



GIANCARLO FRE

The Operatic Kitchen

MUSIC AND FOOD IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA



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GIANCARLO FRE

*The
Operatic
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Translated by
Margherita Spinazzola



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Giancarlo Fre (1952-2013) was an architect, an amateur cookery expert and a man full of curiosity. As an architect he was the author of important restoration projects and publications in that field. His passion for cookery and the arts brought him to write for periodicals, both printed and on-line, and to launch his own blog “Il Gastronomo Educatore”. An observant traveller with an amazing sense of humour, he understood the beauty of life and conveyed its taste and flavour to other people. First and foremost he passionately loved Margherita and Maddalena, who are left with thousands of pages of his recipes, researches, drawings, watercolours and travel diaries.

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This book, first published in 2013 to mark the bicentenary of the birth of Giuseppe Verdi, and now reprinted for Expo 2015, takes the reader on a journey through the Emilia-Romagna of music and gastronomy, a combination that strongly identifies the inhabitants of this land. It may seem an unusual and perhaps odd way to travel through a land, its history, and its culture. But anyone visiting Emilia-Romagna will rapidly realize that, in our region, the musical tradition and the reputation of a cuisine, which a few months ago Forbes magazine called the best in the world, are still among the main drivers of the development of the regional economy, and represent the core elements of a quality of life that is universally recognized.

Behind a great cuisine there are excellent products and skilled producers, and therefore a great agriculture. Today, Emilia-Romagna is the European region that boasts the highest number of PDOs and PGIs products, as many as 41, many of which are at the core of the recipes in this book. It is an achievement stemming from an ancient culture, and from the love for a land cultivated for centuries, that gave us a tradition

of wonderful products and kindled the taste for good food and the pleasure of its sharing so typical of the temperament and character of Emilia-Romagna's inhabitants.

This culture has certainly inspired our great compatriot Pellegrino Artusi, author of *The Science of Cooking and the Art of Eating Well*, the most famous and most read book on Italian cuisine. It was also clearly present in the life of Giuseppe Verdi who, during the 1st census of the Kingdom of Italy, declared himself a "farmer". And, as the reader will discover browsing this book's recipes and anecdotes about the various characters, it also marked the lives of many other musicians: born in our land – such as Toscanini, Corelli, Frescobaldi or Pavarotti –, or who lived here for a long time – such as Rossini and Mascagni –, or who just visited, like Mozart, Wagner, Maria Callas, Puccini.

Wishing you a pleasant reading and a great journey through our history, our cuisine and our culture, we look forward to welcoming you in Emilia-Romagna to enjoy such riches together with us.

SIMONA CASELLI

REGIONAL MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, HUNTING AND FISHING

Opera and cookery fly Italian colours over the world; our region, boasting the names of Giuseppe Verdi and Pellegrino Artusi, is well placed to represent and support both artistic expressions. The investigation of the relationship between music and food was born during the celebrations of Verdi's bicentenary, as a successful cooperation between the Regional Department for Agriculture and the Institute for Cultural Heritage of the Emilia-Romagna Region; it was carried out, with passion and competence, by an architect, Giancarlo Fre, who draws an enjoyable presentation intersecting the lives and works of the composers and protagonists of the stage with selected recipes. The musicians and performers' frequent travels – from Ferrara-born Girolamo Frescobaldi to Modena-born Luciano Pavarotti – were a great opportunity to meet around a table, appreciating and exchanging different tastes, flavours and traditions – often accompanied by funny anecdotes. Cookery – even the traditional type – does not refrain from comparing itself with that born elsewhere, eventually creating tasty variants that become established as the time goes by. The book is not a chronological history of music and cookery, but a work that gently unwinds in four movements, the first one focussing on the golden age melodrama: the 19th century with protagonists such as Gioachino

Rossini (born in Pesaro but growing up in Lugo), Giuseppe Verdi and into the 20th century with Pietro Mascagni (from Livorno, but tightly bound to Romagna for his lifelong relationship with Anna Lolli) and Arturo Toscanini.

The tale of Rossini's eventful life made it possible for the author to delve into the chefs and those French recipe books that promptly issued many preparations *à la Rossini*, which often include ingredients such as truffles and foie gras, as favoured by Rossini. With Giuseppe Verdi, cookery changed its tune and got closer to the local produce and countryside, stretching between Parma and Milan: the stars are *risotto* and *spalla di San Secondo*, that the Maestro used to send as a gift with careful cooking instructions. One only needs to visit his home at Roncole di Busseto, and above all his Villa at Sant'Agata, to be fascinated by Emilia countryside.

If a lot of music by Verdi was understood by people along the peninsula as a unifying stimulus for the country, the first edition of Pellegrino Artusi's handbook saw the light of day in Florence in 1891, to become the guiding light of Italian cookery, written in a language no longer copied from French. Many recipes of the present book are drawn from *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene* (*Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*), that from the 13th edition – issued in 1909 – onwards presented 790 recipes.

I do not want to summarise the brilliant narration of this book, concluded by a gallant nod to five ladies (also known for their links to Rossini, Verdi and Mascagni), but I wish to stress that some topics touched by our “gastronomo educato” (as he called himself in the title of his blog) who could not – sadly – revise the final version of his work, bear witness to an

enthusiasm for the people and their tastes, for those places and habits which encourage readers to listen afresh to and go to the opera and the theatre, to visit the homes of musicians and Taste Museums and explore the musical collections of research libraries and cultural institutes.

ROSARIA CAMPIONI

FORMER SOPRINTENDENTE PER I BENI LIBRARI E DOCUMENTARI
REGIONE EMILIA-ROMAGNA

Translator's note

It is important to recognise that the 70-odd recipes that complement these pages are historic and illustrative of the culture of Emilia-Romagna: it may be possible to use most of them as they stand, but some truly historical ones – either by Pellegrino Artusi or by the musicians – have not been adapted for everyday use in the 21st century, and take no account of modern cooking methods and equipment. Accordingly, where they refer to ingredients which may be uncommon or even totally unavailable in some places, no alternatives have been suggested. If readers are moved to experiment with some of these recipes for themselves as the author and the translator have done, then that is an added bonus, and I truly hope that they will prove rewarding. Both metric and imperial measures are used in recipes quoted from English-language cookery books, otherwise the metric system is used. A few terms which may perhaps be unclear or unfamiliar are explained in the footnotes.

M.S.



*The recipes
of
Melodrama*





Crockery, Museo dell'Agricoltura e del mondo rurale, San Martino in Rio (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

MUSIC IN THE KITCHEN, THE KITCHEN IN MUSIC

Nineteenth-century music in Europe, with its roots in the 18th and offshoots in the 20th century, marked a time of revolutions and evolutions, be they in style, harmony, orchestra and enjoyment by audiences who were also changing and were differently educated. At the same time, the art of cookery similarly had by far its most sensational transformation, as it was making room for the eating habits and tastes of the large numbers of people that criss-crossed Europe, either following or preceding armies and monarchs¹ who were coming, going or uniting their respective houses.

Both Emilia and Romagna were crossroads of social changes as they were part of at least three sovereign states and were ruled, over a mere 100 years, by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Popes who reigned in Rome – seven altogether, from Pius VII to Leo XIII – Habsburgs of various denominations, the Bourbons and several provisional governments during the

Risorgimento. Besides, Emilia and Romagna bordered the Austrian Lombardy-Venetia on the north, the Duchy of Savoy – later Kingdom of Sardinia – on the west, the Grand-dukedom of Tuscany and the Marches, as a part of the Papal States, on the south.

These multifarious geopolitical events and circumstances contributed to the rise of a new and more open culture both on stage and in the kitchen. Rossini, born in Pesaro but raised and educated in Lugo and Bologna, Verdi, born at Roncole di Busseto, Toscanini every inch from Parma and many other musicians trod Europe and Italy, looking for work, theatres, impresarios or simply for inspiration: somebody even found a wife till death did them part. New political and social ideas were spreading at the same time as music and cookery, without ever merging. While so many were leaving, others were arriving in Emilia Romagna, particularly attracted by Bologna: Mozart, Wagner, Donizetti, Paganini, Liszt, Brahms, Puccini, Mascagni and many others were drawn by the lively musical milieu there and the quality of the school founded by Fr. Giovanni Battista Martini, as well as by the beauty of the area. The reputation of the local cooks – both men and women – also seemed to be particularly appealing, as witnessed by contemporary letters and chronicles.

1 *Rolo delle persone che vanno col signor principe alla guerra*, recorded, on 18th June 1571, the names of the aristocrats from Parma who joined Alexander III Farnese at Lepanto: 24 gentlemen, 6 dignitaries of various ranks and a following of 40 among “spenditori, bottiglieri, credenzieri, garzoni, scalchi, canavari, fornai, cuochi e dispensieri” (bursars, bottle and provisions stewards, errand boys, carvers, cellarmen, bakers, cooks and pantry men); quoted in *Dai ponti di Parma. Storia, costumi e tradizioni*, a cura di Giorgio Cusatelli, Bologna, Alfa, 1965, p.108.

The man who classified, recorded and made known the evolution of culinary arts was Pellegrino Artusi from Forlimpopoli. A well-to-do merchant, born in 1820 in the Romagna ruled by the Pope, “he travelled through Romagna, Tuscany and Italy on horseback, by cart, stagecoach and train, tasting dishes at country inns and city restaurants”.² In 1891 he started publishing his *La scienza in cucina*,³ the first comprehensive collection of Italian recipes intended for Italians recently united under one flag. The 475 recipes in the first edition increased to 790 in the last one printed in 1911. Overall there were 15 editions constantly revised, amended and augmented with the help of a widespread network of readers and correspondents throughout the Bel Paese: the idea was to supply Italian families with a common tool, both culinary and expressive, to understand and interpret the shared values of the *Arte di mangiar bene*, the art of eating well. Pellegrino Artusi fled to Florence in 1850, escaping the vicious attacks of Stefano Pelloni, an outlaw known as *e’ Pasadór*; he lived in

- 2 See ALBERTO CAPATTI, *Pellegrinaggio da Forlimpopoli a Firenze, in La Via Artusiana. Una lunga tagliatella tra Romagna e Toscana*, a cura di Roy Berardi, Cesena, Prima Pagina, 2012.
- 3 PELLEGRINO ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina e l’arte di mangiar bene. Manuale pratico per le famiglie*, Firenze, 15 editions from 1891 to 1911. Our edition: P. ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina e l’arte di mangiar bene*, 15ª edizione, Firenze, Tipografia di Salvatore Landi, 1911. English translation, when quoted: PELLEGRINO ARTUSI, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*; foreword by Michele Scicolone; introduction by Luigi Ballerini; translated by Murtha Baca and Stephen Sartarelli, Toronto, Toronto University Press, 2003.

Florence to the end his life and of the definitive edition of his works.

As Artusi was interpreting the prescriptions of beyond-the-Alps culinary literature, none of his published recipes are dedicated to celebrities, either artistic or political. Artusi was not a cook by profession but an amateur and his *Ægerias*, or guiding goddesses, were called Bartola, Marietta – his family’s very devoted cook – Maddalena and Margherita, Cesarina, Adele and Luisetta: only the Marchese di Rudinì, a Sicilian born *Garibaldino*, later minister and premier, was an exception, with a recipe in his name – for a chicken – recorded at n° 544.

Another song was sung beyond the Alps: first Antonin Carême,⁴ then Auguste Escoffier⁵ who were real catering professionals, with their colleagues and imitators, had befriended those days’ celebrities. The composers returned the chefs’ love and appreciation; ideas were discussed and the atmosphere provided ready inspiration for their works, either culinary or

- 4 Marie-Antoine Carême (1784-1833), French chef and connoisseur born in Paris at the height of the French Revolution; he was the first regulator of the *Haute Cuisine* and wrote various books, *L’Art de la Cuisine Française* (5 volumes, 1833–34) being his most famous, with hundreds of recipes, menus, table-settings, the history of French cuisine and a number of instructions for running a kitchen.
- 5 Georges Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935) learned his trade working first as a kitchen-boy and then as an army chef during the Franco-Prussian War; he ended up as chef at the Ritz, at the Savoy and Carlton’s *Maitre d’* in London. Escoffier left a rich literary and handbook tradition; as rumours go, one of the confectioners of his London team was Ho Chi Min, the future Vietnamese revolution leader.



Pellegrino Artusi

Pellegrino Artusi

melodramatic, against the background of the rise of grand hotels and restaurants towards the end of the 18th century, that unchained the creativity and panache of the cooks, until then confined to the kitchens of the aristocracy and merely satisfying their master's tastes.

Carême, to whom the *Tournedos à la Rossini* were probably unfairly ascribed,⁶ spent day after day

6 The true author probably was the chef and restaurateur Casimir Moisson, close to Gioachino Rossini and head of the restaurant called *Maison Dorée*.

in the company of the composer, going through flavours and culinary techniques. Escoffier, a Provençal by birth loaned to Paris and the world, was the herald of French classical cuisine. The rediscovery of French local and home cooking was only to take place at the end of the century and continues to this day with the stress on regional cooking.

Throughout his works and particularly in his *magnum opus*, the handbook titled *Ma Cuisine*, meant for everyday home cooking and published by Flammarion in 1934, the names of musicians, operas and performers were linked to those of recipes, depicting a food-loving world full of harmony, formal in behaviour and manners but exuberant in the appearance and taste of the food.

Just in *Ma Cuisine*, Escoffier suggests 2500 recipes written in over 60 years of activity. At least thirty refer to the world of opera and particularly to Rossini: ten carry his name, three being dedicated to his *La Cenerentola*. Donizetti totals seven quotations of his *Favorita*, while Giuseppe Verdi gets two, a personal one with *Oeufs à la Verdi* and another for his *Aida*: an ice-cream *bombe* all of her own. Five titles are for *Tosca*, six are dedicated to contemporary prima donnas and, again in his *Guide culinaire*,⁷ we find *Carmen* and *Coppélia*.

7 GEORGES AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER, *Le Guide culinaire*, Paris, Flammarion, 1993.

These and other sources, from both culinary and musical literature, will often be quoted in the following chapters.

But we cannot begin without reminding ourselves that even Johann Strauss II wrote a *Cotolekt-polka* dedicated to the homonymous breaded cutlet. The score was lost, but the recipe *Cotoletta alla Milanese* or *alla Viennese* is here to stay. Let's read Carlo Steiner,⁸ a 19th century essayist and scholar who laid down the principles of Milanese traditional cooking.

Prendasi una costoletta di vitello o nodino che abbia il suo osso attaccato, altrimenti sarebbe almeno esagerato e fuori luogo chiamarla costoletta... La si scelga né troppo grassa né troppo magra, ma più sul magro che sul grasso. La si stenda sul tagliere e col pestacarne si cominci a tormentarla dolcemente di modo che le fibrille della carne non si spappolino, ma si

rompano. Quando questa operazione che può anche durare una ventina di minuti è finita, la costoletta viene fatta passare in uovo battuto, poi in pane grattugiato. Anche questa operazione va ripetuta almeno due volte per garantire una impanatura perfetta e regolare. Sul fuoco si sarà nel frattempo messo a sciogliere un grosso pezzo di burro e poco olio di oliva finissimo, in modo da giungere alla bollitura. In esso si faranno passare le costolette che debbono, per essere mangiabili e perfette, risultare dorate in ogni loro parte. Prima di portarle in tavola, le costolette vanno finite, cioè bisogna coprire i 'manici' di ciascuna con un decoro di carta.⁹

And this brings us back to music in the kitchen and the kitchen in music.

8 CARLO STEINER, *Il ghiottone lombardo. Costumanze, tradizioni e ricette della buona tavola lombarda*, Milano, Bramante, 1964, citato in <http://www.taccuinistorici.it/ita/news/contemporanea/personaggi/Strauss-e-la-cotolekt-polka.html>, (April 2013).

9 "Take a veal rib or slice of shoulder with its bone – or it wouldn't be a rib... Choose it neither too fat or too lean, but more on the lean side. Lay it on the chopping-board and start beating softly with a meat-pounder so that the fibres get broken but not crushed. When you are finished, it can well take 20 minutes, dip the cutlet into the beaten egg, then into breadcrumbs. Repeat at least twice over in order to obtain a perfect and even coat. In the meantime, let a big chunk of butter and a dash of olive oil melt on the fire and bring to the boil. Fry the cutlets that to be tasteful and perfect must be perfectly golden on either side. Before serving, cutlets must be dressed, that is the bones must be decorated with curled paper." The Viennese version of the dish does not differ much from Steiner's *Milanese*: the bones are not prescribed, the cutlets are dusted with flour before being dipped into the egg, they are served with lemon slices. See: ALEXANDRA G. ÜRTLER, CHRISTOPHER WAGNER, *Das neue Sacher Kochbuch, englische Ausgabe. Favorite Austrian Dishes*, Wien, Pichler Verlag, 2005, p. 98.

GIOACHINO ROSSINI

Gioachino Rossini¹⁰ was born in Pesaro on 29th February 1792. He was from the Marche by birth but from Romagna by family and education, a Bolognese by studies and residence, then a Parisian for love or whatever. His father was from Lugo, in Romagna, a republican who became a professional player after experience as a slaughterhouse inspector; his mother Anna Guidarini from Urbino, was a passable singer. Partly for his parents' jobs, partly to escape the Pope's police, Rossini and his family frequently moved from one place to another within the Papal States. As early as 1800, the Rossinis returned to Lugo.¹¹ The young Gioachino, who narrowly escaped castration suggested by an uncle who admired his voice,¹² devoted himself, body and soul, to music studies. In 1806 he attended, in Bologna, the school of



Hortense Haudebourt-Lescout,
Ritratto di Gioachino Rossini,
1828, Collezioni comunali, Lugo

- 10 Gioachino Rossini, or Gioacchino, on his birth certificate Gioacchino Antonio Rossini: the Maestro always preferred the first two versions of his name and he often signed simply as "G. Rossini".
- 11 Lugo never forgot the Maestro, who was there jokingly called "e cignàl 'd Lugo" (Lugo's wild boar) instead of "Cigno di Pesaro" (Pesaro's swan) as in the rest of the country. He was made a City Councillor in 1844 and given the honorary title of "Nobile di Lugo" in 1856.
- 12 In 1782, Carlo Broschi, aka il Farinelli, well-known for his soprano voice, died in Bologna where he had retired. From 1726 Bologna was the scene of his rivalry with the other best-known castrato of his days, Antonio Bernacchi.

Fr. Stanislao Mattei, who succeeded Fr. Giovanni Battista Martini, where he studied composition, admiring Haydn, Mozart and Cimarosa. He was a choir-boy for Accademia Filarmonica and took up the spinet. In 1806, aged 14, he wrote his first opera, *Demetrio e Polibio*, that was only to be staged in 1812 in Rome. His taste buds were also



Museo Casa Rossini, Lugo (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

developing, helped by the culinary ability of his grandmother from Romagna, and by his stays in Pesaro – a town he always had a strong bond with. Following his parents he had already lived in Ravenna and Ferrara. For a short while he took up lodgings at a butcher's. Later in life, he declared that he would have liked to have been a *charcutier*. He was clearly laying the foundation of what would become a passion for life, just like music. Pope Pius VII, Barnaba Chiaromonti from Cesena, also in Romagna, kept a vigilant eye over his Pax Romana: he was the same who sentenced his cook Angelo Targhini to death for

high treason, one of the *Carbonari* uprisings and also from Cesena.¹³

Gioachino Rossini's first years in Bologna saw both personal and musical growth: on 26th October 1811 his comic opera in two acts *L'equivoco stravagante* opened, was censored and withdrawn after running for three nights. 1812 saw the staging of five new operas: three farces in music written for Teatro San Mosé in Venice, *L'inganno felice*, *La scala di seta* and *L'occasione fa il ladro*; his first 'serious' opera *Ciro in Babilonia, or La caduta di Baldassarre* for the Lent Season of Ferrara's Teatro Comunale and a comic opera in two acts *La pietra del paragone* that opened on 26th September at Milan's Teatro La Scala. Between 1813 and 1816 he wrote five operas, including *Il Turco in Italia* and *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and the anthem called *Agli Italiani* that was performed at Bologna's Teatro Contavalli to celebrate Gioachino Murat's arrival in town. In the meantime, he had met Domenico Barbaja, the impresario of the royal theatres in Naples, who hired him and introduced him to the soprano Isabella Colbran. Barbaja, before becoming involved with the theatre, had been a *caffettiere* – a coffee house owner – in Milan, where he established the *Caffè dei Virtuosi*, next to Teatro La Scala and made money with a concoction, ever since to be called

¹³ He was executed by Giovanni Battista Bugatti from Senigallia, aka Mastro Titta, celebrated in the musical by Garinei & Giovannini (1962), music by Armando Trovajoli and interpreted by Aldo Fabrizi.

Barbajata

Serves 2

Ingredients:

2 tbs. cocoa (unsweetened)
2.5 decilitres whole milk or cream
2 small cups espresso
Sugar

Preparation:

Prepare a hot chocolate. In a small pan, mix chocolate, coffee, milk or cream, sugar dissolved in a very small quantity of water. Whisk until a froth is formed. As an alternative, the hot chocolate can also be prepared with a dark chocolate bar (70% content in cocoa solids).

Isabella Colbran was the protagonist of *Elisabetta regina d'Inghilterra*, melodrama in two acts, staged in Naples in the autumn of 1815. Those born on 29th February like Rossini celebrate their birthday only once in four years, 30 out of 76 as the composer used to say, with a degree of affectation. Those born in a leap year will relish carnival-time goodies. Giovanni Manzoni, a nobleman from Lugo, filled twenty pages of his *Così si mangiava in Romagna*:¹⁴ from Santa Apollonia Day lunch, on 9th February, comprising six courses, down to the *burlengo*, a Thursday-before-Lent dessert made with the blood of the last pig butchered in winter. For Santa Apollonia Day Manzoni suggests: ravioli, *passatelli* [q.v.

14 GIOVANNI MANZONI, *Così si mangiava in Romagna. Cucina di una vecchia famiglia nobiliare*, Lugo di Romagna, Walberti, 1986, pp. 45 - 57.



Teatro Rossini, Lugo
(Photo: Riccardo Vlahov)

p. 103] or noodles in stock, potatoes in Trebbiano wine, fry with toothpicks, fried cheese blinis, sweet fritters, milk à la Portuguese, chocolate. The following is Pellegrino Artusi's recipe n° 203 for *Fritto negli stecchini* (Fry with toothpicks):

Fry with toothpicks

2 large chicken livers
40 g (about 1-1/3 ounces) of salted tongue
40 g (about 1-1/3 ounces) of Gruyère cheese

Cook the chicken livers in butter, seasoning with salt and pepper. When done, cut into 12 small pieces and do the same with the Gruyère and the tongue. Take 12 toothpicks and skewer all the aforementioned 36 pieces, three per toothpick, in this order: first a piece of tongue, then the Gruyère, and finally the chicken liver, leaving a little space between each piece and the next. Then, using the béchamel described in recipe 220, coat the three pieces on each toothpick so that they are well covered. Dip in the beaten egg, roll in breadcrumbs and fry. If you like, you may add to these ingredients little pieces of sweetbread cooked in the same way as the chicken livers, and tiny chunks of raw truffle.¹⁵

It is not a light dish but it goes well with late winter weather: chicken liver and truffles make it a country-style dish *à la Rossini*.

¹⁵ P. ARTUSI, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, cit., recipe n° 203.

The years spanning from 1815 to 1822 represent the Neapolitan period of Gioachino Rossini. On 20th February 1816 he made his debut at Teatro Argentina in Rome with *Almaviva, ossia L'inutile precauzione* (the opera that was to become *Il barbiere di Siviglia*). It was a spectacular fiasco. The Maestro consoled himself in a well-known letter sent to Isabella "Angelica" Colbran:

... ma ciò che mi interessa ben altrimenti che la musica, cara Angela, è la scoperta che ho fatto di una nuova insalata, della quale mi affretto ad inviarvi la ricetta...: prendete dell'olio di Provenza, mostarda inglese, aceto di Francia, un po' di limone, pepe, sale, battete e mescolate il tutto; poi aggiungete qualche tartufo tagliato a fette sottili. I *tartufi* danno a questo condimento una sorta di aureola, fatta apposta per mandare in estasi un ghiottone. Il Cardinale Segretario di Stato, che ho conosciuto in questi ultimi giorni, mi ha impartito, per questa scoperta, la sua apostolica benedizione.¹⁶

As if it were not enough, after the first performance, the opera was just as spectacularly successful.

¹⁶ "...but what really interests me well beyond music, my dear Angela, is discovering a new salad, whose recipe I promptly send you...: take some Provençal oil, English mustard, French vinegar, a bit of lemon, pepper, salt, then beat and stir well, add some thinly sliced truffles. The *tartufi* will provide this sauce with something similar to a halo, that will send a gourmand into ecstasy. The Cardinal the Secretary of State, whom I met over the past few days, gave me his apostolic blessing for such a discovery of mine". Quoted [in Italian] by PAOLA CECCHINI, *In Cucina con Rossini. Ricette, lettere, aneddoti, motti, frizzi e bisticci del Cigno Pesarese*, Ancona, Tecnoprint, [1996?].

The organ played by G. Rossini, Chiesa del Carmine, Lugo (Photo: Andrea Scardova)



The temptation of truffles followed Rossini wherever he went: Bologna, Florence and, above all, Paris. One can understand the reason why: Montefeltro, Romagna and Emilia are outstanding areas for truffles and their hunters; superior black truffle, superior white truffle, *bianchetto* variety, summer truffle or *scorzone* are a permanent source both of inspiration for cooks and of money for hunters, possibly going about their business accompanied by a *lagotto romagnolo*.¹⁷

¹⁷ The *lagotto romagnolo* is an Italian dog, bred in the Po river delta, in the area around Ravenna and the Comacchio valleys. It is the only breed trained for truffle search.

In 1823 Rossini had completed nine more operas, among which *Mosè in Egitto*, *La donna del lago*, *Maometto II* (another fiasco), *Zelmira* and *Semiramide*, as well as three cantatas and the *Messa di Gloria*. He had recently turned 30 and had married Isabella Colbran. After his 1824 trip to London – performing as a tenor in his own *Il pianto delle Muse in morte di Lord Byron* – he was appointed “Directeur de la musique et de la scène” at Théâtre Italien in Paris. He was warmly met and he entered a new phase in his life. Rossini’s French period began with the cantata *Il viaggio a Reims ossia L'albergo del giglio d'oro*. *Le siège de Corinthe* – the remake of *Maometto II* – opened in 1826 and was very favourably received. In



Apples (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

1826 he composed *Le Comte Ory*, on the libretto by Eugène Scribe and Delestre-Poirson. The following year *Guillaume Tell* was a roaring success and was to become the Maestro's last opera. Such was the enthusiasm that, to mark the event, a *Tarte aux pommes Guillaume Tell*¹⁸ was created, an apple tart decorated with a sugar apple-cum-arrow.

Guillaume Tell cake

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

80 g butter
80 g granulated sugar
2 eggs
100 g plain flour
2 tsp. baking powder
Grated rind of one lemon
4 Golden Delicious apples
2 tbs. sugar to decorate

Preparation:

Pre-heat the oven at 200-220°C. Cream the butter with a fork. Take a bowl and work together the sugar and the egg-yolks until white and frothy. Fold in the creamed butter, the flour, the baking powder and the grated lemon rind. Stir well. If the mixture is too thick, add a tiny bit of water. Grease a 22 cm oven-proof dish and pour the mixture. Peel, core and very thinly slice the apples, then place the slices on top of the cake. Bake for 30 minutes. Dust with sugar before serving.

18 See EMILIE BERTRAND, *500 desserts de A à Z*, Paris, Solar, 2000.

Over the years, pastry-chefs have added ground hazelnuts, raisins, calvados, cinnamon. So far, however, nobody has explained how to make the pierced apple that was placed on top of the cake. Soon afterwards, Gioachino Rossini left for Bologna with Isabella Colbran, from whom he separated after meeting Olympe Pélissier.

Rossini's first years in Paris were hectic, productive and drew him to the great French cuisine. Friends and fans were well aware of his *gourmandise* and meetings with the Maestro were mainly held sitting at a table. In 1823 Eugène Scribe wrote a comedy that stages the preparation of a rich lunch that fans were organising for the Maestro.¹⁹ The action takes place in a hotel where Rossini would be calling. The dramatis personae are: a penniless student, an amateur musician, a few middle-class Parisians, *Bifteakini* the innkeeper, Madeleine his daughter, various *Dilettanti di musica* as a chorus. The main plot – turning around the lunch – is supported by love affairs, mistaken identities, all typical of the vaudeville genre. The innkeeper is anticipating the success of his cooking with the Maestro, acclaimed as a composer and respected as a gourmet. What happens next reduces the famous lunch to a mere “rice soup with *vermicelli*”, christened

19 *Rossini à Paris ou, Le grand diner*: à-propos-vaudeville en un acte par MM. Scribe et Mazères; représenté pour la première fois sur le théâtre du Gymnase Dramatique, le 29 novembre 1823, Paris, Pollet, 1823. Italian Edition in *Teatro di Eugenio Scribe tradotto dal francese*, Parte prima, vol X, Bologna, Tipografia del Genio, 1834.



Modenese Hen (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

as “zuppa alla Rossini”. The irony is blatant and the authors paint a background of fairly modest supporters of Rossini’s and even more modest dishes. Arriving in Paris in 1823, Rossini dines in fact with those who matter in Paris. A memorable banquet in his honour took place at the celebrated Parisian restaurant called *Le-Veau-qui-tête* at Châtelet.²⁰ They were times of excess, with Rossini portrayed sitting on the floor with his hands reaching for the keyboard as he plays the piano at a party. But times were a-changing, both in politics and in the kitchen. In Paris Rossini had met Marie-Antoine “Antonin” Carême,²¹ “the king of chefs and the chef of the kings” who would influence his idea of culinary art thereafter.

20 Cfr. *Chroniques et légendes des rues de Paris*, Paris, Édouard Fournier, 1864: «Le Veau qui tette, était un établissement du XVI^e siècle. On venait y manger du veau de lait et des pieds de mouton. Au XVIII^e siècle, Grimod de la Reynière en parle: «On y mange d’excellentes anguilles piquées de truffes; l’aimable Veau-qui-tette toujours sur pied depuis deux siècles vous invite gracieusement à y faire une station.» “The Veau qui tette, was a 16th century establishment. Customers went there to eat veal and mutton leg. In the 18th century it is quoted by Grimod de la Reynière when he says ‘You can eat excellent eels with truffles; the endearing Veau-qui-tette going strong even after two centuries invites you to make a stop in style’”.

21 Carême was born in Paris in 1784, from pastry-shop boy he became *chef de cuisine* of Talleyrand (Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, *nomen numen*, since Périgord is the French region best known for black truffles), of King George V and of Czar Alexander I, then in Paris of the Rothschilds, who introduced him to Rossini. He said: “Fine arts are five: painting, sculpture, poetry, music and architecture, that relies on pâtisserie”. In the *garniture Rothschild*, Carême used all the ingredients that were to become the hallmark of Rossini: butter, cheese, *foie gras* and Périgord truffles.

Talking of soups, Rossini himself is the author of a recipe that he served with a good consommé: *Semolina dumplings*. It is revealed by Paola Cecchini in her *In Cucina con Rossini*.²² Let’s try here to write it down with the quantities that the original does not give:

Semolina dumplings

Serves 4

Ingredients:

250 g semolina

2 eggs

Salt

A pinch of nutmeg

Butter

Good consommé or clear-soup

Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

Work the semolina, nutmeg, salt and eggs into a dough. Divide and roll into tiny dumplings, the size of a nut, and fry them in butter. Right before serving, throw the dumplings into the hot consommé and sprinkle the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese on top.

Gioachino Rossini returned to Bologna in 1836, suffering from depression according to some, and would live there until 1846 in a little mansion built between 1824 and 1827 at Strada

22 See P. CECCHINI, *In Cucina con Rossini*, cit.

Maggiore 243.²³ It is an elegant three-storey building, resting on a portico with ashlar pillars, its east side overlooking a small square. The years that he spent in Bologna for this second time over, were not the happiest ones for the Maestro. Torn on the one hand between Olympe Pélissier, to whom he had been attached with in Paris, and on the other his wife Isabella Colbran from whom he lived separated, he stopped writing music for the stage.

Travellers to Bologna tried to meet him. Théophile Gautier did not succeed, while Valéry²⁴ describes Rossini's mansion in the journal of his Bologna itinerary. Jules Janin, the French journalist and writer, was luckier; drawn by the merry voices coming from a house across the Certosa, he went nearer and it was Rossini in person who invited him in: «Eccomi ammesso nel fresco santuario, tutto pieno di idee, di parlatori, di cantanti, di vezzose parigine, di dolci accenti italiani e lui, gettando qua e là il suo spirito e il suo ingegno». An aria from *Ugonotti* was then sung. Not too

bad for somebody suffering from depression!²⁵ Rossini went on composing, though. On 18th March 1842 Gaetano Donizetti conducts the *Stabat Mater* at the Archiginnasio palace, where the Great Hall would be called “Aula dello Stabat Mater” ever since.²⁶ In 1846, the year following Isabella Colbran's death in the villa at Castenaso, Rossini married Olympe Pélissier. He celebrated the accession to the papal throne of Giovanni Mastai Ferretti from Senigallia, who took the name of Pius IX. The 1848 uprisings and the ensuing riots brought him to Florence. Three years later, for similar reasons, Pellegrino Artusi would follow suit. Rossini's love and hate for Bologna were evident in his tirade where the city is called “nobile patria di aggressioni

23 The mansion where Rossini lived, now at n° 26, was home and studio for over 30 years to Professor Leonardo Giardina, a well-known Bolognese obstetrician and musician who, in 1952, founded the Doctor Dixie Jazz Band with Gherardo Casaglia. He has made more than 29 records and CDs, with the participation of performers such as Louis Armstrong, Ruggero Raimondi, Paolo Conte, Lucio Dalla, Henghel Gualdi, Pupi Avati.

24 Antoine Claude Pasquin, or Valéry (1789-1847), traveller, scholar and bibliographer, was librarian to the king of France from 1830 to 1847. His notes about Bologna are quoted in ALBANO SORBELLI, *Bologna negli scrittori stranieri*, Bologna, BUP, 2007, pp. 594-631.

25 “And here I am, admitted to the cool shrine, full of ideas, speakers, singers, charming Parisian ladies, sweet Italian accents and him, letting out bits and pieces of his prodigious wit and genius”. The account of this meeting was also published by Albano Sorbelli, bibliographer and director of the Archiginnasio Library, pupil of Giosue Carducci; in his *Bologna negli scrittori stranieri*, he collected the essays of travellers who visited Bologna from the 15th to the 19th centuries.

26 Marco Minghetti wrote: “In 1842 the *Stabat Mater* was performed at the Archiginnasio in Bologna and it was the first time that it was heard in Italy. [...] On [Rossini's] special request, Donizetti came to conduct and it went very well.” MARCO MINGHETTI, *Miei ricordi, vol. 1 Dalla puerizia alle prime prove nella vita pubblica (Anni 1818-1848)*, quarta ed., Torino, L. Roux, 1889, p. 81.

Mortadella (Photo: Andrea Scardova)



e mortadelle”.²⁷ Let’s not forget, however, that *mortadella*²⁸ can be used to prepare an excellent

Mortadella Mousse

Ingredients:

300 g Mortadella
100 g Ricotta cheese
1 tbs. grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
1 tbs. fresh cream (unsweetened)

Preparation:

Mince the mortadella, then work it in with the ricotta and the grated cheese. Beat and fold in the cream, until the mixture is light and frothy. Serve with hot croutons of slices of country bread.²⁹

The Rossinis went back to Paris in April 1855. The Maestro began composing what would be later collected under the title *Péchés de vieillesse*. Four years later their villa at Passy would be completed and they took up residence there as well as at 2 Chaussée d’Antin; their addresses became a meeting point for musicians and

27 “Noble land of assaults and *mortadella*”. Quoted in: *Bologna, nobile patria di aggressioni e di mortadelle*, in *Rossini 1792-1992, mostra storico-documentaria, Perugia, 1992*, catalogo a cura di Mauro Bucarelli, Milano, Electa, 1992, p. 71, partially available at: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002606487>, (April 2013).

28 High quality spiced pork cured meat, typical of Bologna now registered in Europe as PGI (Protected Geographical Indication).

29 The recipe follows that of *Spuma di mortadella* registered at Bologna Chamber of Commerce. Monica Cesari Sartoni and Alessandro Molinari Pradelli use thick cream instead of ricotta (150 gr cream for 400 g mortadella) and whip the cream before folding it in with a spatula. See also MONICA CESARI SARTONI, ALESSANDRO MOLINARI PRADELLI, *La cucina bolognese*, Roma, Newton Compton, 1998.

intellectuals, among whom, apparently, was Richard Wagner in 1860. Three years later he wrote the *Petite Messe Solennelle*. They were years marked by great honours and culinary fame, both for dishes of his own make and for others named after him. According to Paola Cecchini, dishes commonly defined “à la Rossini” are approximately a hundred, but only seven are definitely his own.³⁰ Among those, in addition to the ‘Blessed’ salad and the *Semolina dumplings* that we have already quoted, one should add a *Woodcock soup*, the famous *Maccheroni* patiently and personally filled with *foie gras* and *truffle mousse* by the Maestro with a syringe, the *Truffle ragout* and the

Ham and chicken mousse

Ingredients:

300 g ‘Bayonne’ ham
300 g chicken white meat
A ladle of capon stock
Black truffle slivers
Whipped cream (unsweetened)
Butter
Salt and pepper

Preparation:

Gently fry the meat in the butter and mince it with the ham. Add salt and pepper, thin with stock and pass the mixture through a sieve. Dress with the whipped cream and cool before serving.

30 See. P. CECCHINI, *In Cucina...* cit. THIERRY BEAUVERT in his *Rossini, les péchés de gourmandise*, Paris, Flammarion, 1997, recorded 47 recipes, without differentiating, however, autographs from ‘apocrypha’.

For Rossini, Carême had made the Guillaume Tell cake and the Venison Pâté à la Rossini. It was now time for Escoffier, Carême’s pupil and successor, to come into action. In a career that lasted for 60 years, Escoffier collected and published more than 2500 recipes originally used in his menus.³¹ Among the recipes of his *Ma cuisine*, ten are named after Rossini and three after the opera *La Cenerentola*. They are *guarnizioni*, *omelettes*, the famous *tournedos*, *scaloppine* and *animelle*, *tagliatelle e prosciutto*, *pollastra* and *supremes*, and also *Consommé*, *zampetti* and “*Cenerentola*” *poussins*.

Everywhere the truffles rule, inevitably with foie gras. From Périgord or Acqualagna? White or black? Gualtiero Marchesi comes to our rescue: “There is no rank order: they are too different to compare, the white truffle is indeed similar to the black one in naturalistic terms but gastronomy has differentiated their use according to their characteristics.” And he adds: “Where subtlety is involved [...] white truffle does not rule [...], pâtés on the contrary are the natural port of call for black truffles.”³² Anyway,

31 See GEORGES AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER, *Le livre des Menus. Complément indispensable du Guide culinaire*, Paris, Editions du Félin, 1996.

32 “È ozioso volerne stabilire la graduatoria: troppo diversi per esser posti in competizione, il tartufo bianco e quello nero sono simili, è vero, per natura, ma la gastronomia ne ha distinto le funzioni assecondando le loro differenti caratteristiche.” “Dove c’è complessità [...] il tartufo bianco non è di casa [...] i pâtés sono invece una destinazione naturale del tartufo nero.” GUALTIERO MARCHESI, *Tartufi bianchi e tartufi neri*, in *Il codice del buongustaio*, [s.l., s.n., 2003?], pp. 10-12.

Escoffier was a Provençal in Paris and he had hands-on knowledge of truffles, like Rossini who never gave up on his origins between Marche and Romagna. Let’s try to reconstruct the

Pullet à la Rossini

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

2 kilos pullet (or young and tender chicken: in France it would naturally be a *poularde de Bresse*)

Salt and pepper

1 tbs. butter

75 g black truffle

75 g diced foie gras

A few rashers to wrap the bird

Veal gravy

Preparation:

Season the interior of the bird, fill with foie gras and truffle; bake in butter, frequently basting with the meat juices. When it is ready, place on a serving dish and coat with a sauce made with the butter used for cooking and the gravy.

Escoffier accompanied the dish with noodles and butter, with a bow – just how much appreciated we cannot say – to Rossini’s Italian origins. The dish is neither cheap nor low-calorie and its preparation needs plenty of care. One can make it *semel in anno*, possibly at New Year, while listening to the Vienna Musikverein concert or to the *Petite Messe*. Among his *Péchés*



Romagna geese (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

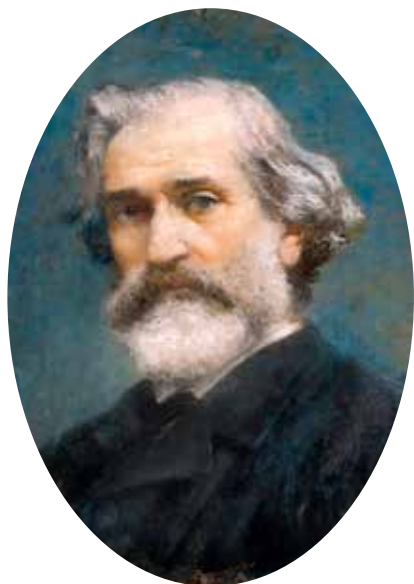
de vieillesse, Rossini has left, in the 4th book, *Quatre hors d'œuvres et quatre mendiants*. The four hors d'œuvres are: *Les radis*, *Les anchois*, *Les cornichons* and *La beurre*, while the *Quatre mendiants* – following the Christmas traditions of Provence – are: *Les figuees sèches*, *Les amandes*, *Les raisins*, *Les noisettes*.³³ On 1st July 1867 the *Hymne à Napoleon III et à son Vaillant Peuple* was performed. The following year, the Maestro said his farewell to the world but not to Paris, where he was laid to rest at Père Lachaise until 1887, when he was returned to Italy to be buried in Florence at the Santa Croce basilica.



Casa Rossini, façade, Bologna
(Photo: Andrea Scardova)

³³ They are a few of the *treize desserts*, or *calenos*, of the Provençal cuisine, that are traditionally served at the end of Christmas Eve dinner. They also include: white and black nougat, dates, the *fougasse*, the *calissons* and mulled wine. Those evoked by Rossini hint to the four mendicant religious orders: Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Augustinians. By the mid 19th century, Frédéric Mistral – the poet from Provence who was later awarded the Nobel prize in 1904 – contributed to the rediscovery and diffusion of the regional lore, blatantly with an eye to independence. See *Au revoir Provence 2-Orange. Treize Desserts provenzali* in: <http://gastronomoeducato.blogspot.it/> (April 2013).

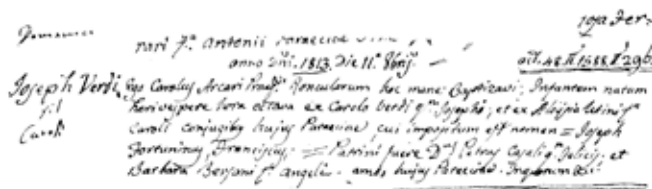
GIUSEPPE VERDI



Francesco Paolo Michetti, *Ritratto di Giuseppe Verdi*, Museo Casa Barezzi, Busseto

On a night in October 1813, Giuseppe Verdi was born at Roncole di Busseto, not too far away from Parma. In autumn, along the Po river banks, the fog that rises from the *Grande Fiume* shrouds the countryside and the villages and carries the scents of burnt stubble, the soil that turns the summer heat into mist, burnt wood and harvested fruits.

Legend has it that Verdi's birth was accompanied by the notes of street-performing musicians who were staying that night at the



Giuseppe Verdi's birth certificate, (fac-simile), Casa natale di Giuseppe Verdi, Roncole Verdi

inn run by the Verdis, who lived on the floor above the large communal room and kitchen of the establishment. Most likely, the bedroom where the baby was delivered was reached not only by the sound of musical instruments but also by the bustle typical of the rituals of food and beverages: the banging of crockery and jugs, some laughter, a few curses, the untimely snores of a patron.³⁴ Similarly, smells of various kinds and origins would find their way to the bedroom: wine, to start with,³⁵ served at the bar and kept in the cellar, smoke perhaps, both

34 John Cage wrote: "Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it fascinating", JOHN CAGE, *Silence*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1961, p. 3.

35 The bard of Parma wines was the Rev. Ferruccio Botti (1905-1983), priest and local essayist. He wrote about the Duchess Marie Louise as an "exemplary bride and mother", about Verdi and Toscanini. He devoted his oenological studies to Malvasia, Fortana and Lambrusco.

of tobacco and of the open fire, body odours of whatever nature, smell of horses, fodder, manure and poultry. And there was food: the inn at Roncole, close as it was to the road going from Parma and San Donnino to the river Po and Cremona, catered for wayfarers and stagecoach passengers. Occasionally, it may have done so even for Bonaparte's soldiers: France still ruled the dukedom and the birth of the baby was registered with the French names of Joseph Fortunin François. What would boil in the Verdis' kitchen? Local produce: season's vegetables, beans, rice, poultry, offal, pork – rarely served fresh but more frequently stuffed. Bread, baked to last, once a week.³⁶ Verdi's mother, Luigia Uttini, herself an innkeeper's daughter, came from the area around Piacenza and had probably brought some recipes from across the river, since Busseto was closer to Cremona and Piacenza than to Parma.

36 In the countryside, bread was baked once a week and all the family would participate in the making. The flour, kept in the 'cassone' (flour trunk) was set to rise by using the "mother" dough obtained by the previous bread-making. Then, one had to "... impastare, gramare menare gran pezzi di pasta con le mani... fare le "pastelle"... che si arrotolavano per ottenere le "ciopette" (knead, work and lift by hand big chunks of dough... make smaller pieces that would be shaped into buns. Then set them aside to rise again, then baked in a hot oven, cooled on shelves), quoted by CLAUDIA GIACOMETTI, *Antologia dialettale: il pane, la casa e la famiglia contadina*, Istituzione Villa Smeraldi, Museo della Civiltà Contadina, Bologna, Provincia di Bologna, 2005.

Cardoon soup³⁷

Serves 10

Ingredients:

2 big cardoons
 500 g fresh salami paste
 2 litres stock (made with meat and bones)
 2 tbs. tomato paste³⁸
 Parsley and garlic
 Olive oil (in Times of Plenty)
 Slices of stale bread
 Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

Carefully strip the cardoons eliminating the hard threads from their back and all the leaves. Cut them into pieces, 8-10 cm long, soak them in water adding two lemon wedges. Cook the cardoons in simmering hot water in a saucepan with a lid on, until they are tender.

In an earthenware pot, brown the garlic and parsley in oil, then stew the salami paste. Add the cardoons – well drained – and stir fry; dissolve the tomato paste in the stock, pour over the cardoons and season. Cook for a good 30 minutes. Sprinkle with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and a bit of olive oil.

- 37 Cardoon (Italian 'cardo'; *Cynara cardunculus*) is a vegetable of the thistle family, related to the artichoke, but quite distinct from it and used differently. Widely cultivated in Emilia-Romagna.
- 38 Tomato paste was home-made; tomatoes were sundried upon boards or wooden grates in the countryside, puréed in a dough that would be slowly boiled in the town. By the second half of the 19th century, with the introduction of vacuum-packing techniques, the purée was factory made.



Cardoons in a field (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

Pisarei e fasò (dumplings and beans)

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

500 g flour
150 g breadcrumbs
400 g dry beans (soaked for 24 hours)
1 onion (1 carrot, 1 celery stick)
Garlic, parsley
Butter
250 g tomato sauce or 2 tbs. tomato paste dissolved in water
1 tbs. chopped lard or 50 g bacon
Olive oil
Salt and pepper
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

For the "pisarei": soak the breadcrumbs, squeeze well and work with flour, salt and a bit of water. Cut the dough and shape into long, thin rolls; cut the rolls into small pieces and work them with the tip of your fingers to shape into tiny oval dumplings. Half-cook the beans in water with a few added onion rings. For the sauce: in an earthenware pot, brown the onion – finely chopped –, garlic and parsley; add the bacon – or lard –, then the beans (well drained), the tomato sauce, season and simmer for 30 minutes. Pour the "pisarei" in hot boiling salted water and lift them out with a slotted spoon as soon as they come to the surface. Serve with the sauce and sprinkle with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Some recipes add carrot and celery to the browning



The making of *pisarei* (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

onion and omit garlic and parsley; others add fresh sausage meat. As usual with traditional recipes and home-cooking, the variations are countless.

Tripe alla Parmigiana

Serves 5-6

Ingredients:

1 kilo 200 g tripe (the best cuts are from *reticulum* or honeycomb, *omasum* or manyplies, *rumen* or blanket, and *abomasum* or reed tripe)
 2 onions
 2 carrots
 2 celery sticks
 Sage
 2 bay leaves
 Garlic
 Parsley
 Tomato sauce or tomato paste dissolved in water
 Salt and pepper
 1 ladle stock
 30 g butter
 Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

In an earthenware pot, brown the finely chopped vegetables and herbs in butter. Add the tomato sauce and the tripe, thinly sliced. Simmer on a very low heat for six hours, slowly pouring the stock. The best way would be to divide the cooking into two, first simmering for three hours, resting for three and then cooking for three more hours. After 12 or 24 hours, the tripe is even tastier, warmed up and sprinkled with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. In Piacenza, white wine is added to the vegetables and herbs as they brown; 100 g boiled beans are added to the tripe half-way through its cooking.³⁹



Anonymous, *Ritratto di Giuseppina Strepponi*, Museo Casa Barezzi, Busseto

After the fall of Bonaparte, the French left the dukedom of Parma and Piacenza. The Congress of Vienna assigned it to Marie Louise of Habsburg, who made her entrance into Parma on 18th April 1816 and would stay until 1847. She was 25 and, as Bonaparte's bride, she had already been Empress of France.

It was the beginning of a golden age for Parma. The Duchess saw to public health and hygiene, assistance to the sick and to women – she founded the maternity hospital, and she reformed the treatment for the mentally-ill.

³⁹ The main references for an overview of cooking in Emilia and Romagna can be found in M. Cesari Sartoni, A. Molinari Pradelli, *La cucina bolognese*, cit. and A. Molinari Pradelli, *La cucina dell'Emilia Romagna*, Roma, Newton Compton, 1993.

As soon as 1819, she had a bridge built over the river Taro. Marie Louise loved music: she restored the Farnese Theatre inside the Pilotta Palace and, between 1821 and 1829 she built the Teatro Ducale – which opened with Vincenzo Bellini's *Zaira* – imposing popular prices in order to widen the audience by attracting less privileged social classes. In 1825 she founded the first public music school, one day to be attended by Arturo Toscanini. Giuseppe Verdi was granted a scholarship there: the composer gratefully dedicated *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata* to the Duchess in 1843. After completing his education, Giuseppe Verdi left Busseto for Milan, capital of the kingdom

of Lombardy-Venetia, where he perfected his musical knowledge and built a network of personal friends and business relations that helped him to enter the music world and stayed with him throughout his life. Before *I Lombardi*, he had already composed three operas, among them the *Nabucco* in 1842. Twenty-four more would follow, at the rate of one, two, three per year. He began travelling through Italy and Europe: Venice, Rome, Florence – where *Macbeth* had its first performance in 1847 – and Trieste. In 1847 he had brought *Jerusalem* – a remake of *I Lombardi* – to the Opéra in Paris, where he would return in 1855 with *Vêpres siciliennes*, to the libretto by Eugène Scribe and Charles Duveyrier.



Museo Casa Barezzi, façade,
Busseto

They were Rossini's last years in Paris: Verdi had met him in 1842 in Bologna.

Since 1844, Giuseppe Verdi had been buying land in the Po valley lowlands, near Busseto. He continued to do so until 1891. In 1848 he bought a homestead at Sant'Agata where he moved in 1851. Those were the years of the Maestro's refinement, both score and table-wise. At a time when French and Austrian chefs showed off at court, Verdi was looking for a cook who would meet his personal tastes and requirements. He was himself a dab hand in the kitchen, like his second wife the soprano Giuseppina (Peppina) Strepponi from Lodi who had carefully instructed – just to be on the safe side – the gardeners, peasants and the coachman at the farm. Verdi loved risotto at a time when rice had not yet migrated from poor people's tables to the affluent ones. In September 1869 he wrote the recipe down for Giuseppina to send to Camille du Locle, the Opéra's impresario in Paris and his French translator.⁴⁰ Here is the Risotto for four:

Mettete in una casseruola due oncie di burro fresco; due oncie di midollo di bue, o vitello, con un poco di cipolla tagliata. Quando questa abbia reso il rosso mettete nella casseruola sedici oncie di riso di Piemonte: fate passare a fuoco ardente (rossoler) mischiando spesso con un cucchiaio

40 The portraits of Verdi – painted between 1885 and 1886 by Giovanni Boldini – who had his studio in Place Pigalle, were also done during the Paris years. The oil on canvas – later to be reproduced on the 1000 lire notes – is now at Casa di Riposo per Musicisti, Fondazione Giuseppe Verdi in Milan, and the pastel one, 'with the top-hat', the best of the two, is now at Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Rome.

di legno finchè il riso sia abbrustolito ed abbia preso un bel color d'oro. Prendete del brodo bollente, fatto con buona carne e mettetene due o tre mescoli (deux ou trois grandes cuilleres à soupe) nel riso. Quando il fuoco l'avrà a poco a poco asciugato, rimettete poco brodo e sempre fino a perfetta cottura del riso. Avvertite però, che a metà della cottura del riso (ciò sarà dopo un quarto d'ora che il riso sarà nella casseruola) bisognerà mettervi un mezzo bicchiere di vino bianco, naturale e dolce: mettete anche, una dopo l'altra, tre buone manate di formaggio parmigiano grattato rapè. Quando il riso sia quasi completamente cotto, prendete una presa di zafferano che farete sciogliere in un cucchiaio di brodo, gettatelo nel risotto, mischiatelo, e ritiratelo dal fuoco, versatelo nella zuppiera. Avendo dei tartufi, tagliateli ben fini e spargeteli sul risotto a guisa di formaggio. Altrimenti mettetevi formaggio solo. Coprite e servite subito.⁴¹

41 In a small saucepan put two ounces fresh butter; two ounces ox, or veal, marrow with a bit of chopped onion. When the onion is golden, toss seven ounces Piedmont rice: brown over a fast heat (*rossoler*), stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, until the rice is toasted and golden. Take some hot stock, made with good quality meat and pour two or three ladles (*deux ou trois grands cuilleres à soupe*) over the rice. When it dries, start again with a little stock until the rice is perfectly cooked. Remember to mention that, halfway through the cooking (which will be a quarter of an hour since pouring the stock over the rice), half a glass of white wine should be added, natural and sweet: also add three generous handfuls of grated Parmesan cheese (*rapè*). When the rice is nearly done, take a pinch of saffron and melt it in a tablespoon of stock, add to the rice, mix and remove from the heat, pour into a tureen. If truffles are available, thinly slice and sprinkle on top of the risotto as if it were cheese. Otherwise simply add cheese. Cover and serve immediately. See <http://www.giuseppeverdi.it/page.asp?IDCategoria=3647&IDSezione=25216&ID=470434>, (April 2013). For Verdi's letters see GIUSEPPE VERDI, *Lettere*, a cura di Eduardo Rescigno, illustrazioni di Giuliano Della Casa, Torino, Einaudi, 2012.

Henri-Paul Pellaprat (1869-1952), a pupil of Escoffier's, made his version of the Risotto, à la Verdi ever since:⁴²

Risotto à la Giuseppe Verdi (by Pellaprat)

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1 finely chopped onion
500 g Carnaroli rice
100 g butter
120 g cultivated mushrooms (champignons)
120 g asparagus tips
120 g Parma ham
150 g peeled tomatoes
A little fresh cream (unsweetened)
1 litre stock
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

Finely chop the onion. Slice the champignons. Toss the asparagus in salted boiling water, let the asparagus cool. Finely chop the ham, scald, peel and dice the tomatoes. Melt ¼ butter in a saucepan, add the onion and brown it. Fry the rice for a couple of minutes. Pour in the stock, a ladle at a time. Wait until it dries before adding any more; halfway through the cooking, add the champignons, ham and tomatoes. Stir well and cook for two more minutes before adding the cream. When the rice is nearly done, add the remaining butter and the grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, stir and cover. Let it rest for a few minutes before serving.

Giuseppe Verdi's fame was steadily growing. He went to Genoa, Rome, Florence, Trieste, Naples, London, Saint Petersburg, Madrid, Cairo. Giuseppina Strepponi, who had sung for the last time in 1843 in Modena, accompanied him in his artistic and culinary itinerary. The Maestro was curious about foreign dishes and skilfully absorbed knowledge and flavours. He met Napoleon III, Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour, was an admirer of Alessandro Manzoni's, was elected to the first Parliament of the Kingdom in Turin, then became a senator. Nevertheless, he did not stop looking after his lands and homestead. He used to spend a lot of the year at Sant'Agata and he was as passionate as a gentleman farmer. He supervised building works, had a ice-house⁴³ built to preserve foodstuffs; as a cow breeder he personally went to markets, specially in Cremona, but he also bred horses and poultry, ran a dairy and a mill, traded in fruit, built

42 Henry-Paul Pellaprat (1869-1952) was one of the founders of the prestigious École du Cordon Bleu in Paris. For the original recipe, see p. 347 of the Italian version of his work *L'arte della cucina moderna*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1977. Further readings <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/henri-paul-pellaprat-1869-1952-un>, (April 2013).

43 Ice-houses (*ghiacciaia* or *conserva*) were round based brick constructions, wide and varying in diameter and partly underground. The floor was slightly sloping toward the centre, in order to let the water drain; above the ground, the ice-house was cupola shaped, always in brick. The outside was covered in soil and the thick greenery that would grow helped keep the inside temperature down. A fairly small door was used in winter to introduce snow and ice that was cut from ponds and reterries. The ice-house would keep foodstuffs cool throughout the summer. At Sant'Agata, Verdi had a fishpond that would probably supply the necessary ice.

artesian wells and took care of the peasants' health and education; he placed massive orders for pasta with a tradesman in Naples,⁴⁴ both for himself and for the household, grew vegetables according to the season: pumpkins, tomatoes, asparagus, spinach. At the same time, he was writing sublime music: between 1850 and 1893, twelve new operas were staged, from *Rigoletto* to *Traviata*, from *Simon Boccanegra* to *Ballo in maschera*, *Don Carlos*, *Aida*, *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Among the tributes paid all over the world, dishes called after him or his operas would be present: Escoffier dedicated one of his ice-cream bombs to *Aida*,⁴⁵ the *Bombe Aïda*: strawberry ice-cream, with kirsch and cherry brandy mousse. From his *buen retiro* the Maestro kept dictating instructions for cooking. He wrote to Count Arrivabene on 27th April 1872:

Io non diventerò feudatario della Rocca di San Secondo, ma posso benissimo mandarti una spalletta di quel Santo. Anzi te l'ho già spedita stamattina colla ferrovia. Quantunque la stagione sia un po' avanzata, spero la troverai buona. Devi però mangiarla subito prima che arrivi il caldo. Sai tu come va cucinata? Prima di metterla al fuoco bisogna levarla di sale, cioè lasciarla per un paio d'ore nell'acqua tiepida. Dopo si mette al fuoco dentro un recipiente che contenga dell'acqua. Deve bollire a fuoco lento per sei ore, poi la lascerai raffreddare nel suo brodo. Fredda

44 Letter to Cesare de Sanctis, 1874, in G. VERDI, *Lettere*, cit., p. 674.

45 For *Aida* as a culinary muse see FRANCESCO ANSELMO ATTARDI, ELISA DE LUIGI, *Celeste Aida cuoca divina*, Milano, Golosia & C, 1998.

che sia, vale a dire circa 24 ore dopo, levala dalla pentola, asciugala e mangiala.⁴⁶

After talking of the *Aida* score he concludes: "Dunque occupati ora della spalletta e sappimi dire come l'hai trovata" (Take care of the shoulder and let me know if you liked it). He was writing about 'Spalla di San Secondo' (a prized cut of ham) that he liked to send to his friends and correspondents as a gift. In Milan he missed the *Marubini*, the filled pasta made in Cremona, the capon and the sweet wine typical of the Christmas festivities along the river Po.⁴⁷ Giuseppe Verdi consoled himself with his:

46 "I will never be the Lord of San Secondo Castle, but I can send you a 'shoulder' of that Saint. As a matter of fact, I have already sent it to you by train. Although we are late in the season, I hope you will like it. However, you must eat before the weather gets *hot*. Do you know hot to cook it? Before doing so, you must *desalt it*, i.e. leave it in warm water for a couple of hours. Afterwards, place it in a pot with water, over the heat. Let it gently boil for six hours, and then cool in its own stock. Once cold, i.e. approximately 24 hours later, drain, pat it dry and eat it." *Lettera di G. Verdi del 27 aprile 1872 al Conte Arrivabene*. In another letter sent to the Ricordis, the Maestro wrote "*Metterla nell'acqua tiepida per circa 12 ore onde levargli il sale, trasferirla in acqua fredda e poi farla bollire a fuoco lento, onde non scoppi, per circa tre ore e mezza. Per sapere se la cottura è al punto giusto, si fora la spalletta con un curedents*" (Leave it in warm water for approximately 12 hours in order to take the salt off, switch into cold water and gently boil, so that it does not burst, for about three hours and a half. To see if it is ready, pick it with a *curedents*). Both letters in: G. VERDI, *Lettere*, cit., pp. 639-640.

47 Letter to Giuseppe Piroli in 1885, published in G. VERDI, *Lettere*, cit., pp. 900-901.

San Secondo Shoulder Meat, (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)



Capon supreme

Serves 6

Ingredients:

6 breasts home-grown capon
 50 g leek, finely chopped
 White or black truffle
 1 decilitre Champagne
 1 decilitre chicken stock
 100 g butter
 50 g flour
 300 g boiled courgettes
 ½ litre milk
 80 g white flour
 50 g butter
 100 g grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
 3 eggs
 Pepper

Preparation:

Melt the butter in a saucepan and brown the leek; in [another] saucepan, brown the breasts, dusted with flour; when they are golden add the Champagne and reduce, add the chicken stock. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes. Set the breasts aside and put their saucepan over the heat. Reduce the juices by approximately 1/3, add the sliced truffle. Slice the breasts across and place them on a serving dish; coat with the sauce. Finish with a few slivers of truffle. To serve, accompany with a soufflé of courgettes: add the grated cheese, eggs and sauté diced courgettes to a béchamel sauce. Pour into greased individual ramekins and bake in a bain marie at 130°C.



Villa Verdi, Sant'Agata di Villanova sull'Arda

The Maestro enjoyed good company and well cooked food into his old age, although he had – sometimes – problems with digestion. As late as 1901, the cooks of Grand Hôtel de Milan prepared the following menu for him and his guests: *Julienne au croûte*, *Truite grillée à la maitre d'hôtel*, *Aloyau de beuf à la jardinière*, *Pain de Gibier*, *Asperges en branche*, *Dindonneau a la broche*, *Glace aux framboise*, *Pâtisserie*, *Dessert*. The menu is typewritten with a few spelling mistakes. Giuseppe Verdi had reached the age of 88 and the last year of his life.

PIETRO MASCAGNI



Bruno Croatto, *Ritratto di Pietro Mascagni*, 1939
Museo Mascagni, Bagnara di Romagna

Even today, in Bagnara di Romagna, somebody says that he can remember the arrival of Pietro Mascagni into town, in a big black car; in summer he was entirely clad in white linen, light hat and a cane as a walking stick, "...cutting a fine figure, unruly mane, easy talk, bright and penetrating eyes, charming, fashionable, boisterous...". It was recently written⁴⁸ that Romagna and Tuscany are united

48 See A. CAPATTI, *Pellegrinaggio da Forlimpopoli a Firenze*, in *La Via Artusiana*, cit.

and divided by a long noodle, with different sauces depending on the side of the Apennines. For Mascagni, one end of that noodle would have been in Livorno – where he was born, and the other one close to Anna Lolli, the love of his life: "...beautiful, kind, with a peaceful face...full, sensual lips, big green eyes – splendid.". She was his muse and partner for thirty-five years.⁴⁹ Mrs Lolli safely kept the many letters to and by the Maestro, approximately 4600 of them, now at



Photo portrait of Anna Lolli,
Museo Mascagni, Bagnara di Romagna

49 See <http://www.pietromascagni.com/content/view/18/59/lang,it/>, (March 2013).

the museum that was founded for that purpose, along with other documents and mementos.⁵⁰



Ritratto di Anna Lolli, Museo Mascagni,
Bagnara di Romagna

⁵⁰ The Mascagni museum was established in 1975 following the donation made by Mrs Anna Lolli to the parish church of Bagnara. It is the most important collection of Pietro Mascagni, with approximately 4600 letters between 1910 and 1944, classified in 126 boxes. In addition, there are personal objects, photos with dedications, a piano, scores, publications about the composer, clippings from those days' newspapers. Museo Storico "Pietro Mascagni" (at the rectory of Chiesa Arcipretale) is in Piazza IV Novembre 2.

Noodles, as made on the Tyrrhenian side, go with important sauces and laborious preparations, such as the recipe inspired by Pellegrino Artusi of

Pappardelle all'Arantina *(Pappardelle Noodles Arezzo style)*

Ingredients:

1 domestic duck (*Anas platyrhynchos domesticus*)
1 tbs. butter
Salt and pepper
Finely chopped ham, onion, celery stick and carrot
1 ladle stock
Veal spleen
½ glass tomato sauce or paste dissolved in water
Nutmeg
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and more butter to finish

Preparation:

Put a cleaned duck into a saucepan, add butter, salt and pepper and brown. Add the chopped ham, onion, celery stick and carrot, cook the duck turning it regularly and pour some stock, keeping the sauce thin enough to be used to coat the pasta. Add the spleen and let it cook with the duck. Add tomato and nutmeg to the sauce. Use on top of noodles, made with just eggs and flour, and cut into stripes with *spronella* (a dented pasta cutter). Cut the duck liver into small pieces, add the grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and a bit of butter if necessary. The duck can be served separately as a main course.

The Adriatic side, always calling to Artusi, counters with

Noodles with ham

Ingredients:

4 or 5 eggs
500 g flour
1 thick slice of ham, untrimmed
Celery stick and onion (once finely chopped, nearly the same in volume as the ham)
Butter
Tomato sauce or paste dissolved in water or stock

Preparation:

Roll out a dough made with five eggs and 1/2 kilo flour. Cut the noodles with a knife, to make them larger than *Taglierini* but narrower than *Pappardelle*. Brown the finely chopped vegetables and ham in the butter. "When they are golden, add tomato sauce or paste...[...]. Don't cook the noodles too much and put only a tiny bit of salt to compensate the ham: drain them well, dress with said sauce and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese".⁵¹

To make *Tagliatelle Verdi* (green noodles) that are "lighter and more digestible" prepare a dough with two eggs and a handful of boiled spinach, squeezed and finely chopped and as much flour as it takes, then continue as for "all eggs" noodles ... "bearing in mind that the beauty of such pasta is in the length that shows the ability of who made it".⁵²

51 P. ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina*, cit., recipe n° 69.

52 P. ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina*, cit., recipe n° 70.

Pietro Mascagni was born in Livorno on 7th December 1863, at 6.30 a.m., in Piazza delle Erbe, where – on the ground floor – his parents ran a bakery. The Maestro's views on food and beverages were handed down to posterity in a few lines of 1934:⁵³

L'igiene prima non è nel fumare, com'io fumo dalla più tenera età un numero di toscani al giorno che supera quello delle mie opere, Nerone compreso...[...]. L'igiene somma, l'igiene regina, l'igiene madre è una sola. Io mangio adagio. L'adagio è un tempo sinfonico. Ma è il solo tempo della mia arte di mangiare [...] Io sono nato con l'esofago stretto e ai primi bocconi che andarono male, io ho, orecchio di musicista, capito subito l'antifona. Se l'esofago è stretto occorrono bocconi piccini. E perché i bocconi siano piccini occorre masticare e rimasticare.

And he concluded:

Come l'anno ha le sue diverse stagioni, volli che i diversi tempi della mia vita avessero differenti

53 "The first health rule does not refer to smoking, because from a very young age I have smoked a quantity of cigars each day that is larger than the number of my operas, Nerone included...The first health rule, the queen of health rules, the mother of all health rules is one. I eat slowly, *adagio*. The *adagio* is a symphonic tempo. But it is the only tempo of my eating art... I was born with a narrow oesophagus and, when the first mouthfuls went wrong, with my musical ear I immediately perceived the antiphon. If the oesophagus is narrow, mouthfuls must be small. In order for them to be small, one must chew and chew again". "Just like there are more seasons to a year, I have wished for different food to match the different ages of my life. As a baby I drank milk, as a young man I drank wine; not so young I 'also' drank wine; as I grew older I drank beer; as an old man I only drink vermouth, Carpano vermouth; as a decrepit old man I will only drink water...". 1934. PIETRO MASCAGNI, in "Illustrazione del Medico" cit. in: <http://www.puntodincontro.mx.articoli/cult27032007.htm> (March 2013).

libagioni. Neonato bevevo latte; giovane bevevo vino; men giovane bevevo "anche" vino; anziano bevevo birra; vecchio non bevo che vermutte, vermutte Carpano; decrepito berrò solamente acqua ...



Top: Portraits of Pietro Mascagni, Museo Mascagni, Bagnara di Romagna

Bottom: Museo Mascagni, detail, Bagnara di Romagna

The Maestro's digestive problems obliged him to observe a careful health regime throughout his day: two eggs whisked with sugar for breakfast, a tiny portion of pasta with olive oil, a slice of meat or a steamed sole or a couple of eggs with Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, cooked apples, but he never gave up his Punt e Mes to celebrate.⁵⁴ For Pietro Mascagni's narrow oesophagus, Artusi as usual could have suggested – omitting to state the quantities,

*Malfattini*⁵⁵ (Misshapen noodles in soup)

Ingredients:

1 pasta dough made with 3 eggs and 100 g flour for each egg, rolled out: *“even the last housemaid would be able to make it”*

1 pot good quality stock

Preparation:

Make a dough in order to obtain “a firm loaf. Cut this into large slices a half finger thick, and leave them a while to dry in the air. Then chop them with the *mezzaluna* into tiny bits about half the size of a grain of rice”. Bring the stock to the boil and pour the *Malfattini* that should cook like any other pasta. Serve hot, with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano aside.

⁵⁴ Punt e Mes, “a tip of bitter flavour and half of a sweet one” is a red vermouth produced by Carpano since 1870.

⁵⁵ P. ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina*, cit., recipe n° 45. In parts, the translation is from P. ARTUSI, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, cit.

Mascagni left Livorno in 1885 and arrived in Cerignola. He married Argenide Marcellina (Lina) Carbognani from Parma. Between 1889 and 1890 he composed *Cavalleria rusticana*, staged the same year in Rome at Teatro Costanzi. *L'amico Fritz* saw the light the next year. On 16th October 1895, *Guglielmo Ratclif* – a tragedy in four acts – was staged in Milan's La Scala, conducted by Mascagni in person. On 25th March, again at La Scala, it was the turn of *Silvano*, a maritime theme drama in two acts by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti. To accompany a veristic drama set among fishermen, our kitchen suggests a dish of



Mullet alla Livornese⁵⁶

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

2 kilos red mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*),
weighing 150-200 g each
Flour to coat
Olive oil
Chopped parsley
Bay leaf, cut into small pieces
Garlic, finely chopped
Sweet fennel
Tomato sauce

Preparation:

Wash, scale and dry the mullet. Some people prefer not to eviscerate them. Dust them with flour. Heat the oil in a large frying-pan and quickly fry the fish on both sides. Sprinkle with parsley, bay leaf, some pepper, a very little garlic and, if you like it, sweet fennel. Let it flavour and, towards the end of the cooking, add a bit of tomato sauce and leave on the heat for a few more minutes before serving.

Museo Mascagni, detail, Bagnara di Romagna

56 This recipe was inspired by those of ALAN DAVIDSON, *Mediterranean Seafood*, London, Penguin, 1972, Italian edition *Il mare in pentola*, Milano, Mondadori, 1972 and of LEO CODACCI, *Itinerari nell'antica cucina toscana*, Milano, Idea Libri, 1995.



Red Mullet (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

In October the Maestro was appointed director of Liceo Rossini in Pesaro, where the following year he conducted the *Petite messe solennelle*. By the turn of the century, Pietro Mascagni was an international celebrity; on 17th January 1901, *Le Maschere* opened simultaneously in six theatres: Rome (with the composer taking the baton), Milan, Venice, Turin, Genoa and Verona. In April he went to Vienna where he conducted Verdi's *Requiem*, in memory of the recently deceased composer; Gustav Mahler invited him, on behalf of the Court, to the Imperial Court Theatre in Vienna. The Maestro began touring Europe and the world with his operas. In 1912 he was in Paris with Gabriele D'Annunzio to compose the *Parisina*. In 1912 he met Laura Lolli, from Bagnara. From that moment there was a constant growth in popularity, going as he did from one success to the next, until *Nerone* – his last opera dated 1935. The Maestro did not hide his sympathy for Fascism, which in turn exploited his popularity, both in Italy and abroad and covered him in honour and decorations, making him one of the first members of Accademia d'Italia. In 1940, to mark the 50th anniversary of *Cavalleria rusticana*, Mascagni conducted the orchestra for the recording. In 1946, he passed away in his room at Hotel Plaza in Rome, where he had lived since 1927, having made clear his complete reconsideration of the fascist regime. *Cavalleria* is destined to stay forever in the Italians' hearts and ears:⁵⁷ the line “*mamma quel vino è generoso*” is there to acquit any excess, at

the table and elsewhere; the local onomasticon of Emilia-Romagna has thus been enriched by personal names such as the very Sicilian *Alfio*, adding to those already heard *Radames*, *Otello*, *Manrico* and *Aida* (often misspelt as *la Ida*), *Norma*, *Amneris*, *Tosca* and *Zelmira*. A few newborns even found themselves christened *Turiddu* or *Toriddo*, the latter having a more Italian sound. Ferrara had already seen a flourishing of *Ugo* and *Parisina*.

The typical home-made cake in Romagna, was, since the 19th century, the *Ciambella* (a ring-shaped cake), accompanied by a glass of red wine. Another well-known character from Romagna, Giuseppe Mengoni⁵⁸ from Fontanelice, who encapsulated the boisterous and somehow reckless approach to business usually ascribed to those from his region, stubbornly kept up his eating habits wherever he went. As an architect, he designed, among other things, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, which was to become the heart of the city. He wrote to his mother that his recipe for keeping himself up and holding back the years, was to drink red wine, *e' ven ross'*. What kind of good wine is

57 Between the early 1900s and 1990, at least 27 films featured or quoted Mascagni's operas. Among the directors we can remember Mattioli, Gallone, Castellani, Lattuada, Patroni Griffi, Zeffirelli and Francis Ford Coppola. See G. C. SERGIO LICURSI, *Mascagni e il cinema* in the exhaustive *Mascagni ritrovato. 1863-1945: l'uomo, il musicista*, mostra a cura di Caterina Criscione e Learco Andalò, catalogo a cura di C. Criscione, Milano, Sonzogno, 1995.

58 Archivio Museo Giuseppe Mengoni in Fontanelice, at the former town hall, stores Mengoni's original photos, drawings and designs.

unspecified, because *Sangiovese* is always good where he came from. The opinion was shared by a very old Capuchin friar of San Giuseppe monastery in Bologna, who for his afterlife was not asking much, but would have appreciated a glass of red wine and a slice of *ciambella* waiting for him. Mengoni prematurely tasted the afterlife, when he fell from the scaffolding of the cupola of 'his' Galleria at the end of 1877.

Ciambella romagnola (ring-shaped cake)

Serves 10-12

Ingredients:

½ kilo plain flour
3 eggs and 1 yolk
180 g granulated sugar
100 g butter
Grated lemon rind
1 decilitre milk
20 g baking powder
Granella di zucchero (coarse-grained sugar)
to decorate

Preparation:

Sift the flour and baking powder on a board to form a heap and make a well in the centre; break three eggs inside the well and whisk, add the melted butter, sugar, milk, grated lemon rind and knead. Accommodate into a Savarin cake tin or form a long thick roll, shape it as a ring – the so called *brazzadella* – then place on the bottom shelf of the oven. Brush with the yolk and sprinkle the *granella* on top. Bake for approximately 30 minutes at 180°C.

Anarchy, another characteristic often ascribed to Romagna, wins even when dealing with *Ciambella*: in Imola, egg-white is used for brushing and fresh yeast instead of baking powder; in Faenza, cinnamon and white wine are added and the hole is filled with jam; no lemon rind in Ravenna; in eastern Romagna corn flour is used and no less than five eggs with almonds and hazelnuts as a decoration before baking; in Forlì fewer eggs but almonds to decorate; in western Romagna fat is added, in the eastern part lard and Marsala wine. Poor people use fat and oil instead of butter, but add dried figs and sultanas, rich people jam, raisins and candied figs.⁵⁹

Mascagni was not spared by gossip with rumours of an affair with, among others, Nellie Melba,⁶⁰ the Australian soprano who sang in the opera *I Rantzau*, at London's Covent Garden in 1893, conducted by the Maestro. Mascagni's family put up with it, but referred to the lady as "the grandfather's slut", while not turning their nose up to the homonymous ice-cream created by Escoffier, the *Pêche Melba* or Peach Melba.

59 G. MANZONI, *Così si mangiava in Romagna*, cit. pp.44-48.

60 Miss Melba was born in Australia, near Melbourne, in 1861; her real name was Helen "Nellie" Porter Mitchell.

Peaches (Photo: Andrea Scardova)



Peach Melba

Serves 6

Ingredients:

6 yellow peaches, ripe and not too big, coming away from the stone easily

Sugar

Vanilla ice-cream

250 g raspberries

150 g icing sugar

Preparation:

Blanch the peaches for a few seconds in hot boiling water and quickly cool them in iced water. Peel and cut them into two, place on a dish, dust with sugar and refrigerate. Make the ice-cream or use ready-made good quality one. Purée the raspberries and sift along with the icing sugar. Fill individual bowls with the ice-cream, delicately place half a peach on top and cover with the sauce.

The Great Escoffier also suggests Pear Melba: steam the pears in vanilla syrup and leave to cool. Put some vanilla ice-cream in a crystal bowl and lay the pears on top when they are cold. Top with raspberry purée. No problem with fresh produce, a-plenty both in Emilia and in Romagna.

Let's conclude with a sweet speciality of Livorno's Sephardic community, that bears witness to the age-old connections between Pietro Mascagni's native town, the Mediterranean and the Jewish community, already settled under the Medici. Let's follow Claudia Roden's suggestion:⁶¹

Date Cake

Serves 10

Ingredients:

250 g (9 oz.) dates, pitted and finely chopped

200 g sugar (7 oz.)

200 g (7 oz.) blanched almonds, finely chopped

4 eggs, lightly beaten

Oil and flour or matzo meal for the cake tin

Preparation:

Thoroughly mix all the ingredients. Line a 23 cm (9 inch) cake tin with greaseproof paper or use a non stick spring-form cake tin, ribbed with oil and dusted with flour or matzo meal. Pour in the cake mixture and bake in a pre-heated (180 °C, gas 4) for about 45 minutes.

61 So far, the best researched text on Jewish cooking is CLAUDIA RODEN, *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand and Vilna to the Present Day*, London, Viking, 1997. It is the definitive work for the evolution of Ashkenazi and Sephardic cookery over the centuries.

ARTURO TOSCANINI

In 1958, Parma celebrated the first anniversary of the death of Arturo Toscanini, the great music director and sublime conductor and also a stalwart of intellectual honesty and strict morality. The performances during the Toscanini celebrations in Parma saw seven world-famous orchestras and six exceptional conductors.⁶² The book published for the event⁶³ begins with a biography that says in the first paragraph: “Arturo Toscanini was born in Parma on 25th March 1867 to Claudio and Paola, née Montani. His father, a tailor and chorus singer, was a fervent supporter of Garibaldi and did not hesitate to leave his family short of means to fight on the hero’s side on more than one occasion. Toscanini spent most of his childhood with his grandparents; so delicate and thin was he that they lovingly fed him light soups and broth. One day he asked for bean soup; from then on he recovered”.⁶⁴

62 Gianandrea Gavazzeni, Sergiu Celibidache, Fernando Previtali, Leonard Bernstein, Lorin Maazel and Otto Klemperer took the baton during the *kermesse* that took place at Teatro Regio from 10th October to 11th December 1958.

63 It is a book that collects the contributions of intellectuals and musicians linked to Parma and Toscanini: *Parma a Toscanini*, a cura di Mario Medici, Parma, Comitato Onoranze Comune di Parma, 1958.

64 *Ibidem*, p. II - bis.



Photo portrait of
Arturo Toscanini,
Museo Casa natale Arturo Toscanini, Parma



Museo Casa natale Arturo Toscanini, detail, Parma



The making of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

This is how a gourmet was born even before the great musician, well strengthened by the invigorating beans. Noting that the cultivation of rice – even if frowned upon – was successful for a long while around Parma, let’s respectfully approach the

Rice and bean soup

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

500 g rice, *Vialone nano* variety
1 small fresh salami
2 tbs. olive oil
(100 g rashers)
1 onion (garlic and parsley)
200 g pinto beans
1 tbs. tomato paste dissolved in a little water
Salt and pepper
Vegetable stock or water
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

Gently fry the onion, chopped salami and garlic and parsley if to your liking. Add the rashers, thinly sliced, again if to your liking. Cook the beans in salted water, without overcooking. Fry the rice in the fried onion etc., add the tomato sauce and a ladle of water or stock. Pour the beans and cook, adding liquid as necessary. The thickness is a matter of taste: it can be fairly runny or thicker for a dense soup or even be similar to a Risotto. Anyway, serve sprinkled with olive oil and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

This traditional recipe was reinterpreted by the young Italo-Parisian *sous-chef* Madeleine Delarue-Clavel, and dedicated to Marie Louise Duchess of Parma.

“Marie Louise” mixed bean soup

Serves 4-5

Ingredients:

300 g mixed organic beans (a mix of barley, spelt, dry beans and fava (broad) beans, lentils, peas)
50 g Parma *coppa* (air-cured meat)
30 g leek
2 cloves garlic
A sprig of parsley
100 ml extra-virgin olive oil
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
Salt and pepper

Preparation:

Soak the beans overnight or longer. Dice the *coppa*, thinly slice the leek. Gently fry in a small pan with 1tbs. oil. In another pan, toss the garlic and parsley, without browning. Set both preparations aside. In an earthenware pot slightly brown the beans, use just enough water to cover and add salt. Beans should be soft but firm when they are cooked. Add the two previous preparations and 1 tbs. oil. Serve with Parmigiano-Reggiano aside.

The young Toscanini was growing up strong and healthy. And every inch a musician. Between 1878 and 1885 he devoted himself to music studies and graduated from Parma

Conservatorium, the music school founded by Duchess Marie Louise. The following year he toured Brazil with as many as 18 operas, most by Verdi. In 1887 he performed at La Scala and met Giuseppe Verdi. In 1892 he conducted Alfredo Catalani's opera *La Wally*, the name he was to choose for his daughter, and Ruggero Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. 1896 was the year of the première of Puccini's *Bohème*. From 1898 he was artistic director and principal maestro at La Scala. By then, his repertoire was wide enough to range from Beethoven, Berlioz and Dvorak to Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann and Smetana, not to mention Verdi, Wagner and Weber. Possibly in search of some respite, he took to mountaineering. In 1898, as he arrived at Rifugio Torino, the mountain hut recently opened at the foot of the Helbronner Peak in the Mont Blanc massif – a five-hour hike from La Palud, with ropes, alpenstock and strap-on crampons, he was blocked inside for two days by a blizzard. He was with the Swiss musicologist Aloys Mooser,⁶⁵ who told the story and gratefully remembered the distribution of a hot soup to the poor climbers. Although the quantities had most likely been stretched to cater for such a crowd, this is the recipe for a traditional

65 Aloys Mooser's paper was published in *Parma a Toscanini*, cit., p. 62.

Soup on a dish

Ingredients:

Toasts
Fontina cheese
Melted butter
Stock

Preparation:

In an earthenware pot, place the toasts, alternating layers of bread and of Fontina cheese. Pour on the stock and soak well. Pour the melted butter and bake at 180°C for 15 minutes. The quantity of the ingredients depends on their availability and the number of people to serve. That day at the hut, they were about fifty.⁶⁶

In Italy the Maestro conducted Debussy and also Strauss' *Salomè*. From 1908 to 1914 he conducted at the Metropolitan in New York. He had left Italy as a country more or less united under the House of Savoy, gone its small capital cities and Parma still an orphan of Duchess Marie Louise after a short rule by the Bourbons and the plebiscite of 1860. The Empress and Duchess, in addition to actively taking care – thanks to her ministers – of the dukedom and country, had imported the French and Austrian eating tastes at her Court. Marie Louise, never short of *Knödel* and *croissants*, had the opportunity – thanks to her cooks – to shape a cuisine typical of Parma,

66 Traditional recipe of Val d'Aosta. Further details in ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA, *Ricettario della cucina regionale italiana*, Milano, Touring club italiano, 2001.

Ham (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)



carefully making use of the local produce whose development the Duchess had promoted. Her provisions steward Vincenzo Agnoletti had described his experiences at Court and beyond.⁶⁷ After the dukedom, cookery would continue to adapt to the times, budgets and bourgeois milieu existing between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and develop into today's cuisine of Parma. For St John's Day, or rather the night of 23rd June, the tradition wants people in Parma and in the neighbourhood to celebrate by dining outdoors, eating the typical *Tortelli di erbette* (Swiss chard ravioli), taking care to really sit outside so that one can feel the dew (*rsèda*) that is believed to bring good luck. What follows is the traditional recipe for the dish, such a favourite in Parma:⁶⁸

Tortelli di erbette (Swiss chard ravioli)

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

1 kilo Swiss chards (*erba bida*)
400 g cow's milk Ricotta cheese, creamy
200 g grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
Nutmeg
1 egg
100 g butter
1 sheet of home-made fresh pasta, made with 4-5 eggs, not too thin

Preparation:

Boil the Swiss chards, stripped of their hard back, drain and squeeze them well. Finely chop and mix with the ricotta, egg, the tip of a tsp. of nutmeg and plenty of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese; work into a thick mixture. Roll out the pasta and cut into 6 cm squares. Place some of the filling in the centre of each square and fold to shape as rectangular ravioli approximately 6x3 cm each. Firmly press the rims. Leave to dry on a tray sprinkled with semolina or flour. Cook the ravioli in plenty of salted hot boiling water and drain them with a slotted spoon as soon as they come to the surface. Serve with butter and Parmigiano-Reggiano.

⁶⁷ VINCENZO AGNOLETTI, *Manuale del credenziere, confetturiere e liquorista di raffinato gusto moderno*, Roma, Ajani, 1831.

⁶⁸ For an in-depth description, see <http://turismo.comune.parma.it/tportalparma>, (April 2013).

Ricotta (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)



Articolo	
Descrizione	
Quantità	
Prezzo Unitario	
Totale	

Agnoletti, albeit with some confusion – he was from Rome after all – did not forget *Anolini*, another staple of Parma festive cooking. The

Anolini alla parmigiana (*Anolini Dumplings Parma Style*)⁶⁹

A woman from Parma, whom I have not the pleasure of meeting, wrote me from Milan, where she lives with her husband, as follows: "I take the liberty of sending you a recipe for a dish which in Parma, beloved city of my birth, is a tradition at family holiday gatherings. Indeed I do not believe there is a single household where the traditional 'Anolini' are not made at Christmas and Easter time." I declare myself indebted to this woman, because, having put her soup to the test, the result delighted not only myself but all my guests. To serve for four to five people:

500 g (about 1 pound) of lean, boneless beef loin
20 g (about 2/3 of an ounce) of lardon
50 g (about 1-2/3 ounces) of butter
1/4 of a medium-sized onion, chopped

Lard the piece of meat with the lardon, tie it and then season with salt, pepper and spices. Then place it on the fire to brown in an earthenware bowl or other saucepan with butter and the roughly diced onion. When the meat has browned, add two ladlefuls of broth, and then cover with several sheets of paper held firmly in place by a soup plate containing some red

following is Artusi's version (recipe n° 54) in one of his gastro-literary renditions that should be read in full:

wine. As to why wine and not water, I cannot explain it, and neither could the lady. Now let the meat boil gently for eight or nine hours, to obtain some four or five spoonfuls of flavorful, concentrated sauce, which you will then strain, pressing firmly against the mesh. Set it aside for use the next day. Make the filling for the anolini with:

100 g (about 3-1/2 ounces) of grated day-old bread, lightly toasted
50 g (about 1-2/3 ounces) of grated Parmesan cheese
a dash of nutmeg
1 egg

Blend this all together into a smooth mixture. Then make a dough with flour and three eggs, keeping it fairly soft. Roll it out and cut it into scalloped disks as in recipe 162. Fill the disks with the stuffing, then fold them in half to obtain small half-moon shapes.

These amounts should yield about 100 anolini. They are good in broth or with a sauce like tortellini, although they are lighter on the stomach than the latter. You can eat the leftover meat as stew by itself or with a side dish of vegetables.

⁶⁹ P. ARTUSI, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, cit., recipe n° 54.

Please note the almost ritual instruction to use a soup plate – into which red wine had been poured – in order to firmly close the pot containing the stew. This habit goes back to the days of open-fire cooking: an earthenware pot with a fairly narrow neck would have been used and a bowl would be placed on top containing wine in order to spread the heat from above as well. Even in wood-burning stoves, cooking would take long hours, with the pot sitting in a



Testing Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
(Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

corner of the stove, with the mandatory bowl of wine with water added, in order to minimise evaporation.⁷⁰ This is a version of

Stew alla Parmigiana

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1 kilo lean beef
Onion, carrot, celery stick
1 clove garlic
3 cloves
50 g lard
2 tbs. olive oil
25 g tomato paste
Bay leaf, cinnamon
Parsley
1 glass red wine
Stock
Salt, pepper

Preparation:

Brown the sliced onion in a pan, add the chopped garlic, lard and parsley. Salt the meat and brown with the onion etc., add the finely chopped celery stick, carrot and onion. Add the tomato paste dissolved in water. Add the cloves, a dash of cinnamon, three bay leaves and cover with red wine. Put a lid on and very gently simmer for 5-6 hours, pouring on stock every now and then. Slice and serve in its gravy as a main course.

⁷⁰ Traditional recipe from Parma. For its counterpart in Piacenza, see *Il grande mosaico della cucina italiana*, Milano, Touring club italiano, 2009.

The First World War saw Toscanini performing for charity and for the troops. In 1920 he was still in the United States, on tour with an Italian orchestra. Ente Autonomo Teatro alla Scala had seen the light and, the following year, the Maestro opened a sensational season under his direction; others would follow until 1929. He took up travelling again, in Europe and North America: he was 63 and full of stamina. He returned to the Old Continent with the New York Philharmonic. In the years before the outbreak of the Second World War he conducted in Italy, Austria, Germany and, in 1936-37, in Palestine. In the United States, the NBC Orchestra was born and Toscanini led its tour in South America. For a long time he had taken a very critical stance against Fascism, terminating with a violent Fascist squad targeting him in Bologna. It was 1931 and the Maestro left Italy for the United States, only to return in 1946 when he took the baton for a medley of operas to mark the re-opening of La Scala: a selection from *Manon*, *Mefistofele*, *Nabucco* and *Te Deum* by Giuseppe Verdi. He went back to his home in Riverdale, near New York, where he passed away when he was nearly 90 years old.

Mussolini's dictatorship had changed the Italians' life profoundly, brutally, despotically and, more often than not stupidly pervading all activities. The arts, including music and cuisine, made no exception. Already starting in 1922, Ada Boni, née Giaquinto, put forward a new and innovative cookbook with the help

of her husband; *Il Talismano della felicità*⁷¹ was published by Casa Editrice Preziosa – which she owned – and supported by the magazine of the same name that she edited. To get the better of the well established Artusi, the Bonis did not refrain from derision or directly attacking the best-seller they were competing against. Alberto Capatti recently wrote: “Even the best authors of the 20th century, must take such a prodigy [Artusi] into account, either by drawing a line or by becoming his accomplices. Ignoring him was simply impossible. When Enrico Boni attacked him in 1925, he was fighting for space for Ada his wife's *Talismano della felicità*”.⁷² In its quest for consensus, the regime soon invaded the Italians' tables and kitchens, the restaurants and inns. Chefs, innkeepers and cookery writers were easily won over: Alberto Capatti quotes from *La cucina pratica professionale* by Mario Borrini: “*Faccetta Nera*” cup and meringue, “*Balilla*” and “*Pontinia*” cup, “*Littorio*” cold chops, veal saddle and cold chicken and even a far-fetched Italian interpretation of *Sauce mousseline* as *Salsa Mussolinia*. The great names of the haute cuisine

71 ADA BONI, *Il Talismano della felicità*, Roma, Preziosa 1925, poi Colombo, 1929-1999.

72 «Anche i migliori autori del XX secolo dovranno misurarsi con questo mostro sacro, prendendo le distanze da lui o facendosi complici. Impossibile ignorarlo. Enrico Boni, nel 1925, attaccandolo, cercava di preservare uno spazio vitale al *Talismano della felicità* della moglie Ada» in: PELLEGRINO ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene. Edizione progressiva*, a cura di Alberto Capatti, Bologna, IBC Soprintendenza per i beni librari, Editrice Compositori, 2012, pp. 47– 48.



Cabbage (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

followed suit, also such as Luigi Carnacina or Escoffier in person with his unforgettable *suprême de poulet Mussolini*.⁷³

The story goes that, from his American exile, Toscanini sighed for the *Casseula* of his days in Milan. In the area of Reggio Emilia, there was a dish called *Cassola* made with mutton, cabbage, tomatoes, lard and herbs, that echoes the Milanese original, in terms of preparation and final presentation.⁷⁴ Gianandrea Gavazzeni was the last one to bear witness to the Maestro's culinary tastes, when he paid him a visit in

⁷³ ALBERTO CAPATTI, *Il boccone immaginario*, Bra, Slow Food, 2010, pp. 35 - 40.

⁷⁴ ALESSANDRO MOLINARI PRADELLI, *La cucina dell'Emilia Romagna*, Roma, Newton Compton, 1993, p. 176.

his *buen retiro* on Lake Maggiore and in Milan. At Christmastime 1954, at the Toscaninis' a "superb" pheasant⁷⁵ is laid out by the Maestro's daughter Wally.⁷⁶ Courtesy of Carnacina, the recipe can be translated as:

Pheasant à la crème

Serves 4-5

Ingredients:

1 kilo young pheasant, ready for cooking
Butter
Rashers
1 medium onion cut into quarters
300-400 ml fresh cream (unsweetened)

Preparation:

Place the pheasant, wrapped with the rashers and tied with a string, in a greased pan with the onion; let it cook for approximately 30 minutes, basting with its cooking juices. Add the cream and continue the cooking and basting. After removing the string and the onion, serve the pheasant in its pan.

⁷⁵ As told by Gianandrea Gavazzeni in *Parma a Toscanini*, cit., p. 39.

⁷⁶ Wally Toscanini, born at the turn of the century, was a real beauty and, aged 25, was portrayed by Alberto Martini in an intense and sensuous pastel. The painting was to become one of the defining works of Italian Déco and is now in Rome at a private collection. For Martini's work and the Italian Déco see the catalogue printed by Silvana Arte for the exhibition *DÉCO. Arte in Italia 1919-1939*, Rovigo, Palazzo Roverella, 31 gennaio - 28 giugno 2009.

The international tributes to Toscanini as a *gourmet* spread in Europe, in the Americas and even in the Middle East, with a plethora of restaurants that carry his name. In Port Washington, near New York, one even plays with names: the owner is called Alfredo Toscanini and he serves Italian pasta and sauces in a “*Tuscan ambience*”.

Spongata

Ingredients:

For the shortcrust pastry:

300 g flour
100 g granulated sugar
100 g butter
White wine
A pinch of salt

For the filling:

300 g mixed almonds, walnuts and hazelnuts
2 tbs. granulated sugar
200 g honey
500 g white wine
20 g pine nuts
100 g digestive biscuits
100 g mixed candied peel, diced
50 g sultanas, soaked in water
Cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg
2 tbs. breadcrumbs
Icing sugar

For the dessert, let’s go back to Toscanini’s Parma and compose the Christmastime *Spongata*, also to be found in the areas from Reggio to Piacenza:

Preparation:

Warm the honey in a *bain marie* and toast the breadcrumbs. Dust the walnuts with part of the bread and finely chop together with the biscuits, hazelnuts, almonds and pine nuts. Add the candied peel and the spices; fold in the honey and the remaining breadcrumbs. Ideally, several small low-rimmed oven-proof dishes should be used, according to the tradition, but any similar dish will do: grease and dust with breadcrumbs, line the dishes with a thin layer of shortcrust pastry and place the filling in each one, then cover with another layer of pastry, firmly press the rims together, prick the surface with a fork. Bake in a medium-high oven for at least 30 minutes. Before serving, dust with icing sugar.



*Music
and cookery
in the
17th and 18th centuries*





Chestnuts (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

GIROLAMO FRESCOBALDI



Bust of
Girolamo Frescobaldi (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

The Conservatorium in Ferrara is named after Girolamo Frescobaldi. The local accent inserts a light stress between the consonants *l* and *d*, making the sound rather sweet and pleasing to the ear. The present building is located in an area particularly important for the history of Ferrara and the heart of its citizens, at the north east of the castle (Castello Estense), overlooking Giovecca (the historic main road), reaching out towards Borgo dei Leoni; since 1440 it was the site of Arcispedale Sant'Anna, one of the first public institutions devoted to the physical and mental health of the Duke of Este's

subjects. Even Torquato Tasso, lost in his frenzy, was committed there from 1579 to 1586.⁷⁷ The “piccone risanatore” [the *healthy pickaxe*, i.e. Mussolini's architectural policies] got the better of the historic building and its place was taken by a degrading structure,⁷⁸ matched by a twin building on the other side of the street, as contemporary propylaea of the policies of urban renovation that were used to build consensus, masquerading as *monumental architecture*.⁷⁹

Torquato Tasso lived under Ercole II, Duke of Este, and Renée of France his Duchess. The direct lineage ended with their son Alfonso II of Este. Emperor Rudolph acknowledged Cesare of Este – Alfonso's cousin – as Duke of Modena and Reggio, already imperial fiefdoms. In 1598, Pope Clemens VIII reinstated the dukedom of Ferrara within the papacy. Girolamo Frescobaldi was born during the reign of Alfonso II, in 1583. At about the same time, Monteverdi composed his *Madrigali* for the Duke. As a last instance of Renaissance creativity, various artists were

77 When he was at Sant'Anna Hospital, Torquato Tasso completed, amended and corrected his *Gerusalemme Liberata*, printed in Ferrara in 1581 – the first authorised edition, by Baldini.

78 The perpetrator was Carlo Savonuzzi, an engineer working for the city council, who was responsible, to a large extent, for the so called “Addizione Novecentista” (20th century additions).

79 CESARE DE SETA, *La battaglia tra gli architetti del regime*, «La Repubblica», giovedì 31 gennaio 2013.

active at the Este court, such as Sebastiano Filippi⁸⁰ “il Bastianino” and his family, Pirro Ligorio, the Garofalo, the Bastarolo, Ippolito Scarsella and Giovan Battista Aleotti, to quote



Memorial stone on the façade of Girolamo Frescobaldi's birthplace, Ferrara (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

⁸⁰ See *Bastianino e la pittura a Ferrara nel secondo Cinquecento*, a cura di Jadranka Bentini, Bologna, Alfa, 1985. For the era of Alfonso II, *L'impresa di Alfonso II. Saggi e documenti sulla produzione artistica a Ferrara nel secondo Cinquecento*, a cura di Jadranka Bentini e Luigi Spezzaferro, Bologna, Alfa, 1987.

just one architect. The Estes left and took all that they could with them, but they left behind an incredible and original legacy of a style of life and shared history, power and politics, and the administration of a country,⁸¹ arts and literature and – last but not least – cookery. In 1583, the year of birth of Frescobaldi, the Court had laid the foundations of Ferrara cuisine for the centuries to come thanks to Cristoforo da Messisbugo. A great quantity of produce and raw materials was available that could easily be turned into food: cereals and flours, fruit, vegetables, wines, cattle and pigs, fowl and venison, wild berries, fish from the sea, rivers and ponds. Cristoforo, active until the mid-16th century, classified the preparations, material, instruments, workers and tools that were needed to transform such a bounty into food that would in turn be served in huge quantities and magnificent presentations at the Duke's table. The pies and filled pasta became *Pasticcio di Maccheroni* and *Cappellacci di Zucca*; the *Salamina* was already an established meat product in Ferrara; fish – both fresh and sea water – was either fished or farmed and was an important feature of the court's bills-of-fare. Talking of *Pasticcio di Maccheroni*, the following is a modern version:

⁸¹ A thorough study is in EMILIO SERENI, *Storia del paesaggio agrario italiano*, Bari, Laterza, 1972, chapters 5 e 6.

Pasticcio di Maccheroni alla Ferrarese

(Maccheroni pasta pie alla Ferrarese)

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

400 g *maccheroncini*

For the shortcrust pastry:

400 g flour

120 g butter

100 g sugar

2 eggs

A pinch of salt

300 g minced beef or veal, ground twice over

100 g chopped ham, both lean and fat

1 carrot

1 celery stick

1 onion

Olive oil and/or butter

Salt and pepper

½ glass medium dry white wine or ½ glass

milk

300 cc béchamel made with butter, flour, milk,

salt and a dash of nutmeg

Plenty of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated

(25 g dried mushrooms, soaked and a tiny bit of white truffle, sliced)

Preparation:

Chop celery, carrot and onion and brown in an earthenware pot with the fat. Add the ham, the meat and stir well. Brown and cook over a very low heat, pouring wine or milk and season. Cook the *maccheroncini* al dente. Line an oven-proof dish with baking paper and roll out about half of the shortcrust pastry in a disk 25 cm wide. Prepare a second disk slightly larger than the first one. Mix pasta with $\frac{3}{4}$ sauce and $\frac{3}{4}$ béchamel, add mushrooms if to your liking. Place it in the middle of the pastry, add the remaining sauce and béchamel, cover with the second disc, close and press the rim firmly. Decorate with any leftover pastry trimmings and brush with milk or beaten egg. Bake in a moderate oven for approximately 45 minutes. As an alternative, the same quantity can be used to prepare 6 individual pasticci, low in conviviality but high in practicality.

This is just *one* recipe. Variations are a-plenty and they see the introduction of sautéed wild mushrooms, green peas, or sausage instead of ham; however, the lady cooks of Ferrara are not too keen to divulge their secrets and can even redirect you to the Artusi recipe n° 349

that dictates: *maccheroni* (i.e. a longer shape), sweetbreads, giblets and gizzards, along with “crest, kidneys and unlaid eggs”,⁸² all wrapped in the usual shortcrust pastry.

82 *Unlaid eggs* are those that can sometimes be found inside the hen and are highly prized for some preparations.

Let's move on to

Cappellacci di Zucca *(Pumpkin Ravioli)*

Serves 6

Ingredients:

500 g white flour
5 eggs; 1 yolk for the filling
2 kilos yellow pumpkin, approximately
180-200 g Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
Nutmeg
Butter
Salt

Preparation:

For the pasta: knead the eggs, flour and a pinch of salt and roll out to form a sheet not too thin; cut into squares, approximately 6x6 cm each.

For the filling: cut the pumpkin into chunks but do not peel; discard the seeds and the threads then wrap in foil and place them in an oven-proof dish. Pre-heat the oven and bake at 180°C for about 60 minutes or until tender; work the flesh of the baked pumpkin with the egg yolk, grated cheese and nutmeg.

Place the filling on each square and fold as you would for any ravioli. Cook in plenty of salted water and serve with melted butter and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. A few sage leaves can be added. Serve hot. It can also be served with Bolognese sauce or a simple tomato one.

Originally, the filling of *Cappellacci alla Ferrarese* did not contemplate any addition of crushed macaroons, as it is instead customary in Mantua. The first known recipe for *Cappellacci* is by Giovan Battista Rossetti who was carver, i.e. responsible for the table, to Lucrezia d'Este, Duchess of Urbino and who wrote the treatise *Dello scalco* that was published in Ferrara in 1584, where he reported his own experiences and what he had had the chance to read in contemporary cookbooks.

One could write whole books and rhymes about *Salama da sugo*, as a matter of fact this was the case. Antonio Frizzi, a scholar from Ferrara, in his 1772 mock-heroic poem *La Salameide*,⁸³ traced back its origins to the similarly named battle of 480 B.C. that opposed the Greek and Persian fleets (two nil to Greece). It is "A mix of minced pork meat and an appropriate quantity[...] of liver",⁸⁴ tongue, spices, strong wine, all stuffed into a pig bladder shaped as a small melon, matured at even temperature for nine months: the towers of Castello Estense would make an excellent choice for that purpose. Cooking the *salama* is part of a complicated ritual that needs a napkin to wrap it up and a string to fasten it to a stick in order to steam it or cook in a *bain*

⁸³ ANTONIO FRIZZI, *La Salameide. Poemetto giocoso con le note*, Venezia, per Guglielmo Zerletti, 1772.

⁸⁴ «Un composto di carne scelta di porcello ben tritata, d'una proporzionata quantità [...] di fegato». The description is taken from VITO CAVALLINI, *A tavola col Duca d'Este*, Ferrara, SATE, 1980, p. 36.



Oratorio di Sant'Anna, Ferrara
(Photo: Andrea Scardova)



marie. In the past it was a matter of individual servings, but nowadays one big *salama* is cut open at the table and shared with mashed potatoes among those who are present. Artusi loathed the *salama*, denying any historic or sentimental value to it. A basketful of *salamina* was donated to Laurence the Magnificent by the Duke of Este. The posh Florentine, apparently, appreciated it. Nowadays, it can also be served with baked pumpkin, figs and melon, beans and lentils.

Igles Corelli, the chef who in the 1980s passionately reinterpreted the traditional cuisine of the Po Delta area, has perfected a number of dishes “alla salamina”, imaginative and only apparently straying from the accepted tradition, tinted with sweet-and-sour flavours, very much “Este style”. A nearly vegetarian (!) recipe suggests to pan-fry, in olive oil, three basil leaves, celery, carrot, shallot, potatoes and

diced aubergines, at 70°C for eight minutes. The vegetables should be placed around a previously cooked *salamina*, and sprinkled with the oil used for frying.⁸⁵ This is contemporary haute cuisine.

Let's go back to our composer: Girolamo Frescobaldi was a man of his time, a protagonist with Giovanni Gabrieli and Claudio Monteverdi of the transition of the language of music from the Renaissance to the Baroque. Educated at the polished musical milieu of the Este court, a harpsichordist and organist, he emigrated to Rome and followed Cardinal Giulio Bentivoglio to Flanders. On his return in 1607, aged 24, he published the first book of *Madrigali* for five

⁸⁵ Igles Corelli's recipes for *salama da sugo* are in GRAZIANO POZZETTO, *La salama da sugo ferrarese*, Rimini, Panozzo, 2002, pp. 250-269.

voices. The next year he travelled to Milan, then to Rome as the organist of Saint Peter Basilica, a position he would occupy for the rest of his life, apart from a short spell at the Grand-dukedom of Tuscany: Frescobaldi had a personal and innovative way of playing and making music and he had an important impact on his Italian and foreign contemporaries. Johann Sebastian Bach himself studied and played his music for organ, while the printed editions of his scores met great success.

The portrait painted by the French artist Claude Melland in 1619, depicts a gentleman with strong features, moustache, goatee and a slightly unruly mane, reminding some vigorous characters painted by other contemporary artists.

When he arrived in Rome, the Pope was Paul V Borghese, an admirer of Guido Reni and Caravaggio. Since the previous century, the popes' kitchens had been under the influence of Bartolomeo Scappi,⁸⁶ the secret cook of Pius IV and Pius V. The new century brought along a new approach to the arts, including cookery. The Renaissance was on the wane and giving way to Baroque. Painting, sculpture and architecture discovered everyday life and cookery followed suit as it recovered the hidden

trove of popular and bourgeois tastes and preparations. Caravaggio, the Carraccis and Guido Reni depicted everyday food, poultry, raw meat, baskets full of fruit. Here you have two recipes in the style of Caravaggio:



Salama da sugo (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

86 Scappis' work is: *Opera di M. Bartolomeo Scappi, Cuoco Segreto di Papa Pio V*, In Venetia, appresso Michele Tramezzino, [1570?]. It is well researched in JUNE DI SCHINO, FURIO LUCCICHENTI, *Il cuoco segreto dei Papi. Bartolomeo Scappi e la Confraternita dei Cuochi e Pasticceri*, presentazione di Tullio Gregory, Roma, Gangemi, 2007.

Guinea fowl filled with chestnuts and pomegranate syrup

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1.5 kilo guinea fowl, ready for cooking
200 g chestnuts, boiled and peeled
250 g fresh sausage
10-12 rashers
2 pomegranates
Sugar, cinnamon, clove and nutmeg
Salt and pepper
Butter or olive oil

Preparation:

Season the inside of the guinea fowl and roughly chop the chestnuts. Prepare a filling with the sausage, chestnuts and, if you like, with the fowl's liver sautéed in butter. Flavour with the spices. Fill the guinea fowl, wrap with the rashers and tie with string. Place the guinea fowl in an oven-proof dish, pour on the melted butter or olive oil and ½ glass dry white wine. Bake, basting now and then with the cooking juices. Discard the rashers and bake until ready. Prepare a syrup with the pomegranate and sugar, setting aside a few grains to decorate. Pour half of it on the guinea fowl and the remaining in a gravy boat and serve.⁸⁷

87 A useful book for fruit in sweet, savoury and sweet-and-sour recipes is MONICA CESARI SARTONI, *La cucina imolese in tempo di baccanale. I piaceri della frutta*, Imola, Comune di Imola, 1992.

Jujube juice⁸⁸

Ingredients:

Jujubes, dried in a cool open place until the skin has wrinkled
Quinces
White grapes
Sugar
Lemon rind

Preparation:

Core the jujubes, when they are soft after drying. Place them in a big cooking pot with the quinces cut into pieces, the grapes, the lemon rind and sugar. Bring to the boil, lower the heat and simmer until it turns brown. Pass the mixture through a sieve, bottle and preserve the juice. It is used to accompany ring cakes and shortcrust biscuits.



Pinto beans (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

88 For a history of the use of jujubes (giuggiole, in Italian, an edible berry-like drupe of various species of *Zizyphus*): <http://www.taccuinistorici.it> (March 2013).

The next recipe was inspired by Annibale Carracci's *Macellerie*:

Stew in white wine

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

1200 g oxtail⁸⁹
1 bottle medium-dry white wine
1 onion
2 garlic cloves
Sage, rosemary, bay leaves, marjoram, parsley, cloves
Salt and pepper
Stock made with beef

Preparation:

Marinate the meat in herbs for 5-6 hours. Brown the oxtail in oil, butter, salt and pepper. Add garlic, onion and parsley. Pour the wine and braise in the oven at 180°C for approximately 2 hours; now and then, add some stock. Leave to rest before slicing the meat. Reduce the juices in a saucepan and pour it over the meat before serving on a warm dish.

Annibale Carracci, with his *Mangiatore di fagioli*, is very close in terms of space and context to Giulio Cesare Croce's *Bertoldo*. The author was a poet and storyteller from San Giovanni in Persiceto and his character was that of the wise peasant who was admitted to King Alboin's court but who "Was grateful to his king, but died in great pain / Because he could not eat turnips and beans"; the following recipe comes to our mind:

Turnip and bean soup

Serves 5-6

Ingredients:

250 g dry pinto beans
Celery stick, carrot and onion
1 sprig parsley, finely chopped
Turnips (*brassica rapa*)
3 tbs. extra virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves
1 chilli pepper

Preparation:

Soak the beans overnight in cold water. Cook in plenty of cold water with celery, carrot and onion. Clean the turnips well, chop and cook in salted water. Drain and set aside. Warm the olive oil, garlic, parsley and chilli in a saucepan. Lightly brown and add the turnips, the beans and some of their broth. Continue the cooking and season as necessary. Serve with olive oil and Parmigiano-Reggiano for those who can't do without it.

89 The oxtail is a prized cut from the back of the animal, roughly triangular in shape, with marbled lean meat, and an external layer of fat good for braising in the oven.

Musicians did not ignore the question of food. Our Girolamo Frescobaldi composed two songs that we would like to read in culinary terms: *la Capponcina* (the prime chicken) and *la Sardina* (the sardine).⁹⁰ The following is a spring recipe, rich in Omega 3, prepared with sardines:

Sardines in earthenware pot

Serves 6

Ingredients:

1 kilo sardines, ready for cooking
 Extra virgin olive oil
 Cervia Salt (natural sea salt) and pepper
 1 lemon, squeezed
 Chopped parsley
 1 shallot, chopped
 2 garlic cloves

Preparation:

In a large low-rimmed earthenware pot, brown the shallot and garlic. Lay the sardines on top, put the lid on and quickly cook on a high heat for one minute. Season and sprinkle with lemon juice, put the lid on and cook until ready. Sprinkle with parsley and serve hot.

Adriano Banchieri, musician and writer from Bologna, followed Giulio Cesare Croce with his *Cacasenno*, to form the trilogy *Bertoldo e Bertoldino col Cacasenno*. In 1604, Banchieri published *Il Zabaione musicale. Invenzione boschereccia a 5 voci*. Here is the recipe for

Zabaione

(also to go with zampone and salama)

Ingredients:

2 egg yolks
 50 g medium-dry white wine
 1 tbs. granulated sugar
 2 macaroons, crushed

Preparation:

Gently warm the ingredients in a saucepan, stirring without whipping to a froth. Simmer for a few minutes until the zabaione thickens. Pour into individual bowls. The chef Igles Corelli suggests a version with verjuice, thyme and bay leaves, salt and pepper and, exceptionally, fresh cream.⁹¹

The dessert of this 17th century style menu is by Marquis Vincenzo Tanara, from Bologna, a typical character of his time, brave horseman, magistrate, landowner and author of *L'economia*

⁹⁰ The catalogue of Frescobaldi's works is OSCAR MISCHIATI, *Catalogo delle edizioni originali delle opere di Girolamo Frescobaldi in Frescobaldi e il suo tempo*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1983.

⁹¹ Recipe quoted by GRAZIANO POZZETTO, *La salama da sugo ferrarese*, cit., p. 255.

del cittadino in villa,⁹² first printed in 1644.⁹³ From his book, we can derive the recipe of a typical cake: the Pinza. After describing it as a loaf of bread (“*una pagnotta oualta, qual chiamano pinza*” a thick loaf called pinza), then as a *Crescenta* (a raised savoury bread) with boiled bacon trimmings (*grasù*), Pinza finally becomes a cake (“*dolce assai buona: la pinza inzuccherata*” the sugary Pinza is sweet and very good), made of fat, flour, sugar and honeydew. The following is the traditional recipe from Emilia.



Sardines (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

92 Our edition: VINCENZO TANARA, *L'economia del cittadino in villa*, in Venetia, appresso Stefano Curti, 1674.

93 An exhaustive report is in *L'arte della cucina in Italia. Libri di ricette e trattati sulla civiltà della tavola dal XIV al XIX secolo*, a cura di Emilio Faccioli, Torino, Einaudi, 1987.

Pinza

Serves 8-10

Ingredients:

For the shortcrust pastry

250 g plain flour

1 egg

80 g butter

Vanilla flavoured baking powder

For the filling:

250 g *Mostarda dolce Bolognese*

(a mixed fruits jam)

Pine nuts

Sultanas

Sugar and *Granella di zucchero*

(coarse-grained sugar)

Preparation:

Roll out the shortcrust pastry approximately 1 cm thick, shaped as an oval. Mix the jam, pine nuts and sultanas (soaked in eau de vie or brandy). Spread the filling in the centre of the pastry, fold and seal the rims. Slightly wet the surface, sprinkle first with sugar then with *Granella*. Pre-heat the oven and bake at 180° C in an oven-proof dish lined with baking paper, for approximately 40 minutes.

One last word about Girolamo Frescobaldi. His present day fame has officially placed him among the stars: an asteroid discovered in 1991 is called 11289 Frescobaldi.

AB

Die. 19. februarii 1653.

Charclus. Thom. Aronchi de Cellis
Paronis Inyalin. baptizatus
fuit. Curator. Curia. Curia
Charclus natus est die 17. i.

Die. Ja

~~Curia~~ Curia. Barolomei de Baruffi et Mar
Paronis Inyalin. baptizatus fu
est. Curia. Curia. Curia
Curia de Aronis natus fuit

ARCANGELO CORELLI



Arcangelo Corelli

Arcangelo Corelli, from Fusignano, deserves his place here for a number of reasons: he was born in 1653 in Romagna, a land of poets, musicians and cooks and he studied music in Bologna, where he was admitted to Accademia Filarmonica in 1670. He was an exceptional violinist and he followed his patrons Pamphili and Ottoboni in Rome. But above all, Corelli – who died in 1713 – was also celebrated in 2013 along with the two great stars, Verdi and Wagner; three hundred years in his case. In

Fusignano, in fact, it is Verdi and Wagner who had the good fortune to share the celebrations with such a distinguished citizen,⁹⁴ contrary to what happened in the rest of the region and of the world.

Fusignano was founded in the 14th century, however the whole area stands on the Roman centuriation. Some relics are still visible between the town and the Senio riverbed which must have represented an important borderline.⁹⁵ The land's agricultural vocation has strengthened the farming and culinary traditions, favouring the development of tastes and recipes firmly linked to the countryside, the fields first fertilised and made productive in the 2nd century B.C. by the discharged Roman soldiers who received plots at the end of their service.

Virgil wrote in the *Aeneid*

Aeneas primique duces et pulcher Iulus /
corpora sub ramis deponunt arboris altae, /
instituantque dapes et adorea liba per herbam
/ subiciunt epulis (sic Iuppiter ipse monebat)
/ et Cereale solum pomis agrestibus augeat. /

94 For an overview of Corelli celebrations in Fusignano see:
<http://www.ravennaedintorni.it/ravenna-notizie/35631/fusignano-celebra-il-genio-musicale-di-arcangelo-corelli.html>.
(April 2013).

95 E. SERENI, *Storia del paesaggio*, cit. I *Paesaggio naturale e paesaggio agrario*. Il *L'italia antica*.

consumptis hic forte aliis, ut vertere morsus
 / exiguam in Cererem penuria adegit edendi,
 / et violare manu malisque audacibus orbem
 / fatalis crusti patulis nec parcere quadris: /
 'heus, etiam mensas consumimus?' inquit Iulus,
 / nec plura, adludens. ea vox audita laborum /
 prima tulit finem, primamque loquentis ab ore /
 eripuit pater ac stupefactus numine pressit.

And, with his chiefs, on forest fruits he fed. /
 They sate; and, (not without the god's command,) /
 / Their homely fare dispatch'd, the hungry band /
 / Invade their trenchers next, and soon devour, /
 / To mend the scanty meal, their cakes of flour. /
 / Ascanius this observ'd, and smiling said: / "See,
 we devour the plates on which we fed." / The
 speech had omen, that the Trojan race / Should
 find repose, and this the time and place. / Aeneas
 took the word, and thus replies, / Confessing fate
 with wonder in his eyes ⁹⁶

In short, the *Piada Romagnola* – the flat sparingly-leavened bread – was born, all in one table, plate and food, the partner of outdoor meals in the shade of leafy trees, bread and butter, sublime staple food, appetiser and main course, «l'azimo antico degli eroi, il pane della povertà, dell'umiltà e della libertà... che s'accompagna all'erbe agresti» as sung by Giovanni Pascoli.⁹⁷

It is far too easy to say *piada*, *piadina*, *pieda*, *piè*: all these local variants share a common base made

of flour and humble water; in the olden time it would be cooked on a stone or in an earthenware dish on embers and nowadays in a cast-iron pan on the heat; the fat element would have been and still is lard, with only a bit of sodium bicarbonate as the raising agent. In Ravenna, tiny bits of *ciccioli* (pork rinds) are added to the dough; sparkling water is used by some to favour an even rising, or beer or sparkling Albana wine. Olive oil – used instead of lard – makes *piadina* lighter but too refined; fresh yeast may be used but, as a result, the preparation would no longer be unleavened and *piadina* would translate into *pitta*, which is a very thin bread, common to many Mediterranean countries, made with oil, risen and baked in a hot oven: very quickly, bubbles will form on its surface and the hollows can later be filled with Greek or Turkish salads, aubergines, cucumbers, or spicy cheese, or spit roasted chicken or pork. The variants of *piada* also have to do with its thickness and size: in the part of Romagna that borders with the Bologna area, in Ravenna, in Forlì and Cesena, it is about 5 mm thick and 15 cm in diameter, which is about 15 cm shorter than the version that can be found along the Adriatic coast, where it is thinner, approximately 3 mm, and larger with a diameter of 25-30 cm. Accordingly, what follows is just one of the recipes for *piada* or *piadina*:

96 John Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*. Book 7 vv. 107-115. <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/aeneid.7.vii.html> (August 2013).

97 "the ancient heroes' unleavened bread, bread of poverty, of modesty and of freedom...that accompanies Swiss chards". See *La piada*, in Giovanni Pascoli, *Poesie*, vol. 1, Milano, Mondadori, 1974.



Piada or Piadina

Ingredients:

½ kilo flour (for making bread)
 1 tbs. olive oil
 1 tsp. sodium bicarbonate or baking powder
 1.5 decilitre water, approximately
 2 tsp. salt

Preparation:

Knead the ingredients on a board. Give the dough the shape of a cylinder and cut it into thick slices that you will in turn roll to form balls that will be, dusted with flour, set aside to rest in a basket. Roll them out to the desired size. Cook each piadina in a very hot cast-iron pan, turning over and pricking with fork to avoid bubbles.

The best accompaniment is what Giovanni Pascoli suggested: Swiss chards, or spinach, or wild herbs, tossed with garlic and a drop of oil, placed in the centre of the piada, that will then be folded to eat. If the rims are pressed before cooking, you will get a *cassòn*, but this is another story.

Ham, salami, stracchino cheese, rocket salad and typical cheese from Romagna also make an excellent choice. On the hills around Rimini, piada is also served with roast chicken instead of potatoes.



Swiss chards (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)



En route
in
Emilia-Romagna





Villa Pallavicini, façade, Bologna (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART



Anonymous (Austria), *Ritratto di Wolfgang Amadé Mozart*, 1777, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Bologna

From his childhood, Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart performed for the most important royal houses in Europe and, with his father Leopold, visited the capitals of music of his time. A very precocious composer and musician, he composed his first minuet in 1760 aged 4 and began performing aged 6 at the courts in Vienna, Paris and London. Bologna was indeed one of the most important ports of call in Mozart's itinerary through Europe; in March 1770 he performed at the Accademia set up by Count Pallavicini in

his town mansion at Strada San Felice. Mozart, with his father Leopold, arrived from Milan via Parma and, with credentials for Maresciallo Gian Luca Pallavicini, he received a very warm welcome in town. For his performance he was paid 205 Lire, against a total expenditure of 763.15 Lire for the whole event. The amount also covered the cost of sugar, cinnamon, snow, the wages of two workers “who came to whisk the chocolate”, 124 lemons and the baker's wage for “the making and baking of biscuits”.⁹⁸ Talking of chocolate, it is appropriate to remember that



Memorial stone at Villa Pallavicini, Bologna
(Photo: Andrea Scardova)

98 «che vennero a frullare la cioccolata», «fattura e cocitura de' biscotti», *Mozart a Bologna. Tra Villa Pallavicini e Accademia Filarmonica*, a cura di Luigi Verdi, Bologna, Tipolitografia Musiani, 2000.



Angelo Crescimbeni, *Ritratto di P. Giambattista Martini*, 1775 circa, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca Musica, Bologna

Mozart – or perhaps his librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte – included it in at least two operas. In *Così fan tutte*, Despina sings as she is whisking the chocolate

Il cioccolato è fatto, ed a me tocca / Restar ad odorarlo a secca bocca? / Non è forse la mia come la vostra, / O garbate signore, / Che a voi dèssi l'essenza, e a me l'odore? / Per Bacco, vo' assaggiarlo: / com' è buono!

While Don Giovanni's protagonist thus instructs his faithful Leporello:

Ordina ch'abbiano cioccolatte, caffè, vini, presciutti. Cerca divertir tutti. Mostra loro il giardino, la galleria, le camere; in effetto, fa' che resti contento il mio Masetto. Hai capito?

And talking of biscuits, this is the recipe for

Baker's biscuits

Serves 8

Ingredients:

1 kilo flour (for making bread)
300 g sugar
35 g ammonium bicarbonate
5 eggs
200 g butter
Milk
Salt
1 egg white

Preparation:

Make a well with the flour and place the sugar, eggs, and softened butter. Add the baking powder and salt; fold in from the outside to the inside and add enough milk to knead. Roll out in more than one sheet about 0.50 cm thick, brush with the egg white and sprinkle with some granulated sugar. Cut into rectangular shapes, about 10x5 cm, with *spronella* the typical dented cutter. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for 15-20 minutes until the biscuits are golden. They are excellent when served with hot chocolate.

Mozart returned to Bologna in July of the same year and stayed until October, again as a guest of the Pallavicinis in their villa at Croce



Apricots (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

del Biacco. Once in town, Amadeus enjoyed a panorama still illuminated by the scientific glow of Luigi Galvani and of Laura Bassi Veratti whose international reputation had even reached the Central Empires. Mozart was studying for admission to Bologna Accademia Filarmonica,⁹⁹ under the guidance of Father Martini. The original copy of young Amadeus' examination paper – in fact not particularly a brilliant one – is still preserved by the same

99 The definitive description of the documents reporting the events that took place at the Accademia can be found in LAURA CALLEGARI HILL, *L'Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna, 1666-1800: statuti, indici degli aggregati e catalogo degli esperimenti d'esame nell'archivio, con un'introduzione storica*, Bologna, A.M.I.S, 1991.

institute. Described as he was as larger than life, pleasure seeking and playful, he must have appreciated his patrons' fun loving milieu and knack for business. The season at the villa, albeit tempered by his studies, must have been rich in new experiences even food-wise. The time of the year was the best one to enjoy the fruit of the Pallavicinis' lands. Their Croce del Biacco abode sat in a wood of tall trees, its back overlooking the cultivated fields while from the south side the eyes could see as far as the hills around Bologna, from San Michele in Bosco to Ozzano and the atmosphere must have been

as fancy-free as that of a “Villeggiatura” (villa holiday).¹⁰⁰

As the 18th century was drawing to a close, the best-known culinary expert was Vincenzo Corrado from Oria, near Brindisi, in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies: in his *Cuoco Galante*,¹⁰¹ he wrote down what is nowadays considered the “Mediterranean Diet”. In Emilia, the anonymous cook of a noble family in Reggio Emilia, the Cassolis, wrote *Libro contenente la maniera di cucinare e vari segreti e rimedi per malattie et altro*¹⁰² at nearly the same time. The cultural gap between the two works is fathomless: whereas Vincenzo Corrado described his job saying that “L’abbondanza, la varietà, la delicatezza delle vivande, la splendidezza e la sontuosità delle tavole richiedevano una schiera di uomini d’arte, saggi e probi” (The abundance, variety and delicacy of the food, the splendour and opulence of the tables required a number of skilled workers, wise and reliable),

¹⁰⁰ A thorough presentation of the villas around Bologna is

GIAMPIERO CUPPINI, ANNA MARIA MATTEUCCI, *Ville del Bolognese*. Bologna, Zanichelli, 1969. Specific references to painting and frescoes in the 18th century are in *L’arte del Settecento emiliano. La pittura. L’Accademia Clementina*, Catalogo della X Biennale d’arte antica, Bologna, Alfa, 1979.

¹⁰¹ VINCENZO CORRADO, *Il cuoco galante, opera meccanica dell’oritano Vincenzo Corrado*, Napoli, Stamperia Raimondiana, 1773.

¹⁰² *Libro contenente la maniera di cucinare e vari segreti e rimedi per malattie et altro "libro di casa" di una famiglia reggiana del Settecento*, a cura di Giulio Bizzarri, Eleonora Bronzoni, Bologna, Il Lavoro Editoriale, 1986.



Villa Pallavicini, ceiling. Bologna (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

the anonymous cook of the Cassolis provides us with family cooking tips and a collection of notes about good housekeeping and the use of leftovers. It goes without saying that the Count’s household cannot be compared to the Prince of Francavilla’s. Cooking at the Pallavicinis’ must have been equally distant from both, particularly during the holidays, more attentive to fresh produce as available and closer to the indications of Marquis Tanara than to those relevant for the Bourbons. That short summer of “Amadé” is narrated with great respect and



Pears (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

tenderness by Pupi Avati in his film *Noi tre* of 1984.¹⁰³ The little genius simultaneously discovers freedom, friendship, the first love troubles and the rich nature of the countryside. His host and patron Gian Luca Pallavicini literally made a living from his land. “Amadé”

¹⁰³ *Noi tre* [Italy 1984, Biography, duration 88 mins.]
Directed by Pupi Avati. with Lino Capolicchio, Ida Di Benedetto,
Christopher Davidson, Carlo Delle Piane, Gianni Cavina.
Music by Riz Ortolani.

tastes his first stolen pear thus allowing us to mention a traditional Austro-Hungarian

Pear compote Charlotte

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

1 kilo pears, approximately
3 tbs. granulated sugar
40 g butter
4 tbs. apricot jam
Vanilla essence
Grated rind of ½ lemon
Cinnamon, clove
1 small glass brandy
400 g Sponge Fingers

Preparation:

Slice the pears and steam with butter, brandy, sugar, vanilla, grated lemon rind, ground cinnamon and two cloves. Once cooked, stir well and pass through a sieve, let the mixture cool down and add the apricot jam. Grease a Charlotte mould (named after the eponymous bonnet). Arrange the Sponge Fingers on the bottom and the sides of the tin, sprinkle with brandy and a bit of water. Pour the compote, crush the remaining fingers and sprinkle on top. Bake in a moderate oven for approximately 30 minutes. It can be served warm or cold.



VINCENZO BELLINI



Giuseppe Tivoli, *Ritratto di Vincenzo Bellini*, 1887, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca Musica, Bologna

Born in Catania in 1801 and prematurely dying in France in 1835, Vincenzo Bellini composed operas, chamber vocal music and arias, symphonic, piano and organ music and – as a student – more than 30 pieces of sacred music. He was a long-time friend of Count Carlo Pepoli from Bologna¹⁰⁴ – a poet and follower of Giuseppe Mazzini – permanently on the run, who wrote the libretto for Bellini's *I Puritani*. Among the operas by Bellini, *Norma* has a

¹⁰⁴ Carlo Pepoli (1796–1881) was a patriot, poet, librettist and politician.

special place: *Casta diva*, one of the arias sung by the protagonist, was one of Maria Callas' best-loved performances. Both the opera and the aria quickly became so popular that the names Norma and Adalgisa won the people's hearts and a place in the birth registers in Emilia-Romagna.



Tomatoes (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

Norma is forever linked to a Sicilian recipe, whose ingredients, easily found over here, made it popular even in Emilia-Romagna:

“Norma” Spaghetti alla Catanese¹⁰⁵

Serves 4

Ingredients:

450 g thick spaghetti
Pasta sauce made with 10 peeled tomatoes, garlic, oil and basil leaves
4 tbs. salted Ricotta cheese or grated matured Pecorino cheese
5-6 aubergine slices with their peel, 3-5 mm thick approximately
Salt and pepper

Preparation:

Cook the spaghetti in plenty of salted boiling water. On a serving dish, coat the spaghetti with half of the sauce and add pepper if to your liking. In the meantime, fry the aubergine slices in olive oil or grill them in a cast-iron pan. Place them on the spaghetti and sprinkle with the cheese of your choice; pour the remaining sauce and more cheese.

In the area of Siracusa, all the sauce should be immediately poured over the spaghetti, slices of long dark aubergines (*Violetta lunga palermitana* variety) should be used, then topped with salted Ricotta cheese, thinly sliced.

A contemporary but ‘philologically’ correct variant consists of filling the slices of fried (or grilled) aubergines with a generous serving of spaghetti in their sauce, adding oil, thinly sliced cheese, then rolling them to form olives. Place some tomato sauce on the bottom of an oven-proof dish, place the olives and cook *au gratin*.

¹⁰⁵ Original recipe from FIAMMETTA DI NAPOLI OLIVER, *La grande cucina siciliana*, Milano, Moizzi, 1976, p.39. Very much Sicilian in terms of generous quantities!

RICHARD WAGNER



Giuseppe Tivoli, *Ritratto di Richard Wagner*, 1883, Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca Musica, Bologna

In 1872, Richard Wagner from Leipzig became an honorary citizen of Bologna and deservedly so after the consensus created in town by his “innovative” music. In 1871, Teatro Comunale saw the Italian premiere of *Lohengrin*,¹⁰⁶ attended by Giuseppe Verdi who, apparently, was furiously taking notes. Bologna was on

¹⁰⁶ Narrated, among others, by Alfredo Testoni in his *Ottocento bolognese. Nuovi ricordi di Bologna che scompaiono*, Bologna, Licinio Cappelli, 1933, pp. 69-76.

the lookout for a new myth, having twice lost Rossini,¹⁰⁷ and the opera was a roaring success. People in Bologna notoriously have a taste for life and, it goes without saying, for food. Life and food are appreciated for what they are, both as a whole and as separate expressions in each and every one of the elements they are made of. Not only is opera loved as a genre, but single operas are appreciated and single arias enjoyed: the same applies to cookery, passionately loved as an expression of life and at the same time appreciated in single dishes while enjoying every mouthful. Audiences have always been ready to embrace operas and performers, not only on stage but also in the kitchen: a typical character is that of ‘Signor Faccioli’ of Via dei Vetturini, who did not hesitate to interrupt the performance of Rossini’s *Mosè* to acclaim any diminutive solo by Antonietta Fricci, born Antonia Frietsche¹⁰⁸ the Austro-Hungarian singer. Thus the Bologna poet Carlo Musi:¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Gioachino Rossini had left Bologna in 1851 and had died in Paris in 1868.

¹⁰⁸ Antonietta Fricci (1840-1912) a well-known singer, particularly in operas by Giuseppe Verdi.

¹⁰⁹ The bibliography of Carlo Musi includes at least ten collections of lyrics and scores of *canzonette* (popular songs) sung in Bologna. See CARLO MUSI, *El mi canzonett: parole e musica*, Bologna, G. Brugnoli & figli, 1916.



Spinach (Photo: Andrea Scardova)

Ai fó una sîra int al nòster teâter
 ch'ai êra la Fricci a cantèr al Mosè.
 Tra la quiêt e l silânzi ch'regnèva
 as sinté fèr dla gâta in platè...
 L êra Fasôl ch'ludèva la Fricci
 quand la cantèva un pzulén da per li

That can be roughly translated from dialect

One night at our theatre
 Fricci was singing the *Mosè*
 In the silence and stillness that reigned
 There was a stir in the audience
 It was Faccioli who was acclaiming Fricci
 Anytime she was singing even the shortest solo.

Faccioli is the true representative of Bologna at the end of the 19th century, when people were poor and ready to enjoy, by hook or by crook, the slightest pleasure: the smallest piece, *pzulén*, sung on stage or a portion – time and again a *pzulén* in local dialect – ¹¹⁰ of what is being cooked.

The honorary citizenship for Wagner had been decided in 1872, but the Maestro only came for the official acceptance on 4th December 1876. That night he was the guest of the mayor, Signor Tacconi, who threw a lavish party to celebrate the event. Did everything run smoothly? In other words, did anybody tell the mayor, caterers and city chefs that Wagner was

¹¹⁰ *Pzulén* or *pzulòn* are to this day the measuring unit of sausage when it is sold 'by the metre': the former indicates a single portion approximately 12 cm long, the latter three or four servings 30-40 cm overall. Beyond that, we find the *gavatta* or *gavtèn*, a whole chunk of sausage, 80-100 cm long.

a vegetarian? If not, unfortunately, what should be done about the *Cappelletti*, capon aspic, giblet soufflé, of the thrushes, hares and woodcocks lovingly prepared, arranged for him and ready to eat?¹¹¹ With luck and with the help of Pellegrino Artusi, the Maestro might have been served the following dish instead, suggested by “the lovely and most gracious Signora Adele”, possibly varying the ingredients a little. Therefore, here it is the soufflé described in *Science in the Kitchen*, followed by another vegetarian recipe that Frau Cosima Wagner in person could have suggested to the local chefs:

*Sformato della signora Adele*¹¹² (Signora Adele's Gruyère Mold)

Ingredients:

100 g (about 3-1/2 ounces) of butter
 80 g (about 2-2/3 ounces) of flour
 70 g (about 2-1/3 ounces) of Gruyère cheese
 1/2 a liter (about 1/2 a quart) of milk
 4 eggs

¹¹¹ Since the bill-of-fare of the day is unknown, Artusi's menu for the month of December is quoted. See P. ARTUSI, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, cit., p. 592.

¹¹² P. ARTUSI, *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, cit., recipe n° 346.



Preparation:

Make a béchamel sauce with the flour, milk, and butter, and before removing it from the fire add the Gruyère, grated or cut into small pieces, and salt. Once the sauce has cooled a little, add the eggs, first the yolks one at a time, and then the whites, beaten until stiff.

Pour this mixture into a smooth mold with a hole in the middle after greasing the mold with butter and dusting it with breadcrumbs. Bake in a Dutch oven and serve filled with stewed giblets or sweetbreads. Serves six people.

“Frau Cosima”¹¹³ soufflé

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

For the béchamel:

- ½ litre milk
- 80 g plain flour
- 60 g butter
- 300 g boiled spinach, squeezed
- 100 g grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 3 eggs
- Nutmeg
- 300 g chanterelles
- 1 garlic clove
- Parsley
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Tomato sauce or tomato paste dissolved in water
- Salt and pepper

Preparation:

Prepare a béchamel and let it cool down. Delicately stirring, fold in the eggs, first the yolks then the whites – whipped until they are stiff –, the spinach, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, nutmeg and salt. Pour the béchamel into a non-stick Savarin cake tin and cook in *bain marie* until the mixture is firm to the touch. Turn out the soufflé onto a round serving dish. In the meantime, cook the chanterelles or start by soaking them in water if you are using dried mushrooms: in an earthenware pot toss garlic and parsley in oil, add the sliced chanterelles, stir and cook with the tomato sauce. Add salt and pepper if to your liking. Pour this sauce into the dip of the soufflé and serve hot. As an alternative, place in individual ramekins and serve with the mushroom sauce.

113 Cosima Francesca Gaetana Wagner (1857-1890) was Richard Wagner's second wife. She was the daughter of Franz Liszt and Countess Marie D'Agoult.



Garlic (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

GIACOMO PUCCINI



Photo portrait of Giacomo Puccini,
Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca Musica, Bologna

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), from Tuscany and more precisely from the area around Lucca, was a great composer of operas, admired also by Arnold Schönberg and Alfredo Casella, but above all by a loyal and passionate public in Italy and beyond. The story goes that he had a clear perception of his musical talent when he listened to Verdi's *Aida* in 1876. His best loved operas, *Madama Butterfly*, *La fanciulla del West* – the first Italian western –, *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Turandot*, filled the theatres and still do so. From 1899 Puccini was a member of Bologna's Accademia Filarmonica, the same as – for example – Niccolò Paganini, Franz Liszt, Giuseppe Verdi, Richard Wagner and Pietro Mascagni or – among *belcanto* virtuosi – Isabella Colbran, Giuditta Pasta and Maria Malibran. Even though his reputation was immense, the Maestro always preferred to withdraw to Versilia, at Torre del Lago where he had moved in 1891: it was a coastal area of Mediterranean scrub sprawling down to the seaside, full of deer, wild boars, hares, rabbits, pheasants, woodcocks, blackbirds, finches and sparrows; on the lakeside, he could find shovellers, coots, widgeons and little grebes. In such a beautiful corner of the world, Puccini could go hunting and receive friends and colleagues for meetings that could also be culinary. Thus, a wild boar could end up as in the recipe for

Wild boar stew in red wine

Serves 4-5

Ingredients:

500-600 wild boar meat
1 litre Tuscan red wine to marinate
and 1 glass for cooking
1 glass good quality red wine vinegar
Basil leaves, sage, peppermint, cinnamon
Coriander, clove or juniper berries
Garlic, salt, pepper and rosemary
1 small tomato or 1 tsp. tomato paste dissolved
in water
Extra-virgin olive oil

Preparation:

Marinate the meat for 24 hours in red wine, vinegar, herbs and spices. Cut the meat into medium sized pieces and dust with flour. In an earthenware pot toss garlic, salt, pepper and rosemary in sizzling oil. Brown the meat and add the tomato and one glass of red wine. Stew on a low heat for 2-3 hours, adding more wine if it dries too much. Thicken the gravy and serve hot with croutons or grilled polenta.



Wild boar (Photo: Wikimedia)



*Dining with
the great performers*





Kneading (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

Luciano Pavarotti was born in Modena and he firmly sits in the Olympus of Italian lyrical singers who set on fire national and international audiences in the 20th century, together with Enrico Caruso, Beniamino Gigli, Tito Schipa, Franco Corelli, Mario Del Monaco, Giuseppe Di Stefano and Carlo Bergonzi. His extraordinary ability with media and business allowed him to bring lyrical music to audiences that had either ignored or disregarded it, to create events such as *Pavarotti & Friends* or the performances of *The Three Tenors*, with Plácido Domingo and José Carreras.

Myth and legend have it that little Luciano, towards the end of the 1930s – he was born in 1935 – performed standing on his father’s worktop: his father was the Carabinieri’s baker. Such a circumstance entitles him to a place among the great musicians who had a culinary background, like Giuseppe Verdi, the innkeepers’ son, and Pietro Mascagni, born in the flat above his parents’ bakery. Pavarotti’s father, an amateur singer, introduced his son to Modena’s “Corale Gioachino Rossini”. Luciano never attended a Conservatorium but became instead a primary school teacher, devoting himself to a career in lyrical music at a later time.

True to his larger than life character, he took up the immediately recognizable aspect of gentle giant – *Big Luciano* in his adoring English-speaking world – that made him better known as a *gourmand* than as *gourmet* which is true only to a point. If he is associated with substantial quantities of *tagliatelle*, *passatelli*, *tortellini*, *zamponi* and “*terdura*”,¹¹⁴ his personal history reveals a gourmet open to the novelties of contemporary cookery – albeit not necessarily light – and even to Chinese dishes.

Luciano Pavarotti and Nicoletta Mantovani’s wedding lunch took place inside Modena’s Teatro Comunale on 13th December 2003, with many of his personal friends attending, such as Bono, Zuccherò Fornaciari and Luciano Ligabue. The chef has made the menu available on the Internet, complete with the handwritten thank-you note from Big Luciano.¹¹⁵ Here it is.

¹¹⁴ “*Terdura*”, literally “*intriditura*” (mix) in Italian, is a calorie laden practice that consists of adding a mix of eggs and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese to soups and risotto.

¹¹⁵ Michele Cocchi, the chef and caterer, can be followed at the URL: www.ideaincucina.com/, (April 2013).

Wedding Menu

Crema di patate con porri croccanti
Cream of potato soup with crisp leeks

Pane al burro
Butter-rich bread

*Piccoli cannelloni di ricotta e mascarpone
con mandorle e pancetta*
Miniature ricotta and mascarpone cannelloni
with almonds and bacon

Pane al sale
Salted bread

*Bocconcini di vitello con carciofi
su tortino di verdure*
Veal titbits with artichokes
on a vegetable quiche

Pane alle olive
Olive bread

*Zuppetta di frutta e verdure
con salsa di arancia e gelato*
Fruit and vegetable bisque
with orange sauce and ice-cream

Torta nuziale e buffet di dolci
Wedding cake and selection of sweets

Appropriately, Italian wines were served. It is not a huge meal, but a well-balanced one referring to the local tradition – potatoes, ricotta, bacon – with a nod to Italian Nouvelle Cuisine – the fruit and vegetable bisque – and taking note of the availability of seasonal produce – artichokes and leeks; it reflects the personality of the artist and host. The attention paid to bread is rather interesting as it brings us back to Pavarotti's personal history and to that of his home town: let's remember the bread made in Pavullo, or rather one should say in Verica. Made of flour,

water, oil, salt and requiring three separate risings, it is nowadays sold throughout the region. To adapt it to Pavarotti's menu, the following is our recipe for

Butter-rich Bread

Ingredients:

600 g bread dough, leavened
200 g butter
15 g fresh yeast or the equivalent dried yeast
2 tsp. salt
25 g plain flour

Preparation:

Crumble the yeast and knead with the flour, add butter in three separate stages, kneading the dough over again each time the butter is added. Add the leavened dough and salt and give it an oblong shape. Cover with a cloth and let it rest for 30 minutes. Cut into chunks the size of an egg; roll with a pin and shape as desired; let the buns rise for 20 more minutes. Bake at 180°C for approximately 20 minutes.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ In Emilia-Romagna as elsewhere in Italy, the reference book for making bread at home is: MARGHERITA SIMILI, VALERIA SIMILI, *Pane e roba dolce. Un classico della tradizione italiana*, Milano, Vallardi, 2007.

Bread (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)





Onions (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

Nevertheless “bread” in Modena, on its own or with the appropriate accompaniments, is the *Gnocco fritto* (fried pancake). The definite article before the name will be “il” in Emilia-Romagna as opposed to standard Italian “lo” in the rest of the world. The usual legend – apparently well grounded – has it that the Maestro was particularly keen on this humble snack, arguably good for any time of the day (and night). As customary, the versions vary in time and place, the staple being flour, water and fresh yeast. Disagreements begin with the lard: should it be used for the dough as shortening or only used for deep-frying? Should it be kept for the dough but seed oil used for deep-frying? Should olive oil be used for the dough, but lard

for frying, and so on...¹¹⁷ This is just one of the recipes of

“Gnocco fritto” (fried pancakes)

Ingredients:

1 kilo flour (for making bread)
30 g fresh yeast
2 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil or 1 tbs. fat
Milk, if necessary
1 tsp. sugar or malt
Salt
Lard for frying or frying oil

Preparation:

Dissolve the yeast in 100 ml lukewarm water with sugar or malt. Knead the flour with the yeast, oil, a bit of milk and water. Place in a large bowl, cover with a cloth and leave to rise in a warm place. Roll out with a pin to obtain a sheet about 1.5-2 mm thick. Cut into diamond shapes, each measuring 8x10 cm approximately, with *spronella* (dented cutter). The frying fat/oil should be sizzling: fry the pancakes one or two at a time, turn with a slotted spoon until they are golden and swelling in the middle: the bubbles will eventually facilitate the filling with cheese or salami. *Gnocco* has a life of its own, though, and it is excellent even without any accompaniment.

¹¹⁷ In Modena there is even a guild to supervise the making and diffusion of the preparation: <http://gnoccodoro.blogspot.it/>, (April 2013).



Gnocco assumes new identities in its itinerary: in Parma it is called “torta fritta”, in Modena and Reggio it is gnocco, in Bologna “crescentina”, in Romagna “piè fritta”. Pellegrino Artusi and the singer-songwriter Francesco Guccini have something to say. In his introduction to recipe n° 194 “Crescente”, Artusi wrote:

Che linguaggio strano si parla nella dotta Bologna! [...] Quando sentii la prima volta nominare la crescente, credei si parlasse della luna; si trattava invece della schiacciata, o focaccia, o pasta fritta comune che tutti conoscono e tutti sanno fare, con la sola differenza che i Bolognesi, per renderla più tenera e digeribile, nell'intridere la farina coll'acqua diaccia e il sale, aggiungono un poco di lardo. Pare che la stiacciata gonfi meglio se la gettate in padella coll'unto a bollore, fuori del fuoco.¹¹⁸

The distinguished scholar seems to get mixed up. There is a confusion between “crescente” or *carsànt* in dialect, that is a very rich bread with oil or fat, tiny bits of lard or ham leftovers or pork rinds, about 3-4 cm thick, which is made by bakers and strictly in the oven, and “crescentina” or *carsintéina*, generally home-made, similar to Modena gnocco and deep-fried in a big pan. But

118 P. ARTUSI, *La scienza in cucina*, cit., p.154 : “What a strange language is spoken in learned Bologna!...When I heard *crescente* (rising) for the first time, I thought of the moon; instead, it had to do with schiacciata, or focaccia, or simple pasta fritta (thick pancakes) that everybody knows and anybody can do, with the difference that in Bologna, in order to make it softer and more digestible, when flour is mixed with very cold water and salt, a bit of lard is added. Apparently, stiacciata swells better if it is fried in a sizzling greased pan away from the heat”.

allowances should be made for Artusi, born in Romagna and having refined his language in Florence, “washing garments [i.e. language] in the river Arno” as Alessandro Manzoni used to say of himself. Francesco Guccini sounds more informed, from a philological point of view, when he wrote the following words for the website of “Confraternita del gnocco d’oro”:¹¹⁹

The gnocco fritto is from Modena. In Pavana it is called pasta fritta, in Bologna crescentina. The basic ingredients are more or less the same: flour ground at a water-mill like that of my paternal grandparents, water and salt. Then, as it is customary in traditional recipes, the “rezdora” [or “zdàura”, from “reggitrice”, the woman who ran the homestead life, with an absolute power over the kitchen, vegetable garden and grocery], can also indulge in lard and milk. It is the expression of cooking as made by the poor and the peasants that has become something we eat as nutritious and savoury.¹²⁰

119 <http://gnoccodoro.blogspot.it/>, (April 2013).

120 “Il gnocco fritto è modenese. A Pavana si chiama pasta fritta, a Bologna crescentina. Gli ingredienti base sono pressoché identici: farina del molino ad acqua come quello dei miei nonni paterni, acqua e sale. Poi, come sempre avviene in quasi tutte le ricette “storiche”, la rezdora si può sbizzarrire anche con lo strutto e con il latte. È espressione della cucina povera, contadina che è diventato un mangiare di nutrizione e di soddisfazione.” Francesco Guccini talked again of *crescentine* in an interview published at <http://www.francescoguccini.net/news/623>. (April 2013).

Speaking of traditional cookery, the following is a recipe that is normally ascribed to Romagna but that is also present in Modena:

“Passatelli” soup

Ingredients:

150 g Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
180 g breadcrumbs
3 eggs
25 g oxtail marrow or butter
Nutmeg
2 litres meat stock

Preparation:

Carefully knead cheese, breadcrumbs, eggs and marrow (that will make the passatelli tender) or softened butter. Season with the nutmeg. The dough should be thick and supple. Warm the stock. To make passatelli the dough must be forced through a specific tool called “ferro” (iron), a sort of cup-and-plunger-like equipment with holes, or a potato-masher. This will make 6-8 cm long tubes, that must be immediately plunged in the hot stock: when they come to the surface then they are ready to eat. Serve in a tureen with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano aside.



Passatelli (Photo: Fabrizio Dell'Aquila)

The same menu could contemplate

Fresh “Gramigna” pasta with sausage

Serves 4-5

Ingredients:

350 g *Gramigna* fresh egg pasta

350 g fresh sausage

1 glass white wine

1 tbs. tomato paste, dissolved in water

A bit of oil

Butter

Salt and pepper

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Preparation:

In an earthenware pot, gently fry the peeled sausage in butter or oil, breaking the meat with a fork. When it browns, pour the white wine, let evaporate and add the tomato. Season if necessary. Cook the *gramigna* in water, *al dente*, and drain. You can either coat with sauce and grated Parmigiano-Reggiano in the earthenware pot on a low heat, or pour the sauce on top of the *gramigna* in a serving dish and sprinkle with the grated cheese. For an earthier taste, omit the wine and tomato. *Gramigna* pasta can be home-made, by squeezing a dough – made with flour and egg – through a hand-cranked pasta press.

MARIA CALLAS



Maria Callas

Maria Anna Sophie Cecilia Kalogeropoulos was born in Long Island, near New York, on 2nd December 1923. Her parents had just left Greece for the United States and the seaside resort of Long Island was a natural port of call for Greek immigrants to that area of North America. The town is still home to a fairly vast Greek community that strives to maintain the culture and traditions of their home country, including culinary tastes. In 1937, “Callas” – her

new self-styled surname – went back to Athens to complete her artistic training and, in 1947 in the capital city, she was the first to perform *Tosca* in Greek. On 2nd August she was at the Arena in Verona with Ponchielli’s *La Gioconda*, and on 7th December she opened the season at Milan’s La Scala with *Vespri Siciliani*: it was a huge success and, in the years to follow, that theatre witnessed her best artistic achievements. ‘La Divina’, as she was referred to by then, arrived in Emilia-Romagna in the early 1950s: on 24th November 1950 she performed at Teatro Duse in Bologna singing *Norma* and then in Parma at Teatro Regio with *La Traviata*. *Norma* and *Violetta* were Callas’s best-loved characters, who provided faultless performances both on stage and in recitals. As an aside to her artistic career, Maria Callas developed a keen interest in cookery, particularly after her marriage to Giovanni Battista Meneghini,¹²¹ and she collected the recipes that international chefs gave her, plus those copied from books and magazines or heard from her Veronese in-laws.¹²² It is not by chance that the composers that she loved best

¹²¹ Giovanni Battista Meneghini (1896-1981) was an entrepreneur, impresario and the soprano’s agent. He married her in 1949.

¹²² Callas’s recipe book was published in 2006: see BARBARA CARBONE, *La Divina in cucina. Il ricettario segreto di Maria Callas*, Milano, Trenta editore, 2006.

– Verdi, Puccini, Bellini – always nurtured their culinary tastes.

Maria Callas, citizen of the world, New Yorker, Italian, Parisian, always was a Greek. So much did she yearn for her homeland and sea that she arranged for her ashes to be dispersed on her death in the Aegean Sea. The Greek diaspora has always tried to rally around active and close-knit communities, however well integrated in their new countries, often blessed

by the Greek-Orthodox Church. To this end, cookery is an important tool, be it in the home kitchen or in restaurants, with the support of the import and trade of typical Greek products. In Emilia-Romagna, Greek cuisine is well-known and appreciated for its own sake and also for its similarities with the Italian one. Both traditions, particularly in the countryside, share products such as pasta, tomatoes, vegetables, poultry, flour and eggs. Among the favourite



Giancarlo Fre, *Greek Market*, watercolour

Pasta for Pasitsio and Romagna tea towel (Photo Margherita Spinazzola)



dishes that they have in common, at least two – but more exist – have names that clearly refer to Italian: *Pastisio* and *Kunéli stifádo*. i.e. the Italian “*Pasticcio di maccheroni*” (Pasta pie) and “*Stufato di coniglio*” (Rabbit stew) respectively.

“*Pastisio*” (Pasta Pie)

Serves 6 (the minimum number sitting at a Greek table)

Ingredients:

500 g minced beef or veal
 250 g pasta
 (*mezze candele, ziti, mezze penne*)
 100 g *kephalotyri* or Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
 1 big onion
 1 glass extra-virgin olive oil
 Salt and pepper
 1 tbs. chopped parsley
 Oregano
 2 bay leaves
 1 carrot
 2 tbs. tomato paste
 1 big ripe tomato
 2 eggs
 For the béchamel:
 2 eggs, 80 g butter, 500 ml milk, nutmeg, salt and pepper, 150 g grated cheese

The next two recipes come from Corfu, an island geographically and sentimentally close to our country, but are common throughout Greece and among Greek expats:¹²³

Preparation:

Brown the meat in a heavy saucepan, without adding any fat. Add the oil, chopped onion, grated carrot, parsley, oregano, bay leaves, salt, pepper and about 200 ml water. Simmer for 20 minutes, add the tomato and paste and continue cooking for about 10 minutes. Cook the pasta *al dente*, drain, grease an oven-proof dish and put in the pasta. Beat the eggs, pour on top of the pasta and sprinkle with cheese. Pour now half of the meat sauce, mix well and press towards the bottom of the dish. Pour the remaining sauce to form a layer. Prepare the béchamel, until you get a smooth and creamy sauce; pour it on top of the meat sauce. Season and sprinkle with cheese and with a little water to prevent over-browning. Bake in a moderate oven for 40 minutes approximately. Serve warm but not hot.

¹²³ An instructive and pleasurable cookery book, but also one of socio-historical analysis of Corfu is JAMES CHATTO, W.L. MARTIN, *A kitchen in Corfu*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993.

“Stifado” (Rabbit stew)

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 1 big rabbit, home bred or wild
- 1 ½ kilo baby shallots
- 1 glass extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ glass good quality wine vinegar
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 ripe tomatoes
- Salt and pepper

Preparation:

Cut the rabbit into chunks and arrange in a saucepan with half the quantity of oil, cover with water, put a lid on and simmer on a low heat for about an hour. Peel the baby shallots and brown them in the remaining oil in an oven-proof dish.

Lift the meat and place it on the onions, add the bay leaves, chopped tomatoes and season. Pour the cooking juice and as much water as needed to cover the meat. Bake, uncovered, for about 1 hour, until water has evaporated: stifado should be nearly dry. Sprinkle with vinegar, put the lid on and shake well to mix. Leave to rest for at least 10 minutes and serve. The next day, warmed stifado will still be excellent. Rabbit has always been an important substitute for or supplement of animal proteins, specially in the Greek isles, but also on the mainland. The same cooking procedure is used also for veal or lamb stew.



FIVE RECIPES FOR FIVE LADIES

So far we have talked of musicians, composers, conductors and great performers. With the exception of Maria Callas, they are all men. Some ladies were mentioned here and there, some from the world of music but most linked to such and such musician or composer. It is high time to spare some pages and recipes just for them. Therefore, the following recipes are respectively inspired by Isabella Colbran and Olympe Pélissier, first and second wives of Gioachino Rossini; Maria Malibran, mezzo-soprano and great performer of Rossini and Bellini; Giuseppina Strepponi, well-known soprano and Verdi's tolerant second wife; and Anna Lolli, singer and muse of Pietro Mascagni.

“Isabella”¹²⁴ rice pudding

Ingredients:

250 g rice
120 g sugar
50 g candied peel, diced
50 g peeled almonds, chopped
3 eggs, beaten
½ litre milk

¹²⁴ Isabella Colbran, born in Madrid (1785-1845), contralto and soprano, Rossini performer, member of Bologna's Accademia Filarmonica. She married Rossini in Castenaso, near Bologna.

50 g butter
Grated orange rind
Breadcrumbs
Alchermes liqueur

Preparation:

Bring the milk to the boil with rice, sugar and some orange rind and simmer until it is no longer liquid. Let it cool and add the candied peel, almonds and more orange rind, stirring. Pour the mixture into a rectangular oven-proof dish, greased and coated with breadcrumbs. Bake at 200°C for at least 30 minutes, having placed – on the bottom of the oven – also a small pan full of water to retain the moisture of the preparation. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with Alchermes liqueur. When the pudding is cold, cut it diagonally to form small lozenges – in Bologna they are called *mandlèine* (almonds) – planting each with a toothpick for serving. Instead of Alchermes liqueur, Maraschino (Marasca cherry liqueur) can be used, but it is not the same.

The pudding is also called “degli addobbi”, the celebrations that take place in Bologna parish churches every ten years, because it was traditionally offered to guests. On those occasions, all the windows and balconies of the

buildings in the parish were decorated with red tapestries and hangings.

“Olympia”¹²⁵ scallops

Noix de Saint-Jacques aux truffes noires

Ingredients:

40 g black truffles, brushed
18 scallops and 6 shells
700 g leek
60 g butter
0.2 litre cream (unsweetened)
Salt and pepper

Preparation:

In a saucepan sauté the washed and chopped leeks – the white bits only – for a few minutes. Add the cream, season and simmer for 4 minutes. Add a few slivers of truffles. Reserve for later. In another pan gently fry the scallops in butter until they are golden, 1 minute each side. Place the leeks into the shells, arrange the scallops on top and finish with the sliced truffles. Adjust salt and pepper if necessary and serve.

¹²⁵ Olympe Pélissier, born in Paris (1799-1878). Muse of Gioachino Rossini, whom she married in 1842. She lived first in Rossini’s town mansion at Strada Maggiore in Bologna, then left with him for Paris.

“Maria”¹²⁶ poached eggs (œufs pochés)

Ingredients:

8 poached eggs
75 g finest green peas
100 g green beans
1 bunch of asparagus tips
40 g butter
Chervil
For the sauce:
Egg yolks
Tarragon
Dry white wine
White wine vinegar
White pepper
Butter
Salt

Preparation:

Dice the green beans and asparagus, 1 cm approximately, and boil. Boil the green peas. Drain the vegetables and sauté in butter. Place them in individual ramekins and slide the poached eggs on top. Coat with the sauce. Sprinkle with chopped chervil and serve.

¹²⁶ Maria Malibran, born in Paris (1808-1836) and christened Maria Felicita Anna García. Mezzo- and bravura soprano, composer and painter. She was a great Rossini and Bellini performer, a pupil of Father Mattei and member of Bologna Accademia Filarmonica. The original recipe of *œufs pochés* dedicated to the singer by Paul-Henry Pellaprat can be found in the chef’s *L’arte della cucina moderna*, cit., p. 355.



G. Cenestrelli, *Ritratto di Maria Malibran*,
Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca Musica, Bologna

*“Giuseppina”*¹²⁷
maccheroncini gratin

Serves 4

Ingredients:

400 g small maccheroni
150 gr butter
100 g Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
3 tbs. flour
0.75 litre milk
Breadcrumbs
Nutmeg
1 onion, finely chopped

100 g butter
120 g cultivated mushrooms (champignons)
120 g asparagus tips
120 g Parma ham

Preparation:

Prepare a béchamel, not too thick: melt 50 g butter in a saucepan, slowly adding the flour, always stirring with a wooden spoon. Cook on a very low heat for a couple of minutes and, always stirring, slowly add the warm milk, salt and nutmeg. Keep stirring until the sauce thickens and looks smooth, velvety and without lumps.

Finely chop the onion. Slice the mushrooms. Toss the asparagus in boiling salted water and leave to cool. Finely chop the ham. Quickly stir-fry in a saucepan with a small quantity of butter. Cook the pasta *al dente* in hot boiling water, lightly salted, drain, place in a bowl and add 50 g butter, most of the béchamel sauce and two spoonfuls Parmigiano-Reggiano. Add the vegetables and stir well. Grease an oven-proof dish with 20 g butter, coat with breadcrumbs and pour the pasta. Finish with a layer of béchamel and grated cheese. Bake in a very hot oven. Remove and serve when the top is crispy and golden.

¹²⁷ Giuseppina (Clelia Maria Josepha) Strepponi, born in Lodi (1815-1897). Soprano and Verdi performer. She married Giuseppe Verdi in 1859.

“Annuccia”¹²⁸ green noodles

Serves 4-5

Ingredients:

500 g flour
 4 eggs
 300 g boiled spinach, squeezed and chopped with a crescent-shaped chopping knife
 600 g white meat (chicken, guinea fowl, rabbit), minced or very finely chopped with a sharp knife
 Chopped celery, carrot and onion
 250 g fresh fava (broad beans)
 1 glass white wine (dry Albana)
 Butter and oil
 Salt and pepper
 Parmigiano-Reggiano or Romagna Pecorino cheese

Preparation:

Roll out a sheet of pasta made with flour, eggs and spinach. Roll it into a tube and cut narrow noodles with *Curtlèina*, the square tip carving knife. In an earthenware pot brown the vegetables in oil and butter or just oil. Add the minced meat and stir well. Brown, stirring with a wooden spoon. Season. Pour the white wine and simmer on a very low heat for 2-3 hours, adding warm water or milk if the sauce gets too dry.

Boil the noodles, drain and coat them with the sauce, the fresh fava and the grated cheese. If you wish to add tomato paste dissolved in water or tomato sauce as you cook the meat sauce, you will get the “red” version of the dish.

¹²⁸ Anna Lolli, born in Bagnara di Romagna (1888-1973), choir-singer and muse of Mascagni.



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L'Emilia-Romagna
celebra i 200 anni
dalla nascita
di Giuseppe Verdi



VALUES AND IDEAS
TO FEED
THE EARTH
Emilia-Romagna
at Expo Milano 2015



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