or with a fork. Alternatively, you can mix all the ingredients in a planetary mixer at medium speed.

Knead until you obtain a smooth, homogeneous dough. Cover with cling film and leave to rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.

FILLING:
Wash and dry the chard and spinach, remove the stems and blanch the leaves in boiling salted water. Drain, cool in cold water, squeeze well to remove excess water and roughly chop.

Wash the parsley, dry it, remove the stems and finely chop the leaves with a knife.

Wash the spring onion, remove the green part and chop finely with a knife.

Clean the garlic, remove its central part and chop finely with a knife.

Heat the olive oil in a pan over medium heat, add the spring onion and garlic, and sauté for about 3 minutes.

Add the Swiss chard, spinach, parsley, Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, breadcrumbs, and egg.

Mix well and season with a pinch of black pepper.

ASSEMBLY AND BAKING:
Divide the dough into two equal parts.

Roll each one out thinly with a rolling pin.

Line the bottom of the baking dish with parchment paper and place the first sheet of dough on top, making sure the edges are completely covered.

Spread the filling evenly, then cover with the second sheet and seal the edges.

Brush the surface with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

Bake in a static oven pre-heated to 200°C for about 30 minutes.

Let cool slightly before serving.

You can replace the flours with other medium-strength types of your choice. If possible, choose ingredients grown sustainably and from supply chains that promote biodiversity. Traditionally, *Erbazzone* is made with mixed wild greens gathered from the fields, feel free to create your favourite version!

As it is a rather laborious recipe, you could make extra pies and freeze them once baked. Reheat in the oven for a few minutes to enjoy them hot, as if freshly baked! *Erbazzone* is best enjoyed in good company. Simply bring it to the table, cut it into slices and share it to make a family dinner or an aperitif with friends even more convivial.

The chard and spinach filling provides vitamins and minerals such as potassium, magnesium and vitamin K, which remain stable after cooking, keeping the nutritional value of the dish intact. The multi-flour dough, made with different grains and degrees of refining, adds fibre and micronutrients typical of whole grains, including B vitamins, phosphorus and zinc.



# ORECCHIETTE CON LE CIME DI RAPA

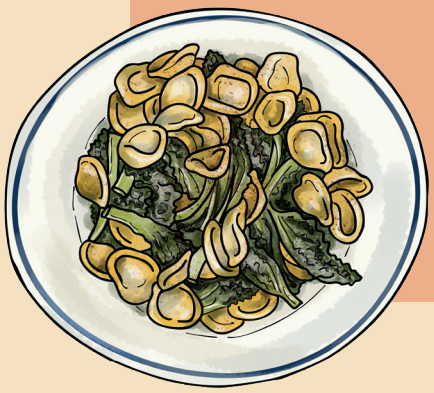
## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

**DOUGH:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Remilled durum wheat semolina | 280 g |
| Warm water | 120 g |
| Remilled durum wheat semolina (for dusting) | q.s. |

**CONDIMENT:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Turnip greens | 1.000 g |
| Anchovy fillets in oil | nr. 4 |
| Chili pepper | q.s |
| Clove of garlic | 1 nr. |
| Coarse salt | q.s. |
| Extra virgin olive oil | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

ORECCHIETTE:

Place the semolina on a pastry board or in a large bowl, pour in the warm water, and knead by hand or with a fork. Alternatively, place lukewarm water and semolina in a planetary mixer at medium speed.

Knead until you obtain a smooth, homogeneous dough. Cover with cling film and leave to rest at room temperature for 10 minutes.

Cut small pieces of dough and, using a knife, shape them into orecchiette. Dust lightly with semolina to prevent sticking.

SAUCE AND FINISHING:

Peel the garlic, remove its core and chop it finely.

Clean the chili pepper, remove the seeds and cut into pieces.

Wash and clean the turnip greens by removing the thicker stems and outer leaves, keeping only the tender leaves and florets. Cook them for 5 minutes in boiling salted water.

In the meantime, heat a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil in a large pan, add the garlic, anchovy fillets, and chilli pepper and let them cook gently over low heat. Turn off the heat.

After cooking the turnip greens for about 5 minutes, add the orecchiette directly to the same pot and continue cooking for another 5 minutes, until the pasta is *al dente*.

Drain the orecchiette with the greens and transfer them to the pan with the anchovy and chilli mixture. Toss well to combine.

Finish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and serve immediately.

Making fresh pasta, once a daily activity of traditional homemaking, has now become a creative and rewarding experience in the kitchen. Among the many shapes, *orecchiette* are a true test of manual skill. They can be shaped with the thumb, with the tip of a knife or even with other techniques. Try them and find your favourite!

*Orecchiette* is one of the many ways in which pasta, a symbol of Italian cuisine, makes its way to our table every day. A source of complex carbohydrates with a low glycaemic index, it provides us with gradual and long-lasting energy. Enjoy it regularly, varying the sauces, preferably with seasonal vegetables and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, to enrich your diet with fibre, vitamins, minerals and healthy fats. Alternating pasta with other cereals also helps to diversify your diet and increase micronutrient intake.







# PIZZA AL PADELLINO

## INGREDIENTS FOR ABOUT 7 PIZZAS

**FOR THE STARTER DOUGH:**

The starter dough is a compact, low-hydration pre-dough consisting of flour, water and yeast.
It is made one day in advance, then incorporated in the final dough of bread, pizza or focaccia. It enriches the aromas and improves the final structure of the dough.

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 Flour (at least 13% protein) | 350 g |
| Water | 157 g |
| Fresh brewer's yeast | 4 g |
| or alternatively dry brewer's yeast | 2 g |

**FOR THE DOUGH:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Starter dough | 504 g |
| Spelt flour | 120 g |
| 0 Flour (11% protein) | 380 g |
| Fresh brewer's yeast | 5 g |
| or alternatively dry brewer's yeast | 2 g |
| Salt | 21 g |
| Water | 430 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 22 g |



**DRESSING:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Peeled tomatoes (approx. 80 g per pizza) | 560 g |
| Salt | 4 g |
| Cow's milk mozzarella | 100 g |

## PREPARATION

STARTER DOUGH:
Pour the water into a bowl and dissolve the yeast in it.

Place the flour in a large container.

Pour the water of the dissolved yeast into the container with the flour.

Mix the ingredients with a spatula until all the water is absorbed.

Let the pre-dough rest in a container, covered with a lid or cling film, at room temperature for about 40 minutes.

Afterwards, transfer the container with the starter dough in the fridge at 4°C until the next day.

DOUGH:
Place the starter dough, 0 flour, spelt flour, brewer´s yeast and half the amount of water indicated in the recipe into the bowl of the planetay mixer.

Start the planetary mixer and knead at low speed to create a nice texture. While kneading, add water gradually until it is absorbed. Before all the water is used up, add the salt and finish the dough.

If the dough is loose and unstructured, increase the machine speed a little.

If you do not have a planetary mixer at your disposal, you can prepare the dough by hand.

Transfer the dough onto a work surface and close it using the "folding" technique: stretch the dough into a rectangular shape and fold it into two or three parts, closing it like a book. This step serves to improve the structure of the dough. We recommend repeating this step 3 times, allowing the dough to rest for 20-30 minutes between folds.

Once the folds are complete, place the dough in a container greased with a little extra virgin olive oil.

Cover the container and leave it at room temperature until doubled in volume. It will take approximately 2 hours at a temperature of about 25°C. The higher the room temperature, the less time the dough will take to double in volume.

When the dough has proved its volume, transfer it back onto the work surface dusted with flour.

Proceed by dividing the dough into balls of a weight suitable for the size of the baking dish in which you are going to roll them out. For aluminium baking dish with a diameter of 18 cm, cut out 200 g of dough.

*The ''padellino'' baking dish is a typical aluminium pan in which the pizza is spread. This is a very useful way to make pizza easily without the use of professional tools.*

Form into balls by folding all the edges of the dough towards the centre.
Transfer the ball of dough into a container.

Cover and allow to double in volume, leaving the container at room temperature. It will take approximately 1h 30 minutes at a temperature of about 25°C.

Once doubled in size, dust some flour on the counter, turn the dough over and transfer it from the container to the work surface.

Dust the dough with a little more flour and press it down with your fingers, spreading it from the centre outwards.

Place the pasta on the baking dishes previously greased with extra virgin olive oil.

Mash the peeled tomatoes with your hands, mix them with salt and season the pizzas.

COOKING:
Preheat the oven to 210°C if ventilated or 230°C if static.

Place the baking dish in the oven and bake for about 8-10 minutes.

When the pre-cooking is finished, add the mozzarella and put the pizzas back in the oven for another 5-6 minutes.

*Pizza* is one of the most widespread words in the world. This dish is always easy to recognize and extremely versatile. There are many styles and versions of it, but the most classic is definitely the *pizza Margherita*: a symbol of Italian conviviality, encompassing in a single dish the nutritional characteristics of a first and second course. Combine it with a side dish of vegetables or a portion of fruit to improve its balance in fibre, vitamins and minerals. Since pizza is rather high in salt and calories, we recommend enjoying it in moderation, sharing it with family and friends, as is traditional in Italy.





# MIXING
## CEREALS AND LEGUMES



Mixing is a gesture performed in the kitchen, but its story comes from ancient knowledge. A **rural heritage** that has been handed down for centuries, with its own rituals and times. It is an entirely personal act: instinctive, orderly or chaotic. Stirring can follow the edges of a saucepan or proceed by drawing ellipses or imaginary spirals in a simmering soup. Some gestures are **more than a simple action**: they are the heart of the recipe. Mixing is one of them. It is the moment when ingredients, previously distinct and solitary, meet and merge into **harmonies of colours and textures**.

In some recipes, this gesture produces some really **interesting** results **for our health**. The combination of **cereals and legumes**, in this respect, is among the most virtuous encounters. In these dishes, what has grown together in the field is carefully mixed, where the alternation of these crops enriches the land and makes it **healthy**: an ancient pact between soil and seed. A complementarity that is celebrated also in the dish: it is possible to find these ingredients combined in many **soups** and **broth-based soups**, sometimes flavoured with sautéed vegetables, a sprig of rosemary or a bay leaf.

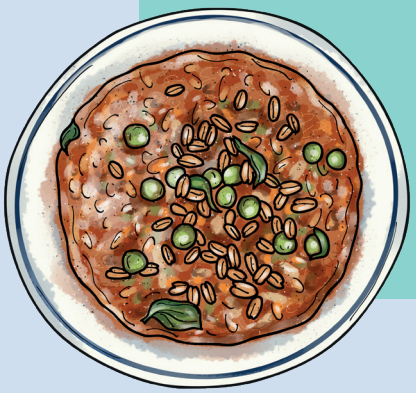
In Italian cuisine, the link between cereals and legumes also includes **pasta**. Whether fresh, dry, short, long, mixed, broken... pasta combines perfectly with one of the many legumes grown in the various Italian regions. The result is a **mosaic of** shared **recipes** in which the real secret is not the type of cereal or legume chosen, but is the rhythm, patience, care and **variety** with which they are mixed together. These dishes, enriched with a drizzle of oil and a pinch of pepper, show how tradition can guide us towards **a balanced**, sustainable **diet** that describes the extraordinary richness of the Italian landscape.

Orienting our diet towards an increased consumption of plant-based foods is now a choice that protects both health and the environment. In this context, **cereals and legumes** have always occupied a place of excellence in the Italian gastronomic tradition. They are simple and **affordable** foods, rich in complex carbohydrates, fibre and vegetable protein, with a naturally low content of saturated fat. In terms of protein, however, each has an incomplete amino acid profile: cereals are deficient in lysine, legumes in methionine. **Their combination** - from classic pasta and chickpeas to rice with lentils and spelt and bean soups - provides a **balanced intake** of essential amino acids, comparable to that of animal proteins. The result is a nutritionally complete, sustainable and flavourful dish.

# MINESTRA DI FARRO E LEGUMI

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Spelt | 200 g |
| Dry peas | 100 g |
| Dried cannellini beans | 100 g |
| Dried lentils | 100 g |
| Peeled tomatoes | 200 g |
| Celery stick | 3 nr. |
| Carrots | 2 nr. |
| Medium onion | 1 nr. |
| Rosemary | q.s. |
| Sage | q.s. |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 20 g |
| Fine salt | |



## PREPARATION

Soak the peas and beans for at least 12 hours, then cook them separately in unsalted water and drain.

Wash and clean the carrots, celery and onion, peel the onion and the carrots, then roughly chop the three vegetables.

Place the oil, rosemary, sage, celery, onion and carrot in a hot saucepan. Fry everything for about 5 minutes and then add the peeled tomatoes.

Cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally and breaking up the tomatoes as much as possible.

Add spelt, peas, beans, lentils and some water if necessary.

Cook until the spelt is cooked through.

Serve the soup hot and season with a pinch of ground black pepper and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

To shorten preparation time, you can use pre-cooked pulses. There is no need to soak and cook them, just drain, rinse and use them in your recipe.

By taking simple steps such as soaking legumes and slow cooking them, you improve the digestibility and availability of certain nutrients in legumes.

The combination of grain cereals, pulses and seasonal vegetables ensures a balanced mix of complementary vegetable protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

You can find this balance in the minestrone: one of the most authentic vegetable soup of the Italian cuisine.

And don't forget that minestrone, rich in water, also contributes to your daily hydration in a tasty way.



# LAGANE E CECI



## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

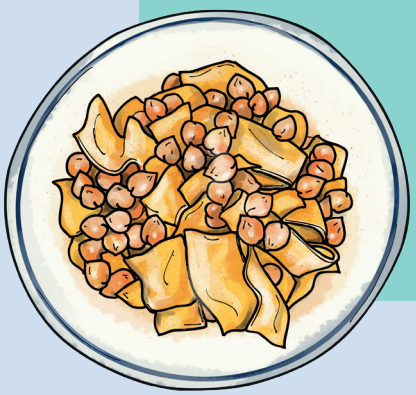


**DOUGH:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Remilled durum wheat semolina | 300 g |
| Warm water | 160 g |
| Remilled durum wheat semolina (for rolling out the dough) | q.s. |

**DRESSING:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dried chickpeas | 200 g |
| Tomato sauce | 300 g |
| Chili pepper | q.s. |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 20 g |
| Fresh thyme | q.s. |
| Clove of garlic | 1 nr. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

DOUGH:

Pour the semolina onto a pastry board or into a large container, add lukewarm water and knead with your hands or a fork. Alternatively, place lukewarm water and semolina in a planetary mixer and knead at medium speed.

Obtain a smooth, homogeneous mixture, cover with cling film and allow to rest for 10 minutes at room temperature.

With a rolling pin or pasta machine, roll out the dough until very thin, 25-centimetres long sheets are obtained.

Let the sheets dry for about 10 minutes at room temperature.

Roll each sheet on itself and cut strips about 2 cm wide.

Dust the dough strips with semolina and place them on a tray so that they do not stick to each other.

DRESSING:

Soak the dried chickpeas in cold water for at least 12 hours, then drain, rinse, cook in unsalted water and drain again when cooked.

Clean the garlic, remove its core and chop it finely with a knife.

Clean the chilli pepper, remove the seeds and cut into fine pieces.

Wash and pluck the thyme leaves.

In a hot pan, pour half of the oil, garlic and chilli pepper.

Slowly cook the sautéed vegetables, then add the tomato sauce and cook on low heat for about 30 minutes, then add the chickpeas.

CREAMING AND SERVICE:

Cook the *lagane* in plenty of boiling salted water, drain them when *al dente* and pour them into the pan with the previously heated tomato sauce and chickpea sauce.

Toss the pasta with the sauce for a few moments until creamy, and serve piping hot.

Finish off the dishes with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, a pinch of ground black pepper and a few fresh thyme leaves.





Chickpeas are rich in fibre, which promotes intestinal well-being. A 50 g portion of dried chickpeas provides about a quarter of the recommended daily fibre intake of 25 g. Combining them with cereal-based foods, such as *lagane*, improves the protein quality of the dish due to the amino acid complementarity between legumes and cereals.

To improve digestibility, remember to follow a process of soaking the dry legume or, if you prefer their tinned form for convenience, do not forget to rinse them well before consumption and consider a portion size of 150 g per person.







# RISI E BISI



## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

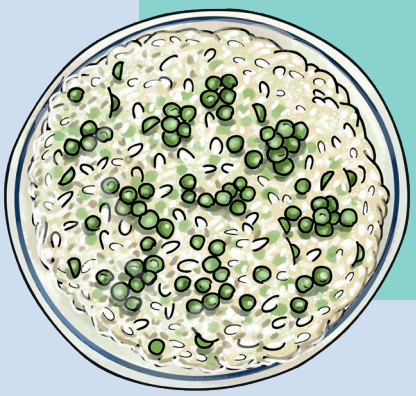


**VEGETABLE FOUNDATION STOCK:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Pea pods | q.s. |
| Onion pieces | q.s. |
| Fennel seeds | q.s. |
| Parsley stalks | 3 g |

**RISI E BISI:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Vialone nano rice | 350 g |
| Fresh peas | 500 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 20 g |
| Grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese | 40 g |
| Medium onion | 1 nr. |
| Parsley | q.s. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Ground black pepper | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

VEGETABLE FOUNDATION STOCK:
Place the pea pods, some small pieces of onion leftover from other preparations, parsley stems, and fennel seeds in a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently for about 1 hour. Strain and keep the stock obtained.

RISI E BISI:
Shell the peas.
Heat the vegetable stock until it comes to the boil.

Wash the parsley, remove the stems and finely chop the leaves with a knife.
Wash the onion, peel it and finely chop with a knife.

Pour the oil into a hot pan.

Add the onion and let cook for 5 minutes.

Add the rice, toast it lightly and bring to the boil, basting with the boiling vegetable stock a little at a time.

Halfway through cooking (after about 8/9 minutes) add the peas.

When cooked, remove from the heat, season with Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and parsley, then stir.

Add vegetable stock and stir until the right density is achieved.

Finish with a pinch of pepper and a drizzle of oil.

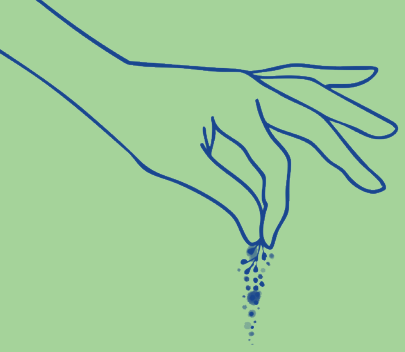


Vialone Nano rice is a variety cultivated mainly in the Veneto region, where this recipe originates. The grains of this rice have a high starch content that is released during cooking, being therefore perfect for this dish. Alternatively, you can choose other varieties suitable for risotto preparation.



Vialone Nano is a rice that undergoes partial refining, retaining part of its fibres. If you combine it with peas, besides improving the protein profile of the rice, your dish will be enriched with fibre and important micronutrients such as vitamin K and iron. To help your body better iron absorption, remember to soak and cook peas thoroughly and, if you can, supplement your meal with a portion of vegetables and fresh fruit rich in vitamin C.





# A PINCH
## HERBS AND SPICES



**Herbs and spices** are combined with salt in meat recipes for the great traditional deli meats. These are the unmistakable **pinch of colour** of many dishes that have made history. The gold of **saffron** in Risotto alla Milanese, the deep green of freshly chopped **parsley**, the soft colours of some **wild flowers** or **sprouts** that can be used in omelettes or risottos. It is almost impossible to summarise in a few lines **the infinite number of variations** in which they feature. From the herbs that grow between land and sea in Liguria, to the bouquet of aromatic herbs that give fragrance to soups, broths, stews and braises. Reading the pages of these recipes means retracing the **geography and history of Italy**: the encounter between the **rural world** - the countryside, wild greens, roots, vegetables growing underground - and the **urban world**, that network of cities that characterises our country, a place of **markets** and **exchange** and a point of arrival - past and present - for **spices from all over the world**. The most important ingredient is **variety**: being able to transform the resources of the land into ever-new culinary creations. History is the most important element in shuffling cards, **habits, customs** and eating habits. Herbs and spices have not always followed a linear path through Italy. For example, a pinch of chilli pepper - the red gold of southern Italian cuisine - began its gastronomic journey through our land only after arriving from Mexico in the late 1400s. Almost four hundred years later, the hot spicy taste of Italian cuisine extended to American kitchens, thanks in part to many Calabrians who emigrated in the late 19th century hoping to build a new life overseas. Spices and herbs give **flavour, spiciness and identity** to local specialities. They build the taste profile of an Italian cuisine that can be **bitter**, like wild *radicchios*, or as **sweet** as **sugar**. What today is the most significant ingredient in confectionery has been for centuries an undisputed presence in the recipes of the richest cuisines: used abundantly to season meats, soups, flavour vegetables and filled pastas. Unaffordable for **common folks**, it has become a symbol of the **cuisine of the elite**. A pinch of sugar still reappears today in some of our dishes: in sweet and sour courgettes in Sicily, as well as in the filling of some pastas in Lombardy. **Wild fennel** rules in Sicilian **pasta with sardines; sage is** the star of ***Saltimbocca alla Romana***; a mixture of wild seasonal herbs is the main ingredient of Ligurian ***Pansòti al preboggion***.

Aromatic herbs and spices have always been used to flavour local dishes and are valuable allies of our health daily. They are a winning choice for **naturally reducing salt consumption** (which according to the World Health Organisation should not exceed 5 grams per day). Learning how to **combine them creatively** in the kitchen is therefore a simple but very effective way of promoting our long-term **cardiovascular health**. Herbs and spices also contain small amounts of vitamins, minerals and bioactive compounds. However, the typical amounts of use - often just a pinch - do not give them miraculous properties. Their real value lies in **enriching** dishes **with flavour and aroma**, and in promoting a **varied and balanced diet**. More taste, less salt, more health: a simple secret of Italian cuisine **to be rediscovered**.

# PANSÒTI AL PREBOGGION

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

**DOUGH:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Common wheat flour | 400 g |
| Water | 180 g |
| Dry white wine | 12 g |

**FILLING:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mixed fresh wild herbs (e.g. borage, chard, dandelion) | 600 g |
| Fresh cow's milk ricotta cheese | 100 g |
| Egg | 1 nr. |
| Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated | 40 g |
| Marjoram | 10 g |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Coarse salt | q.s. |
| Black pepper, ground | q.s. |



**FINISHING AND PRESENTATION:**

OPTION 1:

| | |
|---|---|
| Butter | 20 g |
| Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated | 20 g |
| Marjoram | 5 g |

OPTION 2:

| | |
|---|---|
| Shelled walnuts | 200 g |
| Bread | 100 g |
| Milk | 100 g |
| Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated | 30 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 30 g |
| Garlic clove | 1/2 nr. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |

## PREPARATION

THE FILLING:

Wash the mixed herbs, remove the stems, keep only the leaves, and cook them in plenty of boiling salted water.

Drain them, cool them in cold water, squeeze them and chop them roughly.

Wash the marjoram, remove the leaves and finely chop with a knife.

Beat the egg.

Place the mixed herbs, marjoram, Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, egg and ricotta in a bowl.

Stir and season with salt and pepper if necessary.

DOUGH:

Pour the flour onto a pastry board or into a large container, add the water and wine and knead with your hands or a fork. Alternatively, place the flour, water and wine in a planetary mixer and knead at medium speed.

Obtain a smooth, homogeneous mixture, cover with cling film and allow to rest for 10 minutes at room temperature.

Roll out the dough with a rolling pin or pasta machine into several sheets about 1 mm thick.

ASSEMBLING FILLED PASTA:

Prepare the ravioli: cut the dough into triangles, seal the filling in each triangular piece, then fold over on itself. Try as much as possible to avoid trapping air inside the ravioli.

Cook the pansoti in plenty of boiling salted water and drain them in a bowl.

FINISHING AND PRESENTATION:

Option 1:

Add the butter in small pieces to the bowl and stir gently until it is completely melted. Complete with grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and a pinch of marjoram leaves.

Option 2:

Preparing the walnut cream:

Blend all ingredients and if necessary add cooking water until a creamy consistency is obtained.

Dress the *pansòti* with this walnut sauce.



In addition to the classic shape, feel free to close the *pansòti* in whichever way you like or find most confortable. As a dressing, you can replace butter with extra virgin olive oil if you prefer. When preparing the walnut cream, you can replace the milk with an equivalent amount of water at room temperature.

The marjoram, which characterises the filling of *Pansòti al preboggion*, adds aroma and natural flavour, so less salt can be used. This reduces risks associated with hypertension. Seasoning with chopped walnuts makes the recipe even more complete, providing vegetable proteins, vitamins, minerals, fibre and polyunsaturated fats, valuable allies of cardiovascular health.



# PASTA CON LE SARDE

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Spaghettoni or bucatini | 300 g |
| Fresh sardines | 300 g |
| Golden onion | 100 g |
| Anchovy fillets in oil | 50 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 40 g |
| Wild fennel | 40 g |
| Raisings | 20 g |
| Pine nuts | 20 g |
| Saffron | q.s. |
| Black pepper ground | q.s. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Wash the onion, peel it and finely chop it with a knife.

Wash the fennel, remove the thicker stems, cook it in plenty of salted water, drain it (retain the water) and let it cool in cold water.

Squeeze it and chop it up with a knife.

Soak the raisins in warm water for 15 minutes.

Toast the pine nuts in a frying pan.

Clean the sardines by removing the bones and heads.

Pour the extra virgin olive oil into a hot pan, add the onion, cook for 3 minutes. Add the cleaned sardines, anchovies and saffron.

Continue cooking for about 10 minutes, add the pine nuts, then turn off the heat, keeping the sauce warm.

Meanwhile, bring the fennel cooking water to the boil, cook the pasta, drain it *al dente* and add it to the sauce.

Serve by adding a pinch of pepper and fresh fennel. Dress with a dash of extra virgin olive oil.

Sometimes saffron is replaced by tomato sauce thinned in a little water. In addition, you can dress layers of the pasta in an oven dish and broil them in the oven. You can serve this version of pasta with sardines either warm out of the oven or cold.

Pasta with sardines is a symbol of Italian cuisine, where two fundamental ingredients meet: pasta and blue fish. Pasta, cooked *al dente*, requires slower chewing, which aids digestion due to the action of enzymes in saliva. Oily fish, on the other hand, is an excellent source of protein and essential nutrients such as polyunsaturated fatty acids, calcium and vitamin D, valuable for heart and bone health.



# SALTIMBOCCA ALLA ROMANA

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

**SALTIMBOCCA:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Veal top round or rump in approximately 0.5 cm thick slices | 600 g |
| Slices of dry-cured ham | 20 nr. |
| Sage | 10 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 40 g |
| Dry white wine | 40 g |
| Toothpicks | 20 nr. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |

**SIDE SALAD:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Cleaned mixed salad | 200 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 20 g |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Black pepper ground | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Pluck the sage leaves and wash.

Place a sage leaf on each slice of meat, cover with a slice of dry-cured ham and secure the three elements with a small wooden toothpick, thus forming the *saltimbocca*.

Pour the extra-virgin olive oil into a hot pan and very quickly brown the *saltimbocca*, then remove them from the pan, dab the bottom of the pan with kitchen paper (removing any remaining fat), return the *saltimbocca* to the pan and deglaze for a few moments with white wine, allowing the alcohol to evaporate.

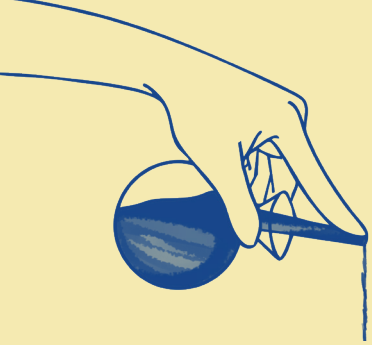
Separately, dress the salad with a drizzle of oil and a pinch of pepper. Arrange it on the bottom of serving plates.

Remove the toothpicks and place the *saltimbocca* on the salad with the dry-cured ham side up and dress with the cooking juices.

The mixed salad accompanying the *saltimbocca* completes the dish nutritionally. Vegetables add fibre, which increases satiety, and provide essential vitamins and minerals such as folate, vitamin K and bioactive compounds such as beta-carotene.

We also recommend dressing the salad with fresh lemon juice: this will not only enhance the taste, but also increase the vitamin C intake and improve the absorption of iron in the salad.





# ADDING
## A DRIZZLE OF OIL



A drizzle of oil on a slice of toasted bread, a sprinkling of cheese on a pasta dish, a few drops of vinegar brightening up a fresh salad. In Italian cooking, **adding an ingredient** is never just a detail. It is the gesture that completes a recipe, finishes a dish and personalises the flavours. **Extra virgin olive oi**l takes centre stage among the many ingredients in this ritual. It can be found everywhere, event in the most unexpected areas, where olive cultuvation is a heroic endeavour.

Oil is not just a dressing: it is **food, culture, and symbol**. Beneficial to health, it has provided nourishment to the civilizations that have developed in the **Mediterranean basin**. Over the centuries, it also has taken an important spiritual and material significance and has become part of **everyday gestures**. Oil is not only an ingredient in many preparations, it is often added at the end, raw, "to finish off the dish". It gives fragrance, aroma and it is **health's perfect ally.**

Numerous studies recommend choosing vegetable oils over animal fats each day to improve the nutritional quality of food. However, vegetable oils are not all the same.

One parameter by which the quality of an oil is assessed is its acidity, i.e. the percentage of free fatty acids: the lower it is, the higher is the value of the oil. **Extra virgin olive oil** is the most valuable of all, because it **preserves its flavours and active ingredients intact**: monounsaturated fats, especially oleic acid, phenolic compounds and vitamin E. Due to its lipidic nature, it also facilitates the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K) and phytoconstituents such as carotenoids and lycopene, present in orange and red vegetables such as carrots, pumpkin and tomato. **Using raw** extra virgin olive oil preserves those heat-sensitive substances that give it its characteristic fruity aroma and contribute to its **health benefits**.

The act **of adding** is also an act of creativity: everyone chooses how and how much to add, following their own taste and habits. It is a gesture that makes those who dine together co-authors of the dish, custodians of a knowledge that is renewed every time the hand transforms the food served. In Tuscany, Ribollita - a soup made with bread, pulses and vegetables - is complete when a few drops of oil fall into the steaming dish.

In many Italian dishes, oil is both the first and the last gesture that begins at the stove and is repeated at the table.

The interplay between preparing and completing reflects the essence of Italian cuisine, where the combination of simple gestures builds **taste and conviviality**.

# PESTO GENOVESE

## INGREDIENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Fresh basil leaves | 500 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 300 g |
| Parmigiano Reggiano cheese | 150 g |
| Pecorino matured cheese | 70 g |
| Pine nuts | 50 g |
| Garlic clove | 2 nr. |
| Salt | q.s. |
| Ice cubes | 4-5 cubes |



## PREPARATION

Pluck the basil, wash and dry very well.

Clean the garlic and remove the core.

In a blender, place the basil, garlic, pine nuts and ice.

Blend by gradually adding the oil until smooth.

Grate the matured pecorino and Parmigiano Reggiano cheeses.

Pour the mixture into a bowl and add the cheeses.

To preserve the bright colour of the pesto, you can add a few ice cubes in the blender to prevent overheating. Traditionally, pesto is prepared with a mortar: rub the mortar with garlic, add pine nuts and a few grains of coarse salt and start pounding. Then add the basil leaves with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and continue to crush until the mixture is smooth. Add grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and matured pecorino cheese. Pesto is used to season pasta, preferably *trofie* or *trenette*. Pesto should only be added after the pasta is cooked and never heated. It can be stored in the refrigerator for two days covered with oil to preserve its freshness and aroma.

To keep the aroma and health properties intact, it is best to use the oil raw and store it away from light and heat. Quality can also be seen in the acidity: the lower it is, the finest the oil. Extra virgin olive oil is the best suited, because it retains its aromas and all-important nutrients, such as good fats, vitamin E and polyphenols.



# FAVE E CICORIA

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Dried fava beans | 400 g |
| Chicory | 700 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 20 g |
| Garlic clove | 1 nr. |
| Bay leaves | 2 nr. |
| Coarse salt | q.s. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Water | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Leave the fava beans to soak for at least 12 hours before cooking, then drain, rinse and cook them in plenty of boiling salted water with the bay leaves.

When cooked, remove the bay leaves, drain the fava beans and keep the cooking water.

Season half of the fava beans with oil and fine salt and store separately.

Blend the other half of the fava beans, adding the cooking water.

Add the previously seasoned fava beans to the resulting purée and adjust the salt if necessary.

Clean and wash the chicory by removing the stem end.

Cook the chicory in plenty of boiling salted water, drain and cool it in cold water.

In a hot frying pan, add extra virgin olive oil and crushed garlic and allow the oil to flavour on a low heat for about 3 minutes.

Add the chicory previously drained from cold water and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the garlic clove.

Heat the fava bean purée and spread it on the bottom of the plate, place the chicory on top and add a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

In many traditional recipes, chicory is simply served boiled and seasoned on the side with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. To give your dish a personal touch, we suggest adding chilli peppers or wild fennel flowers. In addition to dried ones, fresh and tender broad beans can be eaten raw, and doing so allows you to consume excellent amounts of vitamin C, iron, calcium and potassium. Chicory, on the other hand, is famously rich in fibre, particularly inulin, a prebiotic substance that helps stimulate the growth of good bacteria in the gut and improve the health of your gut microbiota.



# ZUPPA DI CAVOLO NERO E FAGIOLI

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Celery | 100 g |
| Carrots | 150 g |
| Onions | 100 g |
| Potatoes | 200 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 50 g |
| Peeled tomatoes | 200 g |
| Kale | 300 g |
| Savory cabbage | 200 g |
| Swiss chard | 200 g |
| Thyme | 5 g |
| Rosemary | 5 g |
| Dried borlotti beans | 300 g |
| Stale bread | 300 g |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Pepper | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Soak the dried borlotti beans in cold water for at least 12 hours, then drain and rinse.

Wash and clean the celery, carrots and onion.

Peel the onion, peel the carrots and roughly chop with the celery.

Wash, peel and roughly chop the potatoes.

In a large hot saucepan, combine the oil, celery, carrot and onion.

Cook for about 5 minutes, then add the beans (previously soaked for at least 12 hours, drained and rinsed), peeled tomatoes and potatoes, after which salt and cover with water.

Let the soup simmer gently for about 45 minutes, adding water if necessary.

Wash the kale, Savoy cabbage and Swiss chard, remove the stems, cut them into irregular pieces and add them to the saucepan, continuing to cook for 25 minutes.

When cooked, add a pinch of washed thyme and rosemary.

Toast the bread slices in the oven, rub them with a clove of garlic to taste, then place them in the bottom of an oven dish. Pour the boiling soup over it. Add a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and bring to the table.

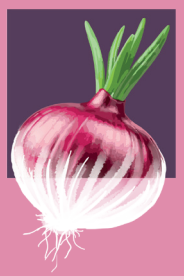
You can also enjoy this soup the next day: it will be even richer in flavour! Simply store it in the refrigerator in the oven dish and simmer it again in the oven before consuming. This is the *ribollita*: a dish made from stale bread, which adds flavour and substance to the soup.
Bread is a versatile ingredient: if you want a gluten-free version you can eliminate it, while for a more intense flavour you can choose a whole-grain or ancient grain bread. You can also customise the ribollita by adding a pinch of your favourite herbs.

Kale is one of more than 300 varieties of cabbage, all belonging to the Brassicaceae, or Cruciferae, family. Among green leafy vegetables, it is the best source of calcium, which is essential for bone health. It is also rich in fat-soluble compounds that remain stable when cooked, such as vitamin K and carotenoids, precursors of vitamin A. To aid their absorption, finish the dish with a drizzle of raw extra virgin olive oil, as is traditional in Italy.





# REUSING
## A NO-WASTE CUISINE



Stale bread, carrot peelings and celery leaves, many pasta shapes left over in the jars, some meat scraps and crusts of aged cheese. Many Italian cuisine recipes start like this, **from the end of something else.**
Reusing means reinventing. A concept born from the historical need to make the most out of available products, which were few and perishable. Therefore, if in the past avoiding **food waste** was the basis of home economics, today reusing food has a richer meaning and new values: **respect** for the environment, society and resources.

Leftover cooking is **circularity**: a set of flavours that change and adapt, reflecting the products of a specific area and the taste of each person. It is the product of other recipes, earlier gestures of kneading, mixing, adding a pinch of herbs here and there just to start over again, by reusing ingredients and preparations, **so as not to waste anything.**

Let's take **bread**, for example. It is a staple food that comes in many shapes and variations, and, once stale, it turns into the basis on which **infinite specialities** of Italian cuisine are built. Preparations such as *panzanella, acquacotta, canederli or pappa al pomodoro* enrich stale bread with different ingredients, giving it new taste and gastronomic nuances.
Recovering means **changing the face of ingredients** that were previously part of other dishes and stories, giving them back their value and creating something new and even more interesting. The art of reusing in the kitchen links generations through **handed-down gestures**, learned skills and **good habits** worth sharing.
Every year, almost **one-fifth** of food for human consumption is **wasted**, amounting to about 79 kg per capita, equivalent to more than one meal a day for people who suffer from hunger. In Europe, more than 58 million tonnes of edible food are thrown away every year, with significant **economic and environmental consequences**: wasted resources, loss of nutrients and more than 250 million tonnes of $CO_2$ unnecessarily generated. Wasting food means not only losing the food itself, but also all the resources needed to produce it: water, energy, agricultural land, and money. Moreover, it means losing valuable nutrients. More than **60 per cent** of this waste occurs **at home**, highlighting how every daily choice can make a difference. **Italian culinary tradition** offers **valuable tools** to tackle this problem. Tried-and-tested recipes and creative practices allow **ingredients to be given new life** and make meal preparation an easy gesture to reduce waste.

# PANZANELLA

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Stale bread (preferably without salt) | 800 g |
| Medium-sized ripe tomatoes | 6 nr. |
| Cucumber | 2 nr. |
| Red onion | 1 nr. |
| Basil | 15 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 20 g |
| White wine vinegar | q.s. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Black pepper, ground | q.s. |
| Water | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Cut the bread into coarse cubes.

Wash the tomatoes and cut them into pieces slightly smaller than the bread cubes.

Wash the cucumbers, peel them, divide each into two parts, and slice them thinly.

Put the bread in a bowl and season it with the tomatoes, cucumbers, vinegar and a little water.

Wash the basil, chop it by hand and add it to the contents of the bowl, then mix.

Wash the red onion, peel it, slice it very thinly and add it to the rest of the preparation.

Season with a pinch of pepper, salt and a drizzle of oil.

Serve garnishing each portion with a fresh basil leaf.

*Panzanella* is an iconic recipe of popular Tuscan cuisine, perfect for giving new life to leftover bread. You can try different variations by changing the type of bread or the seasoning, always keeping the idea of reusing stale bread. To personalise your *panzanella*, you can add desalted capers, preserved anchovies, a clove of garlic or a pinch of chilli pepper.

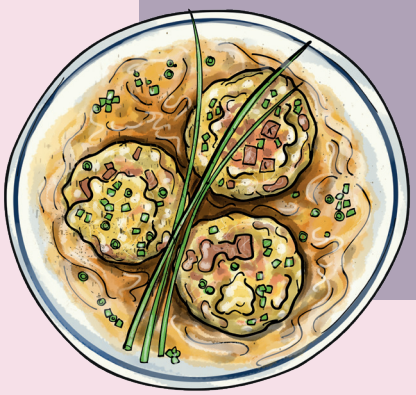
Bread is a staple of Italian cuisine. Always present on the table from breakfast to dinner, it is one of the main sources of complex carbohydrates. One tip is to vary the types of flours and choose, whenever possible, wholemeal versions that are richer in fibre, B vitamins and minerals, as well as improving the glycaemic response after consumption. Italian tradition also teaches us never to waste it: transforming it into new recipes, from soups to desserts, is a gesture of taste and sustainability.



# CANEDERLI TIROLESI

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Stale bread | 500 g |
| Milk | 250 g |
| Egg | 4 nr. |
| Speck | 150 g |
| Chives | q.s. |
| Parsley | q.s. |
| Black pepper, ground | q.s. |
| Nutmeg | q.s. |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Butter | q.s. |
| Sage | q.s. |
| Vegetable or meat stock | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Cut the bread into small cubes.

Dice the speck.

Wash the parsley, remove the stalks and finely chop the leaves with a knife.

Wash and finely chop the chives.

Beat the eggs and add the milk, stale bread, speck, parsley and chives.

Add a pinch of nutmeg, pepper and adjust the salt if necessary.

Shape the dough into round dumplings with a diameter of about 6 cm.

Cook the dumplings in plenty of boiling salted water for about 15 minutes, drain them and serve them hot, if necessary seasoning them on the plate with a drizzle of melted butter flavoured with sage, alternatively cook them for about 15 minutes and serve them in a good hot broth.

To obtain a tastier vegetable broth, we recommend browning the vegetables in a casserole dish with a little oil or in the oven. You can use vegetables that have available in the kitchen (traditionally celery, carrot, onion, parsley stalks...) and that you may have left over from other preparations. You can also flavour the broth with some sweet spices of your choice (cinnamon, cloves, juniper, star anise...).

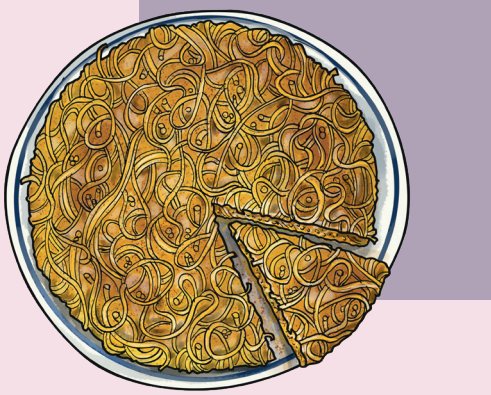
Choose broths made with only vegetables or white meat such as chicken, capon or duck, and avoid those made with red meat such as veal or lamb. In this way, you can preserve the environmental sustainability of the dish and give new life to the vegetables you have in your kitchen, turning them into a tasty, waste-free broth.



# FRITTATA DI PASTA

## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 SERVINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Cooked long pasta | 600 g |
| Whole eggs | 4 nr. |
| Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, grated | 80 g |
| Whole milk | 100 g |
| Extra virgin olive oil | 30 g |
| Fine salt | q.s. |
| Black pepper, ground | q.s. |



## PREPARATION

Mix the eggs, Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, a pinch of salt, milk and ground black pepper in a bowl.

Add the cooked pasta and mix it with the ingredients already present.

In a hot non-stick pan, first pour in the oil and the seasoned pasta, distributing it evenly.

Cover with the lid and cook over medium-low heat for 10 minutes or so.

Then, with the help of a plate, turn the frittata di pasta over and finish cooking on the other side.

Transfer the *frittata di pasta* to a serving dish, slice and serve piping hot.

The *frittata di pasta* started out as a recovery dish, designed to reuse leftover pasta. The best way to prepare it is to use what is left over from the previous day. Any format and any seasoning lends itself to this transformation. For a lactose-free variant, you can replace the milk in the recipe with the same amount of water.

As the name suggests, the recipe includes a frying phase, a method to be used in moderation as it increases fat and calorie intake. However, if done correctly, it is a pleasure you can indulge in from time to time. It is important to choose an oil with good heat resistance such as extra virgin olive oil, which at the same time enriches the dish with aroma and good fats.



# THANKS

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