

# Walking with Luisanna

Paths and food of Prato and surroundings

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**ENG**



**VISIT**TUSCANY



The first volume of the eatPRATO Books, a delicious series that will help us to discover the best of Prato's food and wine production. eatPRATO is the quality brand of the area and the events that promote it are unique occasions to celebrate and savor the delicacies that this land can offer with its products and producers always at the top of the national and international rankings. eatPRATO awaits us in June with its sparkling summer edition and in December with the sweet eatPRATO Winter event.

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Municipality of Prato  
—  
Tourism Office

# Walking with Luisanna

Paths and food of Prato and surroundings

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**This publication is the original and genuine travel diary of Luisanna Messeri, dedicated to flavors, products, recipes and stories that is possible to meet, discover and savor along the Wool and Silk Route and the Medici Route.**

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**Luisanna Messeri**, beloved character for the cuisine, both on television and on the radio (from La prova del Cuoco, to Decanter - Chef ma non troppo on Radio 2, to the first food comedy Il Club delle cuoche on Sky), is the author of numerous books, great custodian of the flavors and recipes of the Tuscan tradition and volcanic spokeswoman for all the unmistakable tastiness that makes Italian cuisine unique, fervent devotee of Artusi and faithful to the motto that “great cuisine is neither rich nor poor: it is good “.

*Texts, recipes and photos by Luisanna Messeri*

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# All roads lead to Prato...

THE ROUTE OF WOOL AND SILK  
& THE MEDICI ROUTE

D

**ear Hiker...** if you have this nice little book in your hand, it means that you deserve it. It means that you have decided to set off on a strategic and well-studied path... *It means that you have chosen to travel the ancient roadways* rich in history and legends... It means that you are curious to go looking for beauty, and the good... It means that you don't want to be first but you just want to enjoy a slice of the fantastic world... It means that you understand that the beauty of life must be conquered and savored slowly... *It means that you are ready to get excited* and you know that by walking you learn... It means that you want clean air, unspoiled places and silence... It means that you are ready to be amazed by the special effects of an Art and a Crazy Nature ... It means that you want to make new friends in the hospitable and welcoming stops of the intermediate stages... It means that you have made room in your heart to fill it with new emotions... It means that you have considered to be kidnapped from the beauty of the unspoiled places that you will cross on your way... *It means that you are looking for alternative and intelligent ways*, away from the roads full of cars, which will make your holiday magical... It means that you want to enjoy the right rest from stage to stage by eating, and drinking, very good and well done things... It means that you like the good & the beauty wherever they are, even 20 km away... It means that lucky you, you have considered catching a Syndrome of Stendhal for the many artistic and natural beauties you will encounter on your pilgrima-

ge... It means that you have not been lost along the way and that the CAI has done an excellent job with the trail signs... It means that you have not cheated and happy you made to affix all the stamps on the Credential at each stage... ***It means that you made small deviations from the path*** ... It means that you have satisfied your needs for pure beauty of an authentic territory... It means that the hospitality and welcome you have received in these places have moved you... ***It means that a dreamed and widespread sustainable tourism, which combines nature, history and art, is possible***... It means that en plein air art as you breathe in Prato, ancient and modern, is a nice viaticum to leave happy... It means that for nothing in the world you missed the Visitation by Pontormo in Carmignano... ***It means that you have seen with your own eyes that the salamander with glasses and the big yellow belly of the Calvana Massif are not two T Rex*** ... It means that you are now sure that Unesco has not boasted its World Heritage recognitions to the two splendid Medici Villas you have visited... ***It means that now you will look at fruit & vegetables with other eyes because you have been to the Museum of Still Life***... It means that from the Francigena Route, strategically through the Medici Route and the Wool and Silk Route, you found yourself in the navel of the world.

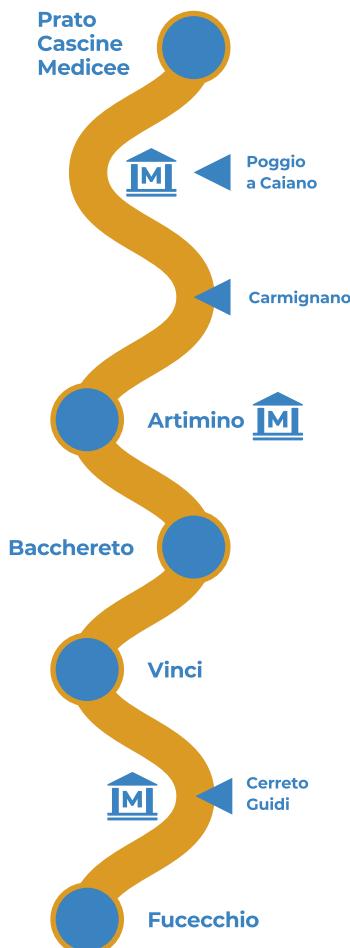
***...It means that you understood after so many kilometers  
that all roads, the beautiful ones, lead to Prato!***

Bruno Carrera  
Ursus



# The Medici Route

The Medici Route is a 76 km path, of medium difficulty, achievable in 4 or more days. The route, which can be identified thanks to the specific signs, develops mainly on local roads and CAI paths. The beginning is set at the Medici Cascine of Prato, the arrival is in Fucecchio, after having crossed the territories where the Medici family lived, hunted and delighted, shaping wonderful landscapes, represented also by Leonardo da Vinci in his paintings. Along the way there are three Medici Villas, today recognized as Unesco World Heritage sites, but also historic villages, ridges and valleys, natural parks, archaeological sites and numerous historical and artistic sites. The Medici Route is also a strategic link between the Route of Wool and Silk and the Via Francigena.



# The Route of Wool and Silk

A 130 km path of medium difficulty achievable in 6 or more days. The route develops along the CAI paths with white-red signs and with specific signs bearing the logo of the Route. The route passes through villages, peaks and valleys, four natural parks, never exceeds 1,000 m in height and arrives at every stop in a village served by public transport. It joins 2 historic centers of great value, which have grown over the centuries thanks to the wise management of water: Bologna, the city of the weir and canals and centuries' old silk capital, and Prato, the city of Cavalciotto, mills streams and fulling mills, capital of the wool and textile district.



# At the table with the magnificent 7 Prato & C.

CANTAGALLO, CARMIGNANO, MONTEMURLO,  
POGGIO A CAIANO, VAIANO, VERNIO

In the irremediable decline of agriculture, with rural society strangled by progress, in Tuscany we are lucky because we can still find real gastronomic fields and uncontaminated spaces. Here in the Prato Area, which from the Plain climbs the Bisenzio Valley, and then stretches between the rolling hills of Montalbano, each territory has its goodies, the result of nature and the work of men who have always known how to combine memory and innovation to make unique their land by giving life to Made in Tuscany, that potpourri of culture, elegance, simplicity, which someone today calls "miracles". And if there would be many Saints to devote themselves to, (at least as many as the beautiful churches and splendid

Abbeys in these places!) in this area miracles have always been done only by men with the overbearing help of a generous nature. In the last century these territories have been hit by a disruptive progress which has brought modernity and wealth but which, fortunately, did not provoke the cultural genocide of memory and did not sweep away the beauty accumulated over the centuries; indeed, if possible, to these have been added the artifacts of industrial archeology as evidence of the industrious passage of time. Today the engine of the quality of life,

**"Prato is not in Italy!  
It is in Tuscany"**

*(Curzio Malaparte)*

here, comes from tradition, from the sober simplicity, characteristics of the Tuscans even in the kitchen: not synonymous with thrift or “short arm”, but intelligent and wasteless consumption: “Simplicity is the supreme sophistication” as Leonardo da Vinci used to say, so simplicity, in our opinion, is not banality but refinement ... You can also see it in the landscape which is a construction of man, and it is not something we look at, it is something we do. The sober elegance of rural architecture, the harmony of the hills and the mountain with the cultivation of olive trees or vines, are an unmistakable land art shaped by man. The first feature that catches the eye is the variety: fields, vegetable gardens, meadows, woods, waters ... Here is the secret! In the *Prato Area*, water is the wealth that made the difference: that of the Bisenzio river above all, regimented with groyne and banks, was the driving force of the great textile industry of the Piana that changed the fate of the area. Water has always been a great agriculture ally: well-irrigated fields give an infinite variety of good fruits that end up on the tables of healthy, democratic cuisine, which takes care of it, because for us eating is culture. The cuisine of the *Prato Area* is a fundamental part of the great family of Tuscan recipes, those of tradition, with variations related to local taste and customs be-

**“Whoever arrives in Tuscany immediately realizes that he is arriving in a country where everyone is a farmer. And being a farmer for us does not only mean knowing how to dig, hoe, plow, sow, prune, harvest, harvest grapes: above all it means knowing how to mix the clods with the clouds, to do a whole thing of heaven and earth. Nowhere, I will say, is the sky as close to the earth as in Tuscany.”**

(Curzio Malaparte, *Maledetti toscani*)

cause here the endless wars between local prides have always stopped at the kitchen door. Here only dishes for those who come to the table with hunger and no recipe is untouchable because each has its own variant, that of my mom! I offer you a florilegium of classic, easy recipes, inspired by great products: this nimble booklet wants to be a tasty souvenir to put into practice once you are back home, to share the good cuisine of this land. And after all these hikes I am sure you really deserved it!

# Appetizers .1

Ficattole with mortadella and figs

Schiacciata

Bruschettas or Crostoni

Crostini with liver sauce

Bread slices with cabbage and beans

# First Courses .2

Potato Tortelli

Egg Pasta

Maccheroni with duck sauce

Pappardelle with wild boar sauce

My Pappa al pomodoro

Vegetables soup: Ribollita

# Second Courses .3

Prato stuffed celery

Roast pork loin

Stuffed chicken neck

Celery Meatballs

Fried polish mushrooms

Stewed wild boar

Beans in the flask

# Desserts and Biscuits .4

Prato Biscuits

Berlingozzo

Sommommoli

Castagnaccio

Castagnaccio and chestnut pancakes

Mantovana

Zuccherini cookies

Prato Peaches

# The basis of our cuisine: a question of myth and civilization

THE FUNDAMENTALS: BREAD,  
WINE AND OIL

# Prato Bozza

YESTERDAY BREAD IS GOOD TOMORROW  
EVEN OUT OF METAPHOR...

I

n Tuscany, land of perennial struggles, bread has been baked without salt since at least 1100 AD. It is said that Pisa, the port from which the salt flowed, one day decided out of spite not to supply the hinterland anymore. The Tuscan bakers did not lose heart, on the contrary, they said better, with ***unsalted bread*** you save and then you will feel more the flavor of our dishes! The Tuscans are champions ***for making necessities, virtues...*** Good bread is easy to find here: many bakers are proud of their craft. Generally it is now one of the few jobs that is passed from father to son: it is difficult to improvise bakers and make all the dedication and culture of bread your own. Bakers are special people, you can see it when they work, at night, and during the day when they serve you. If they realize that you are someone who knows about it, because you ask for a bread, which is underbaked, white, or very baked, low, high etc... then they want to serve you well, they want to give you satisfaction: for the baker it is a question of honor! And then he throws himself prone in the basket of loaves, begins to scratch, one by one, crunches them, studies them... and then chooses. You, in a flash, perceive the love for the dignity of the done well job and when you leave your shop, in your heart, you know that you will surely eat the best bread in the world, a unique bread, made especially for you! The ***Prato Bozza***, very good as soon as it comes out of the oven, gives its best when it is firm because it is long lasting, even a week, and you can make all the traditional dishes with it. Once bought, turn it up in a tablecloth and stow it in the kitchen cupboard, so it won't dry out too much but it will acquire a nice



photo: Marco Bardazzi

consistency. Then, a saw knife in one hand, in the other the bozza resting tightly on the heart, and off, slice: a drizzle of oil, vinegar and salt or wine and sugar, oil and orange, a tomato rubbed with oil, a slice of Prato mortadella or a sausage... my snacks are tasty! Everyone can continue to eat the bread they want, or even not to eat it, since it is now demonized and it is all the fault of the bread and carbohydrates if we are fat... But if you do not taste, at least once in your life, the bread that is baked around here, you don't know what you're missing! And what did you live doing? **Solid cheese and pitted bread.** The Prato bozza is made with soft wheat flour, preferably with GranPrato flour, has a beautiful white and very honeycombed crumb, the result of the long leavening to which it is subjected. It is an ancient bread, of peasant tradition, slightly acidic, without salt, with a nice crunchy crust that makes it perfect to accompany all the good things, the tasty dishes that are produced and cooked in these parts.

# The extra virgin olive oil

"GOOD OIL DOES NOT LEAVE THE MOUTH OILED"

W

ithout starting from the mists of time, it is from the Middle Ages that in Tuscany we are fixated with good oil and with the systematic cultivation of the olive tree. *"The Tuscans learned to make the most of their meager resources and administer them wisely. Civilization always has as its fertilizer the greed of the earth and the thrift of men who find stimulus to their initiative. Peoples could be divided into two categories: those that go to oil and those that go to butter. And there is no doubt that civilization was born among the first."* Indro Montanelli. So do you write oil and read Tuscany? Of course! Of extra virgin olive oil, genuine, top quality, here it is produced a lot in small family-run farms and on bigger farms, especially from the typical cultivars of these parts: **leccino, moraiolo, frantoio and pendolino**. Leccino gives a more delicate oil than other cultivars, even with spicy hints, the moraiolo is bitter and the oil of the mill is definitely the most spicy of all. The pendolino gives the sweet and spicy. But it is when they are skillfully mixed that they give an unbeatable and indispensable oil in the preparation of all our dishes! Each soil makes a different oil, with its particular character, its taste, its strength: the oil is not all the same and don't say that ours is too expensive! When it is cheap it means that there is a scam, it is adulterated, perfumed and colored with chlorophyll... But do you have in mind how much manual work is behind a liter of extra virgin olive oil? When you buy oil you don't have to save money, you have to spend more, because when it is made as God commands, cold pressed, without chemical interventions, it is much better and then there are many more



polyphenols, the antioxidants essential for our health, than in any other food. It is a real pharmacy and then anyway, we say “add a little oil” not a quintal! ***The extra virgin olive oil of the Prato Area is an excellence and has obtained the Tuscan IGP recognition, with the additional geographical mention Toscano del Montalbano for the hills of Carmignano and Poggio a Caiano and Toscano delle colline di Firenze for the oil of Prato (Filettoli), Montemurlo and Bisenzio Valley.*** Instructions for use: its enemies are light, heat and air. It is better if you consume it within a year of squeezing it, so it will maintain its maximum flavor and aroma because oil, unlike wine, does not improve with age!

# The brilliant Carmignano:

A DOCG FOR THE GRAND DUKE

I

*Wine is the song of the earth to heaven.* Luigi Veronelli.

In these areas vines and olive trees have been cultivated since the dawn of time ... Etruscans, Romans were already happily getting drunk with *Carmignano* wine. Good, very good, in the Middle Ages this wine costed four times as much the wine of the other neighboring territories: wine worthy of the Gods! Carmignano obtained the first DOC antelitteram, the oldest in the world, in 1716 with the *announcement of the Grand Duke Cosimo III de 'Medici* that set the boundaries and regulated the production of the most important Tuscan wines of the time: Chianti, Pomino, Valdarno Superiore and our Carmignano, which was already exported abroad at the time because, full-bodied, it "held up" the trip well. The Medici had an unconditional love for these territories, so much so that they built three villas and various farms... *Today Carmignano is an excellence of the territory: DOC, DOCG, Vinsanto, Barco Reale, Rosato called Vin Ruspo:* structured, soft, young aged, white, red, pink... and not far away there is also a *Pinot Noir*, born by chance, by a lucky mistake, in Montemurlo area. Three hundred years and do not feel them: in these parts they did not sit on their laurels, they went on. They understood that having a treasure is not enough and if every row of vines is the biography of an old man of ours who has split his back to make us inherit these masterpieces, then we must be able to reconcile tradition with new technologies, new tastes and win the nostalgia. And here the fruits of a lot of work were not long in showing up:



photo: Simone Ridi

today these wines are returning to the top of the wishes of those who want to drink well and want a wine that does not hit either in the head or on the wallet... The specification identifies as components of the *Carmignano DOCG Sangiovese* minimum 50%, *black Canaiolo* from 0 to 20% (used only by a few producers), *Cabernet Franc* and *Cabernet Sauvignon*, alone or together, from 10 to 20% (and for these vines the legend says that there is the hand of Caterina de 'Medici...) and the *Tuscan Trebbiano*, the *white Canaiolo* and *Chianti Malvasia*, alone or together, up to a maximum of 10%. In recent years the trend has been to not use Tuscan Trebbiano, white Canaiolo and Chianti Malvasia replaced by vines such as *Merlot* and *Sirah*. Carmignano DOCG lends itself to aging and requires one year for Carmignano and at least two years for the Riserva, one of which in oak or chestnut barrels, before being marketed. Around here wine is loved as much as food, so choose a label, a cellar: now as you fall, you fall well! Prosit.

***Wine is nothing but sunlight mixed with the earth's moisture. Galileo Galilei***

.1  
APPETIZERS  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Ficattole mortadella & figs

## INGREDIENTS

1/2 kg of GranPrato flour  
 400 ml of water  
 10 g of whole salt  
 4 g of dry yeast granules  
 15 g of lard  
 extra virgin olive oil  
 1 glass of water  
 a pinch of coarse salt  
 mortadella of Prato  
 dried figs of Carmignano

## Schiacciata

***Then for these recipes you could buy bread dough from the baker. If you do not find it or want to use the excellent flour you have here, GranPrato, here are my personal recipes tried and tried again. Good job!***

In a large bowl, sift the flour well with the baking powder. Add half of the water and start mixing by adding the salt, the lard and, always turning, also the rest of the water. Transfer the mixture to the pastry board and work it with your hands, until you have obtained a homogeneous mixture which you will rest in an oiled container sealed with plastic wrap. Leave to rise for an hour or until the mixture has doubled. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin and cut it into lozenges with the toothed wheel, letting it rise again for 20 minutes. Bring to temperature, 170°, abundant extra virgin olive oil preferably from the Prato area in a pan or a deep fryer and dip a few ficattole at a time because when frying they will increase in volume and you risk not cooking them well. Turn them a few times, drain them and put them on the paper to drain. A pinch of fine salt and stuff them with a slice of Prato mortadella and half a fig of Carmignano.

With the same dough you can make Schiacciata. When the dough is leavened the second time, spread it with your hands in a low pan, well greased with oil, taking care to create dimples with your fingertips: sprinkle the surface with a mixture of 1/2 glass of water and coarse salt and let rise in a warm place for another 30 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 200° and bake the schiacciata for 20/25 minutes. You can perfume your focaccia with rosemary or oregano, slices of onion, boiled potatoes and parsley or have it support the classic "ham and fresh figs". IDEA!!! Buy a refractory stone 2.5 cm high and as wide as yours oven, place it in the bottom. Heat the oven for 30 minutes before placing the schiacciata, or the pizza, to be baked on it.

.1  
APPETIZERS  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Bruschettas or Crostoni

## INGREDIENTS

1 bozza of Prato  
 200 g of Prato mortadella 100 g  
 of stracchino cheese  
 tuna in oil  
 fresh onion  
 basil  
 thyme  
 extra virgin olive oil  
 1 clove of sweet garlic  
 salt  
 ripe tomatoes  
 bacon  
 honey  
 fresh pecorino cheese  
 anchovy

*The bruschettas, also called crostoni, are truly a fantasy mine and always save any situation! You can put everything on top: raw and cooked herbs, cheeses, cold cuts, carpaccio, dried fruit, anchovies, vegetables in oil, ham and figs, ricotta and dried tomatoes, a slice of lard, a bit of acacia honey ... It is clear, however, that, however they are, they always go with a good glass of Carmignano. My favorite bruschettas are made like this, with the bozza of Prato stating a few days and imagination...*

**Mortadella of Prato and stracchino cheese:** mix 200 g of Prato mortadella in a bowl that you will have roughly blended with 100 g of stracchino and spread the cream obtained on bread. Place the slices in a pan and bake at 180 degrees for five minutes, until a nice crust has formed. A sprinkling of black pepper and the NUMBER ONE crostone is ready!

**Tuna and onion:** drain and crumble the tuna in oil that you have drained and season it with slices of fresh onion, a few leaves of basil and thyme, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and a drop of vinegar and season the bread that you have in the meantime toasted.

**Garlic and oil:** always with the toasted bread on both sides, peel a clove of sweet garlic and rub it just slightly on the slice. Season each slice with a nice drizzle of good oil from the Prato Area and a pinch of salt and a few slices of raw garlic.

**With tomato:** peel and dice the ripe tomatoes, season them with salt and pepper, basil, oil and put a spoonful on the grilled bread. In winter, when there are no fresh tomatoes (!) season with good chopped tomatoes pulp with slices of fresh onion, oregano, extra virgin olive oil, salt and black pepper.

**Bacon and honey:** here also grilled bread and a slice of bacon. In the oven, time to heat the sliced meat and once you have pulled out a few drops of honey and a stem of thyme.

**Cheese and anchovies:** place a slice of fresh pecorino cheese on the slice of bread and place an anchovy fillet on top. Spend the time to melt the cheese in the oven under the grill.



## INGREDIENTS

600 g of chicken  
and rabbit livers

1 onion

a handful of pickled capers

a couple of salted anchovies

a small glass of Vinsanto

extra virgin olive oil

butter

salt

black pepper

*This is the classic recipe, but everyone has his or her own, and as always Mum's is the best! Mum also put a little spleen in the sauce for the black croutons. Then there are those who put a spoonful of tomato paste, two sage leaves, those who all the herbs ... Vinsanto of Carmignano is a must!*

Wash the livers under running water, carefully removing any gall and nerves, dry them well with kitchen paper. Chop the onion and, with a drizzle of oil, in a pan, brown it on a very gentle flame. When the onion is cooked and has become transparent, throw the livers in the pan, raise the heat and let them brown well for 5 minutes. Sprinkle them with Vinsanto of Carmignano and let evaporate. Remove from the heat. With the chopping knife, or in the mixer if you prefer a creamier result (or if you have little desire to bustle!), finely chop the livers together with the capers, well drained from vinegar, and the diluted anchovies. Put the mixture back in the pan, adding a cup of water with which you will have rinsed the mixer glass because everything is broth! Cook for a few more minutes, adding a spoonful of tomatoes concentrate if you wish. Taste, season with salt and pepper, add a small glass of Vinsanto again and possibly a small piece of butter to make the cream shiny and still some more to decorate. In the fridge, well sealed with transparent film, the cream can be kept for a week. *NB: There are two ways to serve this pate, two are the schools of thought: there are those who use fresh bread, cut into slices and covered with cream and who, once sliced, toast it and then wet it with hot broth before spreading the pate. And then there is the third: bring it to the table in a nice gravy boat and everyone does it themselves!*

# Bread slices with cabbage and beans



***It is the simplest recipe in the world, and by now you know  
that simple in Tuscany does not mean trivial...***

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#### INGREDIENTS

slices of Prato bozza  
black cabbage/boiled beans  
extra virgin olive oil

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You just have to slice, grill and lightly rub with garlic a few slices of the beautiful bozza of Prato, preferably from GranPrato and stale, to boil the leaves of a couple of *black cabbage* palmettes that you will add wet to the bozza, then season with a nice drizzle of excellent extra virgin olive oil from the Prato area, a pinch of fine sea salt and a grind of black pepper. Stop. Very simple yes. Very trivial no!

After preparing the bread as described above, season the slices with a couple of spoonfuls of *boiled beans*, the piattellini, special because they have a thin skin and are tasty: with the usual drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, a pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper. And that's it.

.2  
FIRST COURSES  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Potato Tortelli

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## INGREDIENTS FOR THE PASTRY

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1 kg of GranPrato flour  
10 organic eggs  
a pinch of salt

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## FOR THE FILLING

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2 kg of floury potatoes  
half a clove of garlic  
a sprig of parsley  
salt and pepper  
nutmeg  
grated Parmesan cheese  
2 fresh sausages

### **WHO DOES IT ROUND AND WHO DOES IT SQUARE...**

*In Tuscany there are many mountain areas where special potatoes are grown, which claim to be the copyright holders of the potato tortello: Mugello, Casentino, Bisenzio Valley, each with a small variant, but basically very similar, born from the drive to make a virtue of necessity! Promoted PAT product, it is included among the Traditional Agri-Food Products: it is a “poor dish” full of flavor and history.*

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Make the dough as usual (see page 26). Meanwhile, boil the potatoes with the peel and, still hot, pass them finely and mix them well with the minced garlic and parsley, salt and pepper and a little nutmeg. If you like, crumble the two sausages and brown them on the fire, finally adding them, drained from the fat, to the potato mixture. Pull a strip of fine pasta with the machine. Make many morsels of filling and place them in a row, 3 cm apart from each other, on the sheet you will fold over on itself. Use your fingers to attach the two overlapped sheets, simultaneously removing all the air close to the filling. Then with the help of the toothed wheel, cut and seal the tortelli, (half-moon or squares as you prefer), going over the contours, where the pasta sticks, with the prongs of the fork, to be safer than later during cooking they will not break and will be more beautiful. *Secret:* throw them a few at a time in the pot, with the water boiling where you will have put a pinch of coarse salt and a drizzle of oil, being careful to drain them, as they return to the surface, with a slotted spoon. Arrange and season them, gradually in layers in the bowl that you will bring to the table. The best dressing is a meat sauce, a duck or rabbit sauce, wild boar or with mushrooms: sauces of which someone adds a couple of spoonfuls in the potato mixture. The Tortelli, however, are also delicious seasoned with butter & sage and a sprinkling of grated cheese.



# Egg pasta

*Homemade pasta... Oh god, what else is there to say about pasta that hasn't been said a million times already? Of course, it's a miracle that two ingredients, eggs, flour, or water and flour, give life to such a versatile thing! If you want to experience the thrill of making your own pasta, you must have some tools: a wooden pastry board, a nice long rolling pin, a spatula and, in a snap of modernity, you could also have the machine to pull the pasta thinly... a brilliant thing! It is that, to be clear, that is used to make pappardelle, malfatti, maccheroni, tagliatelle, tortelli and tortellini, ravioli, quadrucci for soup, pasta for lasagne, cannelloni... The ingredients are simply (and that's all to say), GranPrato flour and fresh organic eggs. For each guest, calculate 100 grams of flour, a whole egg and a pinch of salt.*

Place the flour on the pastry board, make the crater in the middle and break the eggs: with a fork start to beat them, like omelette, and in the meantime start mixing a little flour with the egg that collapses from the internal sides of the crater... Going on like this, at a certain point, you have to leave the fork and start working with your hands. At least for about ten minutes the dough should be worked, squeezed, beaten, folded, massaged... until it no longer sticks to the hands, it no longer incorporates flour and then, beautiful elastic, you will make a smooth ball that you will leave to rest an hour under a clean, warm cloth. Pull it with a rolling pin (or with the machine...), fill it to your taste making tortelli or ravioli, or let it dry a little and cut it into the shape and size you like best.



# Maccheroni with duck sauce

***Make the pasta as explained above, cut it and put it lying on a tablecloth, with a little flour, to dry a little before cooking.***

Take the duck, wash it, dry it and, once it has been cut into small pieces, put it on the open fire together with the minced herbs, lemon zest, whole garlic and rosemary. Brown well, turning the pieces several times and, when it has taken on the color of gold, blend with the dealcoholised wine (boiled for about ten minutes before using it), and let it evaporate. Add the tomatoes with the concentrate dissolved in a cup of water, salt and ground pepper, stir every now and then, cover and cook forty minutes. Before turning it off, let the sauce dry by removing the lid. Remove the pieces of duck, sprinkle them and chop the meat, putting it back in the pan. Cook the maccheroni and season them in layers in the bowl with lots of good ragù and a sprinkling of cheese if you like.

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## INGREDIENTS

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- 1 duck
- onion
- carrot
- celery
- parsley
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 sprig of rosemary
- 1 glass of dry white wine
- 1 can of peeled tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- extra virgin olive oil
- lemon zest
- salt
- black pepper
- grated cheese



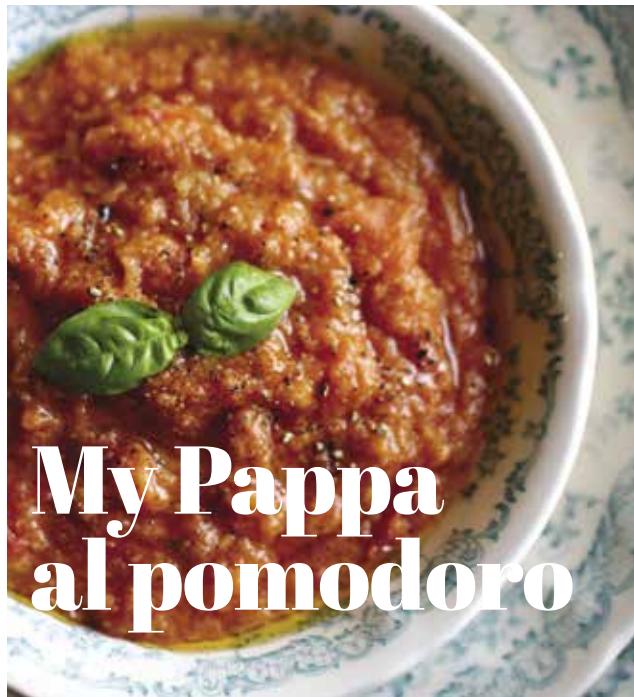
# Pappardelle with wild boar sauce

*This fresh pasta is tastier because I recommend using chestnut flour: make the pasta normally, taking care to sift the two flours together. Pull it and cut it into "pappardelle", bearing in mind Artusi's saying "Short bills and long pappardelle..."*

## INGREDIENTS

350 g of flour 0  
150 g of chestnut flour  
5 organic eggs  
a pinch of salt

To prepare a special dish like this, all you have to do is get wild boar, go read the main course recipe, wild boar stew, and season your pappardelle that you made with the recipe described above. The Pappardelle are narrower than the Maccheroni but wider than the Tagliatelle...



## INGREDIENTS

1 kg of stale GranPrato bozza  
 1.2 kg of ripe tomatoes  
 (peeled in winter)  
 3 leeks  
 2 tablespoons  
 of double tomato paste  
 1/2 l of hot vegetable broth  
 1/2 teaspoon of sugar  
 abundant basil leaves  
 extra virgin olive oil  
 salt  
 black pepper  
 chilli at will

# My Pappa al pomodoro

*What else to say that was not said on this standard dish of our Tuscan cuisine? Recovered dish, poor dish... Of the recipe, as always, there are infinite variations, every family has its own, you know! There are those who use garlic or shallot in place of leek and onion; who in the place of basil puts sage and there are those who, poor them, also add grated cheese at the end... here is the only mortal sin!*

In a crock or steel pan, put a little oil, the leek made in fine or chopped rounds, the chilli pepper and the tomato paste. Fry about ten minutes over low heat, stirring frequently, add the tomatoes, boil again and cook for five minutes. Add the vegetable broth, sugar and season with salt. In the meantime, the Prato bozza must be cut into very thin slices, like the host, which, once thrown into the pot, must be left to cook for about twenty minutes, until they are undone, the broth will be evaporated and the result will be a “deconstructed” meal, to be eaten with a spoon, soft but not liquid, because it must be a bit sticky... Here, the difficulty of the food is all here, in dosing the liquid part. Once removed from the heat, the pan must be kept covered for ten minutes. At this point add the basil, (which should not be put when the food is hot because it would lose all its aroma), a nice round of raw extra virgin olive oil, and a mince of black pepper. Needless to say, tomato soup is always good, hot, warm or cold.

.2  
FIRST COURSES  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Vegetable soup: the Ribollita

## INGREDIENTS

800 g of dried cannellini beans,  
 4 bunches of black cabbage  
 3 potatoes  
 3 carrots  
 2 onions  
 2 celery ribs  
 1/2 tube of tomato paste  
 1 glass of extra virgin olive oil  
 coarse salt  
 black pepper  
 sprigs of thyme  
 a stale Prato bozza

*Vegetable soup, bread soup: many names for the mother of all the ribollite of the next day, a dish now on everyone's lips and famous in the world. With this recipe you risk because, like all recipes, everyone does it as they please! To tell the truth, there is not the right one and the wrong one... at most are nuances, refinements, the result of family practices and personal tastes. Common traits for everyone: stale Tuscan bread, cannellini beans, black cabbage, thyme and good oil.*

First, the beans: if they are fresh, they are usually boiled in water with a clove of garlic. If the beans are dry, they should be soaked overnight in lukewarm water and, the next day, drained and boiled for a few hours on very low heat, without salt and with a clove of garlic. Wash and coarsely cut celery, onion, carrots, take the pressure cooker, pour in a drizzle of oil and fry the herbs slightly. Add the tomato paste, the finely chopped cabbage, the potatoes, the other vegetables and stew 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the broth where the beans have cooked, blend half of them and put them too, plus a handful of salt and thyme leaves. Close the lid and cook 40 minutes after it whistles. If you use a normal pot it takes twice as long. Taste and season with salt. Now you have several options: eat this minestrone as it is (even cold it is delicious) with the addition of the rest of the whole boiled beans, or you can cook the paternoster or rice or, even better, you can make soup with bread... Slice the host-style bozza and, in a nice earthenware pot, alternate bread, boiled beans, minestrone and a pinch of black pepper in several layers. Cover and let rest for half an hour or more. Last option, put it back in the pan, on a high heat for 10 minutes and, always when it has become creamy and the bread crushed, here you find the ribollita - soup boiled twice ... Simple isn't it?

**"The air... outside  
 Porta al Serraglio...  
 no longer smells  
 like cod and soaked  
 chickpeas, vege-  
 table soup, baked  
 beans..."**

*(Curzio Malaparte  
 Maledetti toscani)*

.3  
SECOND COURSES  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Prato stuffed celery

## INGREDIENTS

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1 whole celery with leaves  
2 organic eggs

## FOR THE FILLING

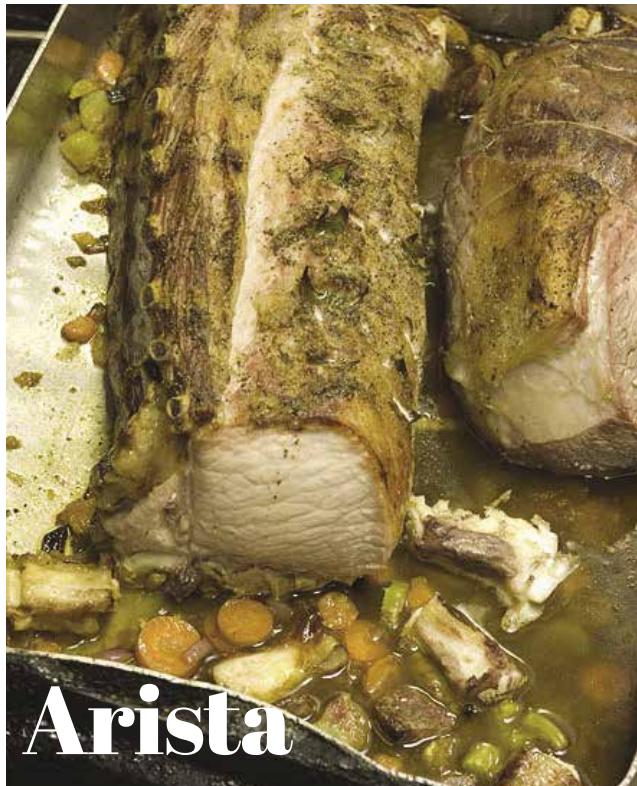
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150 g of minced meat  
100 g of Prato mortadella  
1 chicken liver, parsley  
garlic  
nutmeg  
grated cheese  
1 organic egg  
salt and pepper  
00 flour  
carbonated water at will  
extra virgin olive oil  
tomato sauce  
1 clove of garlic  
1 sprig of parsley

*It is the most classic and ancient dish of the city of Prato: it is talked about, and has been eaten since the Middle Ages, since it became the dish for the Feast of the Madonna. Like any traditional recipe, which comes from afar, the variations are numerous, as many as those who cook it ... Celery, white and crispy, is a vegetable that needs a lot of water and in the Prato Area, it has already been said, so much water has worked wonders and has turned into ... money!*

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Clean the celery stalks, cut 10 pieces of 15 cm and blanch them in lightly salted water. Drain and free them from the external filaments and put them to cool on a towel, pressing them gently to release excess water and widen them a little. Meanwhile, quickly brown the minced meat and the liver with a drizzle of oil, which you will chop with the knife and mix with the meat. Mix with the chopped Prato mortadella, the egg, a pinch of salt and one of pepper, the mince of garlic and parsley, and grated cheese until a nice firm consistency is obtained. Fill the grooves of the celery ribs with a nut of the mixture and they will be paired with each other and tied with kitchen string to obtain the classic "cigar". Once prepared, pass them one by one in the flour and then in the beaten eggs. In a pan put abundant extra virgin olive oil on the fire and, when it reaches the frying temperature, 160° / 170°, gently dip the stuffed celery one by one, lower the heat and turn them carefully. When they are beautiful golden, they must be pulled up with a slotted spoon and dripped on a sheet of yellow paper. You can eat them immediately, fried, but the best thing is to pass them again 10 minutes in a good ragù or in a tomato sauce perfumed with a mince of garlic and parsley.



## INGREDIENTS

1.5 kg of arista  
 carrot  
 celery  
 onion  
 garlic  
 fennel seeds  
 rosemary  
 dry white wine  
 salt  
 black pepper  
 extra virgin olive oil  
 1 tablespoon of cornstarch  
 1 tablespoon of mustard

*The pork loin is called "arista", that is the fillet and sirloin joined by the bone. I will spare you the legendary story of the Florentine origin during the Council of the late '400 for Greek etymology, "aristà, aristà" because no one believes it anymore...*

Take the chopping knife and, on the cutting board, make a little mincer of garlic with a teaspoon fennel seeds, salt and black pepper. If you don't like the smell of fennel, use rosemary. Make small but deep incisions in the side of the loin and fill the holes with the aromatic mincer. Then with what is left, massage the surface of the loin well and tie it like a salami with string. Place the meat (with the bone at the bottom) in a pan and grease it with oil; put in the preheated oven at 180° and leave to cook for an hour and a half by pricking it occasionally with the sauce that will form. Half an hour after take out the pan and put all the herbs cut into large pieces by turning them over in the sauce that has formed. Steam with a glass of white wine. At the end of cooking, when it is beautiful in gold color, remove the meat from the oven and wrapping it in aluminum foil, let it rest for 15 minutes before slicing it. To create the sauce to serve with the meat, put the pan on the fire, add a cup of water with a spoonful of melted cornstarch and a little mustard and, with the help of a ladle, peel well all the savory stick that you will use on meat. In the classic version the arista is served cold with the hot sauce. *Oven or stove?* The arista can also be cooked in a saucepan, in a pan, on the fire, just add a ladle of broth and cook, covered, for 50 minutes.



# Stuffed chicken neck

## INGREDIENTS

1 chicken neck  
 200 g of minced meat  
 1 bio egg  
 minced garlic and parsley  
 1 slice of bread soaked in milk  
 a pinch of nutmeg  
 salt and pepper  
 1 glass of dry white wine  
 2 cloves of garlic  
 1 sprig of rosemary  
 2 spoonfuls of tomato paste  
 grated organic lemon zest

*Traditional peasant dish, it is a refined and delicate dish: a classic of our cuisine, when with little you do a lot...*

Cut the skin of the neck very low on the chest, while from the part of the head cut right under the neckline and throw the head away. Now remove the skin from the neck bone: you must remain a casing, as long as possible, which you will clean well and which you close by sewing it with a needle and thread, on the smallest side. The other side will be used to fill it. After you have done all the work on the chicken neck you are well on your way. Now you have to mix all the ingredients in a bowl: meat, egg, minced garlic and parsley, squeezed bread, salt, pepper, nutmeg and lemon zest. With this mixture fill the neck, pushing it well inside. Once filled, with needle and thread sew the ends well and, with the same needle, randomly pierce all the sausage that you will have obtained. In a saucepan, heat a drop of extra virgin olive oil with garlic, put the neck inside, brown it by turning it often and then wet it with white wine. Let evaporate, add salt and pepper, add the tomato paste, rosemary and a small cup of water. Cook over low heat, with the pan covered for half an hour. Serve it cut into slices, with a little of its sauce and some boiled potatoes. It is also delicious boiled and served cold, with mayonnaise and green sauce.

.3  
SECOND COURSES  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Celery meatballs

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## INGREDIENTS

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2 celeries  
2 whole eggs  
2 cloves of garlic  
1 sprig  
of parsley flour  
canned tomatoes  
extra virgin olive oil  
salt  
black pepper  
a pinch of nutmeg

***For those who want to cook but have little time or especially for those who, vegetarians, do not like meat, this recipe is perfect: classic but not too much...***

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To make these meatballs, wash, cut into pieces and cook in salted water, a celery also using some leaves. Once cooked, strain well and, with the chopping kmife, chop it on the cutting board until it is almost reduced to pulp. Then squeeze it with your hands and put it in a bowl with the eggs, salt and pepper, garlic, parsley and nutmeg, mixing everything well with a ladle. With the help of a soup spoon to take the same amount of mixture, make the meatballs, if possible, all equal and round. Flour them and fry in abundant hot oil. In the meantime, with the usual chopped garlic and parsley, cook the tomatoes, fresh or canned according to the season, in a saucepan with the extra virgin olive oil. Once all the meatballs are fried and strained the excess oil on kitchen paper, put them in the pan with the tomato sauce diluited with hot water, or serve them with the sauce separately in a small bowl. Appetizing, simple and delicious.

.3  
SECOND COURSES  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



## INGREDIENTS

# Fried polish mushrooms

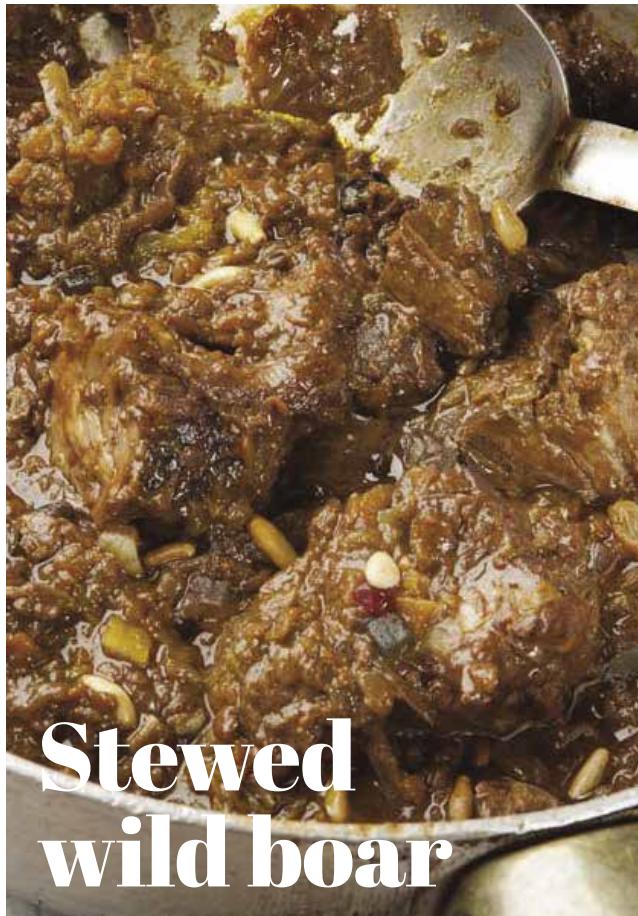
polish mushrooms  
flour  
extra virgin olive oil  
cold sparkling water  
salt

*Polish mushrooms, boletus edulis, are precious and delicate and when you buy them they must also be beautiful! They can become part of the mixed fry, but they have their own nobility and even on their own they are a dish for a king. Endless diatribe: must mushrooms be fried with or without egg? After several tests I decided to fry them without egg, I only use flour and extra virgin olive oil. The result is a light and fragrant fried food.*

Clean the mushrooms but do not wash them: remove the soil from the stem using a small knife, then carefully clean the chapels with a wet rag. Cut the mushrooms into slices a finger high and bring a pan of extra virgin olive oil to temperature. As soon as the oil is at temperature, take one slice at a time, pass it a second in cold water, flour it and fry as usual, over medium heat. Stir and put the mushrooms to strain the excess oil on kitchen paper. Bring to the table. To be eaten immediately with the addition of a pinch of fine salt.

**NB: EYES OPEN WITH MUSHROOMS!!!** If at the beginning and at the end of summer it rains and then it is not too hot and it doesn't blow so much wind to dry the ground, look at the calendar, count 15 days and go to the woods. If you are lucky, and long eye and you get up early, you will take the risk of going home with the basket full of different types of mushrooms... But, as saying goes, better to be afraid than to be screwed: therefore do not trust and always have them checked by someone more experienced than you because with the empirical techniques you can not save yourself from the poisonous mushroom!

**IT IS NOT TRUE THAT:** Garlic that turns black when cooked, as well as silver that blackens, indicate poisonous mushrooms that, among other things, do not always stink or change color when you cut them. The phallous amanita, for example, remains the same but kills you. Mushrooms are excellent in the DIET because they have very few calories. But we must not abuse it because they always contain something toxic... Are they or are they not, as the ancients said, children of thunder?

**INGREDIENTS**

1 kg of wild boar meat

**FOR THE MARINADE**

- 1 carrot
- 1 red onion
- 1 celery stick
- 4 cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 juniper berries
- fresh thyme
- 1/2 liter of full-bodied red wine
- 1 cup of vinegar

**FOR THE SAUCE**

- herbs  
(carrot, onion, celery, parsley)
- 2 glasses of red wine
- tomato paste
- a few leaves of sage
- rosemary
- 2 cloves of garlic
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt and black pepper

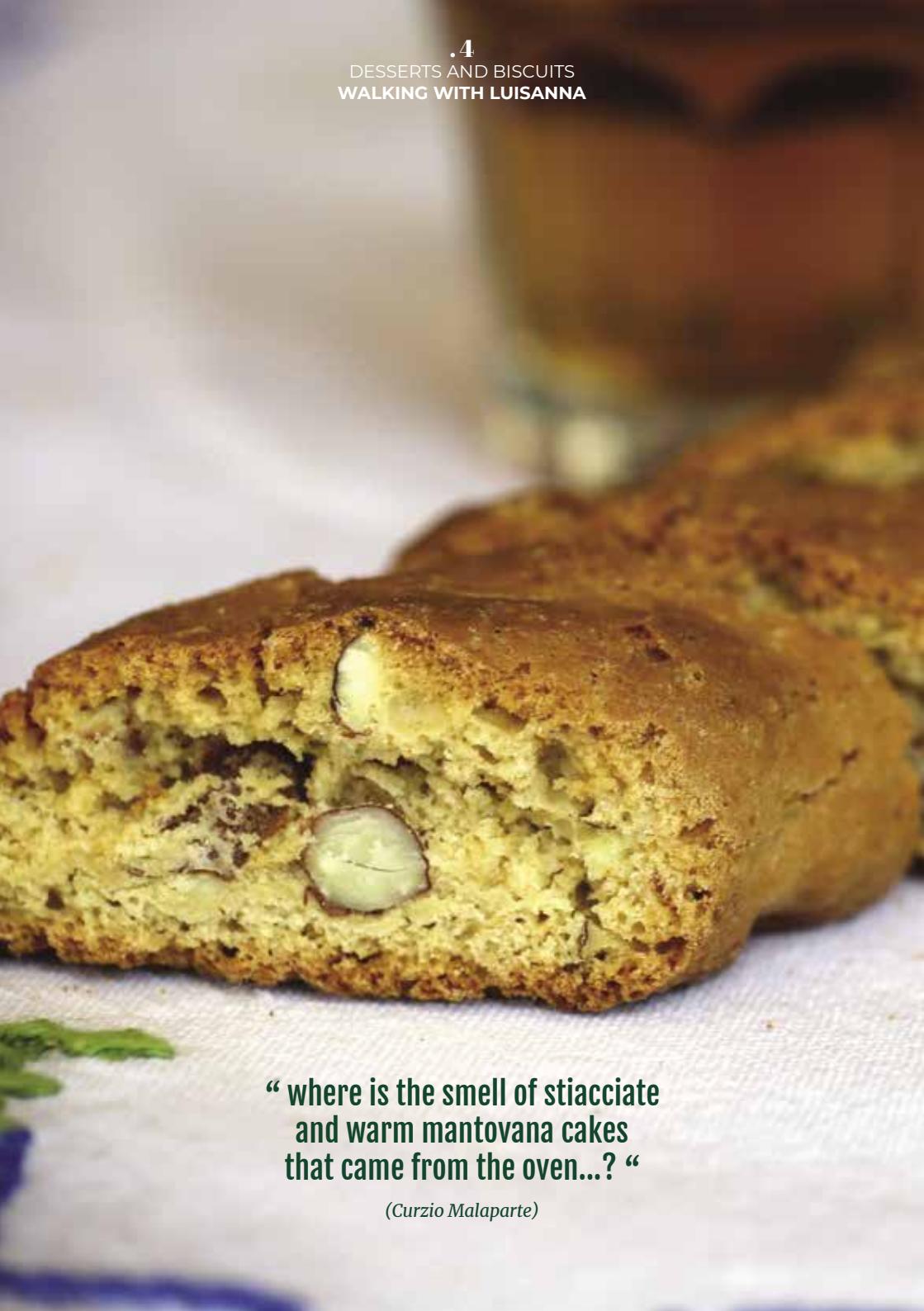
Put the chopped meat in a bowl, with herbs, spices, vinegar and wine and marinate for 24 hours in a cool place. Pour 1/2 glass of oil in a pan, add 2 cloves of garlic, other minced herbs and brown the meat strained from the marinade, add again some sage leaves, 4 cloves, 2 bay leaves, 2 juniper berries, fresh thyme and rosemary. Turn gradually, season with salt and pepper, add two tablespoons of tomato paste and steam with the wine of the marinade, cook for an hour and a half, covered and on low heat. If necessary, add a cup of boiling water. P.S. With this sauce, perhaps by chopping a piece of meat, you can also season a nice plate of pappardelle...



## Beans in the flask

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Even in this area there is a great respect for beans, you wouldn't be Tuscan otherwise... There are "virtuous gestures", moves that cost nothing neither effort nor money, but which give the meaning of life. One of these is keeping good dry beans in hermetically sealed glass jars, being careful to insert also black peppercorns that will keep the weevils away. Another is to soak the beans for a night in barely warm water; then drain them into the glass flask with cold water, two cloves of garlic and a sage leaf and, finally, put on low heat, to cook our legumes without haste. The beans, the meat of the poor, are still here, always the same and always special, seasoned with a drop of extra virgin olive oil, a pinch of salt (at the end of cooking!) and ground black pepper, perfect as a side dish for any course.



**“ where is the smell of stiacciate  
and warm mantovana cakes  
that came from the oven...? “**

*(Curzio Malaparte)*

# Prato Biscuits

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## INGREDIENTS

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300 g of weak flour  
200 g of caster sugar  
200 g of almonds  
0 g of acacia honey  
4 yolks  
2 whole organic eggs  
1 sachet of baking powder  
2 spoonfuls  
of extra virgin olive oil  
1 organic lemon  
1 vanilla bean  
1 bottle of good Vinsanto!

***Know that in this area you can not avoid, at the end of the meal, the perverse pairing “biscuits/vinsanto”: very crunchy biscuits to be soaked in a glass full of Vinsanto. I warn you, they are addictive! So I give you a recipe to put into practice when, far from here, you will need once again this unforgettable combination.***

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To toast the almonds in the oven. In a bowl mix the egg yolks, the two whole eggs, the sugar, the honey, the oil, the grated lemon zest and the vanilla seeds. Pour the flour on the pastry board, add the yeast and the egg mixture, work this mixture as little as possible, just enough to mix the ingredients. Then, once you made a ball with the dough, scrape the pastry board well and lightly flour it. Take some of the dough and make a large finger roll, about the size of an inch and as long as the baking sheet. Place these cylinders on the baking paper placed on the baking sheet, brush them with egg mixed with milk and bake at 180° for half an hour, until they have taken a nice hazelnut color, golden and shiny. Take them out of the oven. Once warm, with a knife cut obliquely many biscuits 1 cm thick, which once cold can be placed in a hermetically sealed cookie jar. The biscuits thus prepared must be toasted, that is, put back in a hot oven for a few minutes: the result will be a biscuit of particular crunchiness and shelf life.



# Berlingozzo

***"Each cuisine is linked to the territory; therefore it must reflect, first of all, the characteristics, traditions, products, habits of the place..." T. Gregory***

Characteristic and ancient cake that in these areas has always been prepared during the carnival celebrations. Whisk the two whole eggs and the two egg yolks with the sugar. Add the grated orange zest, salt, Vinsanto and the oil. Work a few minutes, gradually add the sifted flour and finally a sachet of baking powder. You need to obtain a nice soft mixture: if necessary, add a little fresh milk. Grease and flour a cake tin, with the hole, pour the mixture in it, beat the pan on the table to spread the dough well and decorate it with sugar grains. Bake at 180° for about 40 minutes. Done!

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 organic eggs
- 200 g of caster sugar
- 400 g of GranPrato flour
- 1 organic orange
- 1 glass of Vinsanto
- 100 ml of extra virgin olive oil
- a pinch of salt
- 1 sachet of baking powder
- butter to taste
- sugar grains



# Sommommoli

***Also called San Giuseppe pancakes. They are delicious and I always wonder why I only do them on the 19th of March. Then I answer myself, luckily I only do them on that day, otherwise it would be a problem! Because these too are addictive...***

The day before, cook the rice in the milk for 45 minutes, with the orange zest and a pinch of salt. Stir frequently and, a quarter of an hour after the end of cooking, add the sugar. Remove from the heat and let cool. Mix the cold rice with the egg yolks and Vinsanto. Pour a lot of oil into a pan and put it to heat. As soon as it goes up to temperature, with the help of two spoons, pour the mixture in spoonfuls and fry it by turning it over. Drain the pancakes, arrange them on the yellow paper and then sprinkle them with caster sugar flavored with vanilla. They are eaten categorically with hands and licking fingers...

## INGREDIENTS

1 kg of rice  
3 liters of whole and fresh milk  
600 g of caster sugar  
12 organic egg yolks  
a glass of Vinsanto  
the grated zest of an organic orange  
a pinch of salt  
sugar to taste  
vanilla bean  
extra virgin olive oil

.4  
DESSERTS AND BISCUITS  
WALKING WITH LUISANNA



# Castagnaccio and chestnut pancakes

## INGREDIENTS

1 kg of fresh  
chestnut flour  
water  
pine nuts  
walnuts  
raisins  
extra virgin olive oil  
a pinch of salt  
rosemary  
Holy wine

*The chestnuts that grow in these mountains are magnificent. Without dwelling on the past when these natural monuments that are chestnut trees, were the basis of subsistence so as to be called "the bread tree", they are still a spectacle today thanks to the loving care that is reserved from generation to generation to these plants, which fortunately continue to produce some of the best winter fruits. To make boiled, roasted, glazed, in syrup... or dried and ground, and then with sweet flour you can prepare many recipes, sweet and savory. I transcribe the two most characteristic and simple to prepare at home.*

**CASTAGNACCIO.** Sift the sweet flour so that it does not make lumps. Add a pinch of salt and as much warm water as needed to create a not too thick mixture. Let it rest for half an hour. Add the squeezed raisins that you will have kept in the Vinsanto, pine nuts, chopped walnuts, a tablespoon of oil and mix again with a whisk. There are those who also put a few needles of rosemary... I don't like it as it smells too strong and repeats to me, but it is a matter of tastes... Give one last stir and pour everything in a well-oiled pan: the chestnut cake must be a finger high because during cooking it halves in thickness. One last drop of oil on the surface, put in a hot oven at 180° and bake for half an hour. It will be ready when it has a nice brown and cracked crust. It is good warm and cold.

**PANCAKES.** Once the flour mixed with water has rested, instead of making the chestnut cake you can make pancakes: add other pine nuts, raisins and walnuts, mix well and, when the extra virgin olive oil that you have put, abundant, to heat will have reached the right temperature, take the mixture by spoonfuls and fry a few at a time. Turn the pancakes a couple of times, being very careful not to burn them because it is likely to happen. After putting them to drain from the oil and turning them over in the caster sugar they are ready, hot or even cold.



# Mantovana

**Famous and simple Prato cake. When it is said that geography is an opinion. There are those who call it Torta Paradiso, but I lack the right coordinates of it...**

## INGREDIENTS

- 6 organic eggs
- 200 g of sugar
- 200 g of butter
- 200 g of flour 00
- 150 g of sliced almonds
- 1 vanilla bean
- icing sugar

Whip the 5 egg yolks and the whole egg with the sugar, until it becomes a frothy and light mixture. Add the melted butter, vanilla seeds, sifted flour and mix well with your hands. Pour everything into a fairly large round pan, well buttered and sprinkled with almonds, even on the edges. Also cover the surface with almonds. Bake for 1/2 hour at 180°. Take it out and let it cool before serving, sliced and whitened with powdered sugar, and accompanied by a spoonful of mascarpone cream.



# Zuccherini cookies

***These cookies are offered for weddings: a very sweet donut, a symbol of union, coated with white icing symbol of purity. An elementary symbolism, which I really like for this. In Vernio there are specialists of this type of biscuits.***

Pour all the ingredients into the mixer and mix quickly. If you don't have a planetary mixer, a bowl and lots of elbow grease are enough! Take the dough out, put it on a pastry board and finish kneading with your hands. Make many finger rolls and then many donuts that you will bake at 180° in a pan covered with baking paper. In a saucepan, boil a quart of a liter of water with the sugar and melt it on a high flame. When it boils, throw the donuts in it and turn them well with a ladle and leave them until the sugar has formed a white film on the surface. Pull them up with a skimmer and let them dry and cool. Once dry, they last even a week, just don't eat them all together!

## INGREDIENTS

- 1Kg of flour 00
- 8 whole organic eggs
- 100 g of melted butter
- 150 g of caster sugar
- 2 sachets of baking powder
- 30 g of anise seeds
- 1/4 liter of water
- 200 g of caster sugar
- a low pan
- a saucepan



# Prato Peaches

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INGREDIENTS 100 PIECES

## FOR BRIOCHE DOUGH

1.100 g of flour  
240 g of sugar  
140 g of butter  
10 organic eggs  
35 g of brewer's yeast  
40 g of acacia honey  
20 g of candied orange  
a vanilla bean  
70 g of water, a pinch of salt  
1 bowl of custard prepared  
with half milk and half cream  
and perfumed with lemon zest  
and vanilla bean

## FOR THE DIP

120 g of sugar  
80 g of water  
60 g of Alkermes

## FOR THE FINISHING

candied orange  
castor sugar  
leaves of mint

## TOOLS

a mixer  
a scale

**From an ancient tradition, here is a sweet precursor of finger food, those mini pastries which are so loved by the new geniuses of pastry. Two half-spheres of leavened dough, stuffed with custard and soaked in a red spicy vanilla liquer, languidly rolled in caster sugar. There are those who have seen in this union a metaphor for what binds heaven to earth, the lower world with the upper world, between matter and spirit, the result of a search for earthly perfection... everything can be! This recipe wants to look the man in the face: complicated but satisfying.**

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Start making the first dough for the brioche dough: put in the mixer 45 g of flour, 2 whole eggs, 60 g of sugar, yeast, 60 g of butter and still water. Knead until you get a smooth and elastic dough (don't worry, the machine does it!). Remove the dough from the machine and let it leaven for an hour and a half. Add the rest of the ingredients in the mixer and knead again. Second dough: put the rest of the ingredients in the mixer and start. As soon as they are mixed, add the first leavened dough and knead it until it is again smooth and elastic. Let it leaven again at room temperature, optimal 27°, for another hour and a half... Take the leavened dough into brioches, cut 100 grams and, working it with your hands, make a loaf. Cut it in half and then again in half 2 times in order to obtain 8 pieces of 15 g each... Roll the pieces until you get smooth balls, let them rest about twenty minutes, take them back in your hand, roll them again and put them in a buttered cake pan. After 10 minutes, press them with the palm of your hand and let them leaven again for 5 hours, then bake at 220° for 6 minutes. I don't give you the recipe for custard, you have it for sure: however use, as I said, milk and cream and vanilla and lemon smell. Prepare the dip by mixing the alkermes with the water and sugar syrup. With a knife, lightly pierce the ball where it touches the pan. Soak it completely in the warm dip. With a pastry bag full of cream, fill the ball abundantly and couple two by two. Roll the peach in sugar and decorate it with a small piece of orange and a mint leaf. Will you make it?

**I told you: it is better to buy already made sweets!!!**

# Tuscany



## **PRATO**TURISMO

The tourist area of Prato is made up of the municipalities of:  
Prato, Cantagallo, Carmignano, Montemurlo,  
Poggio a Caiano, Vaiano, Vernio

[www.pratoturismo.it](http://www.pratoturismo.it)