



An Italian *nonna* at work in the kitchen

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SPECIAL REPORT: ITALIAN FAMILY RECIPES

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Dishes Handed Down, With Love, for Generations

In Italy, food is practically synonymous with family. So many Italians' earliest memories of eating or cooking are inextricably linked to a mother or a grandmother. We asked our Italian friends to share the recipes that have been passed down in their families.

Si cucina sempre pensando a qualcuno, altrimenti stai solo preparando da mangiare is an Italian saying meaning, "you always cook thinking of someone, otherwise you're just preparing food." Collecting these recipes was like diving into people's memories. This collection is a culinary field trip spotted with anecdotes about little hands robbing freshly fried *olive ascolane* from the pan

and one family's infamous story of lambs who kept leaving for *Milano*.



In Italy, probably thanks to grandmas, there is a common unit of measure in recipes that is known as QB or "Quanto Basta." This means "however much is enough." In true Nonna-style, many recipes like the ones we use in this issue have QB as the quantity of flour or oil or salt.

This might mean that your first attempt at making *polenta* comes out lumpy and your second attempt comes out too watery, but persistence will lead you to that perfect golden formula. Trust us when we say you won't mind repeating these beloved recipes.



Massimo and Jasmine

A Love Story & Pasta Recipe

Once upon a time, a Chinese-Canadian girl met a tall, dark, and handsome Italian boy at a bar in a classic meet-cute worthy of a 90's sitcom. Fast-forward thousands of Aeroplan miles, bottles of wine, minutes on Skype and that girl now calls *Bergamo* her adopted home. That girl is me.

The first trip I ever made to Italy was to Bergamo, where I met and stayed with my then-boyfriend's parents without speaking a word of Italian. Naturally they didn't speak English and so we communicated through the next best thing: food.

To welcome me to Italy and into their home, my father-in-law made the classic pasta dish of Bergamo: *Casoncelli alla Bergamasca*, a stuffed pasta shaped like a candy and served with a wonderfully calorific sage, bacon, and butter sauce and to this day, to me it tastes like love on a plate.

It's the perfect dish for the northerly city of Bergamo, which used to have quite cold winters and is rather infamous in Italy for being home to some of the hardest workers. The people from Bergamo, known as Bergamaschi, are renowned bricklayers and this pasta dish would be served as a hearty and much-needed meal after a long workday, or

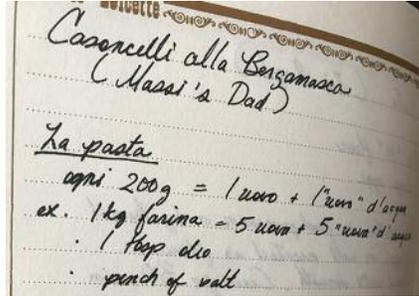
continued on page 2

There are more than 600 shapes of pasta.

Jasmine *continued from page 1*

in my case, to welcome a future daughter-in-law.

My father-in-law's recipe is one that was passed down through his mother. When things started to get more serious and it was looking like I would amount to more than a study abroad fling, the recipe was passed down to me as well.



We were standing in a tiny kitchen in Edmonton, Canada as my visiting father-in-law patiently explained the process to me and I wrote everything down frantically on a scrap piece of paper. My recipe was a hybrid of Italian and English, with quick sketches of what the pasta shape should look like in the margins. That first batch we made together would last us that entire winter, the casarelli that we froze brought back memories of Bergamo for my homesick husband while they had me dreaming of a future life in Italy.

When we finally decided to take a chance and move from Canada to Italy, that scrap of paper with this recipe came with us across the Atlantic and was eventually transcribed into my official *ricettiera* (recipe book). Like so many Italian recipes, it is one that takes a lifetime to perfect yet every time we sit down to eat them, they remind me of how far we've come in so many more ways than one.

—Jasmine Mah

Jasmine is a Canadian blogger living in Bergamo who is releasing her first book entitled "Wander(lust)" in August this year.

Recipe *Casarelli alla Bergamasca*

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Giovanni Innocenti*

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
Fresh pasta: 4 cups of flour 5 eggs 5 full "uova" d'acqua (what this means is that you take one of the cracked eggs and fill it with water and add that amount to the dough, repeat this five times if you use 5 eggs) 1 tbsp of olive oil pinch of salt	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mix all of the ingredients for the pasta using your hands until it becomes a smooth dough. Gather into a ball and cover with a cloth.2. Mix all filling ingredients together by hand. Add broth until it starts to stick together. Add pepper and nutmeg. You should be able to make little balls and have the filling keep the form.3. Pass a piece of pasta through a pasta machine (KitchenAid or manual) at the lowest setting (should be number 1) until smooth (fold in half and always pass through with open sides first). Pass through setting 5 once. Use a glass to stamp out circles.4. Roll a tiny ball of filling and put it in the middle of each circle. Fold the circle in half, sealing edges well (you may need to brush a bit of broth on the edges to do so). Fold in half again and press your index finger on the filling which will make an indentation and give you the "candy" shape. Add pasta to boiling, salted water and when they float to the top they are ready.
Filling: 1 lb mortadella, grated 1/4 cup of mix of Parmigiano Reggiano and Pecorino 1/4 cup grated old bread Beef broth, QB (you can use broth cubes to make it or follow a recipe to make a beef broth from scratch) Pepper, QB Nutmeg, QB	

Recipe *Butter Sage Sauce*

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Giovanni Innocenti*

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
Pancetta, QB Butter, QB Sage, QB Parmigiano Reggiano, freshly grated	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cut cubes of pancetta, as much as you like and fry with butter. Again, there are no quantities here because it really depends on how much "sauce" you like and how much pasta you are making.2. Add a few leaves of sage and cook everything together on low heat until the sage and the pancetta are both near-crispy.3. When the pasta is ready, add to the pan with the butter sauce, mix, and serve with freshly-grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

QB means *quanto basta*

Lia Andreina's Stuffed Zucchini

This recipe is such a family favorite that over the last 50 years, my aunt's fingers have morphed into the perfect shape to stuff the small Roman zucchini. Her index fingers are slightly twisted and curved and make for the perfect tools.

As a kid, I ate these at many summer lunches at my grandparents' apartment. Now as an adult, my aunt *Andreina* convinces me to make the trek to her apartment (which used to belong to my grandparents) across the city in the *Quartiere Trieste* in the summer heat with the promise of stuffed *zucchini*. She always makes extra so I can take some home and

turns any leftover filling into tiny meatballs as a special treat.

The mix of sausage and beef that goes inside of the hollowed-out zucchini was my grandma's idea, and my aunt, her only daughter, continues the tradition today. My aunt uses the same bowls, the same utensils, the same oven to make them as my *nonna* did and they taste just like summer memories of my childhood.



Alessandro and Andreina

In Rome, summer is zucchini season. They are sold at markets with the flowers still attached to the ends.

Sometimes, she adds the flowers to the filling or uses them for other recipes. My aunt prefers the smallest of the zucchini since they cook for less time and do not dry out the filling. Roman zucchini are smaller and more delicate than the ones found in the United States, but the recipe can be doubled to fill the larger vegetables.

—Alessandro Fanelli

Alessandro Fanelli is a data analyst in Rome, but for a decade he played an active part in his family's pig farm on the Lazio-Abruzzo border, even appearing in an episode of Andrew Zimmern's Bizarre Foods.

Recipe

Zucchine Ripiene

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Lia Andreina*

INGREDIENTS

½ lb of ground beef
 ½ lb of ground sausage
 1 egg
 6 Roman Zucchini
 Salt, QB
 Olive oil, QB
 Mint, optional

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the zucchini into pieces about 3 inches in length. Hollow out the insides of the zucchini with a pointy knife or use an apple corer to clear them out. Save the insides.
2. In a bowl, mix the ground beef, ground sausage, the insides of the zucchini, the flowers if you have them, an egg and a little bit of salt, keeping in mind that the sausage is already salty
3. Using your hands, stuff the mixture into the zucchini and ensure it is compact and full but not overstuffed
4. If you have any extra filling, roll them into tiny meatballs and cook on the sides of the baking tray. I think my aunt makes more filling on purpose to ensure we have these bitesize bits too.
5. Line the zucchini in a baking tray with a little bit of olive oil on the bottom and drizzled over the top
6. Cook for about 30 minutes at 350 degrees or until the zucchini are tender. Test with a fork and if they are soft, it is time to take them out.
7. Sprinkle some chopped mint on top, if desired.
8. Eat the zucchini at room temperature or slightly warm.



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or add as much as necessary.

Nunzia's Family Lamb Dish From Puglia

I was raised in *Manduria* near *Taranto* in *Puglia* in a masseria built by my great-grandparents in 1881. My great-grandfather *Tommaso* was rich although not aristocratic, but nonetheless he asked to marry the daughter of a count, *Rosina*.

Rosina brought as a wedding gift to Tommaso some grape plants of the *Primitivo di Gioia* variety, and her father's cook, *Nunzia*. Today, *Primitivo* wine is one of the most important Italian wines and the Primitivo of Manduria is one of the most loved.

When Nunzia came to the family,

she brought recipes that characterize our family's cuisine to this day. She made delicately thin *orecchiette* and *pizzariieddi* pasta that seem to twirl by themselves around her *frizzulu*, a tool she used to shape the pasta, handled like a conductor's baton.

my family called this delicious dish of wrapped lamb meat and interiors. The term is actually from the town of *Altamura*, because in Puglia they call them *marretti* or *turcinieddi*.



Masseria



Anna in the garden



Anna with brothers and grandfather

I enjoyed eating lamb as a child but I also loved playing with the numerous baby lambs that were born in the spring. Every once in a while, I'd arrive at the farm and see that one of the lambs was missing.

I'd ask the shepherd and he'd tell me, "He went to Milan," in such a serious tone that I understood the trip was permanent and the lamb was not coming back. Back then in the 1950s, many Southern Italians made the trip to Milan and did not return for a long, long time, if ever, back to their Southern roots.

I believed this charade until one day when I came back to the farm and I saw a big lamb, freshly killed, its blood staining the white-washed walls of the farmhouse. They tried to tell me he was a lamb bought at the butcher and he was definitely not one of my lamb friends. Nonetheless, the gig was up and the magic of my Milano-bound lambs was broken.

For a while I refused to eat lamb, but my dad and my grandfather encouraged me to look at the lamb as meat, which gave nutrients to many families and kept them from starving. Many years later, I learned to make *gli gnummarieddi* for myself.

—Anna Schiavoni-Benzi



She made *lasagne* noodles in broth, *maccheroni con la coppola* (a favorite baked pasta dish), zucchini soup with egg and Parmigiano, and, last but not least, *gli 'gnummarieddi*. This is what

Recipe

Gli 'Gnummarieddi

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

Nunzia

FROM THE KITCHEN OF:

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
Interior meat of lamb such as kidney, heart, lungs and the fat netting which is like an internal lining that lines the internal organs	1. Chop up the interior meat into strips and prepare little logs with each log containing a piece of kidney, heart and lungs. Wrap the log in the netting so that each log resembles a sausage wrapped in casing.
Potatoes, the same quantity as the above meats	2. Once the logs are wrapped, add to a baking sheet and add potatoes cut to the same size and dimensions.
Herbs such as rosemary, sage, and if available, wild fennel and myrtle	3. Add the aromatic herbs, salt and at the end the olive oil. Don't add too much oil or it can get too greasy.
Olive oil, QB	4. Put in the oven at 350 degrees for 45 to 60 minutes until the potatoes are ready.
Salt, QB	5. Enjoy with Primitivo wine, of course!



Italians eat salad after the

Throw Together Minestra e Pizza

Nothing in this world tastes more like my nonna's kitchen than *Minestra e Pizza*, a staple dish of *Castelvetere sul Calore* in the mountains of *Irpinia* in *Campania*.

The dish is made of vegetables like wild greens or swiss chard or dandelion greens; whatever is available at the time of preparation. The greens are cooked in salted water with onions and any part of the pig available — even ears, feet, or fresh sausage called *cotenna*. The *pizza* is actually a polenta made of corn flour cooked in a cast iron skillet until it becomes a sort of savory pie, crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside.



Carmela, husband and grandchildren

The *Castelveteresi* were very resourceful with the ingredients they grew themselves during tough times. Even today, my grandma makes this dish in many different varieties, including anything she has found an abundance of in her garden or on sale at the supermarket. She has a reputation in the family for “taking risks” with recipes and filling in ingredients with whatever is available. One day she went out for a long walk around the neighborhood and returned home with two giant mushrooms she picked off of a neighbor's tree. “Are these safe to eat?” we all asked. “Let's see” she said.



Carmela and the mushrooms

When she was a little girl, her own grandmother used to give her fresh eggs to eat and instead of taking the eggs home and cooking them, she would go into the only candy shop in Castelvetere, barter the eggs and get some chocolates for a snack. This method of trading ingredients for food is

partially to blame for the fluidity of the recipes of Castelvetere.

When I was a child I remember thinking “oh no, minestra and pizza AGAIN!” when I would eat at my grandparents', but now it is one of my favorite dishes for when I'm feeling homesick or when I want to feel closer to them. I make it at home with less exotic pork products and often use sausage instead of the pigs' ears. Don't tell my grandma! She'd say the ears are the best part.

—Danielle Abbazia

Recipe

Minestra & Pizza

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: Carmela Del Vaglio

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
1/3 cup polenta per person	1. In a big pot, add water, a generous pinch of salt, an onion and the desired pieces of pork meat. After a while, add the greens directly into the pot and cook until the veggies are soft- about 15 minutes. Once everything is cooked, add the cannellini beans and bring them to temperature.
1.5-2 lbs of greens (can be swiss chard, chicory greens or dandelion greens, even mild broccoli rabe)	
1 can of cannellini beans	2. In a separate bowl, mix the polenta corn flour with hot water according to the instructions on the package until it is well mixed and smooth. (Instant polenta is much quicker, but in the old days, they used the corn flour that took about 40 minutes to make.)
Pork meat like sausages, short ribs or pieces of pork to be boiled, QB	
Salt, QB	3. Add the polenta to a cast iron skillet, lightly coated in olive oil, and spread it evenly. Cook until the bottom has a nice hard crust then using a plate, flip the polenta to cook the other side. When the polenta firms up a bit, it is done. The inside will be softer than the outside crust, but should hold its form and not be runny. (This polenta was previously cooked in the fireplace and can still be done today for an added smoky taste.)
Hot pepper flakes if desired	
	4. To serve, cut wedges of the “pizza” (the polenta) and add to a bowl with the vegetables and pork on top. Add hot pepper flakes if desired.



meal to help with digestion.

Traditional Tuscan Torta della Nonna

This traditional cake, which is filled with custard, is a Tuscan favorite known as *Torta della Nonna*. As with most Italian classics, everyone's *nonna* has their own secret recipe... but here's ours!

Thanks to the great popularity in restaurants, the origins of this dessert have been lost. According to some

records, the real origin of this dessert is to be attributed to the Aretino territory, while others opt for a more recent Florentine origin.

The history says that the cake was conceived and realized by *Guido Samorini*,



Maura Tambi

a Florentine chef and restaurateur. Some customers, tired of the few suggestions that the restaurant offered, asked him to surprise them the following week with a new recipe. Samorini then, offered this simple cake "which gave so much pleasure in taste and novelty."

However, there is a passage by historian and cookbook author *Pellegrino Artusi* suggesting that the grandmother's cake already existed many years before: "... I found the dessert with pine nuts and custard cream a tasty pie..."

One of the variations of this dessert is *Torta del Nonno*, with the addition of cocoa and the use of almonds instead of pine nuts. Other variants include cherries inside the cream.

As far as we are concerned, my mother Maura's Torta della Nonna is the best in all of Tuscany. This recipe has been handed down for the generations, from mother to daughter, and its secret is the use of fresh and high-quality products such as eggs of *Valdarno* chickens, raised to organic standards and fed genuinely.

—Vittorio Cammori



Recipe

Torta della Nonna

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Maura Tambi*

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
Pastry: 2 ½ cups plain flour, plus extra to dust 1 ¼ cup unsalted butter, chilled and chopped 1 ¼ cup sugar 1 egg + 1 yolk 1 tbsp baking powder 1 tbsp cold water Raisins Vanilla extract Finely grated zest of lemon	1. Start by making the pastry: Mix together the flour and baking powder, then rub in the butter with your fingers. Next, stir in the sugar and zest, then mix in the vanilla and whole egg and yolk, water and bring the pastry together. Wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
Filling: 4 cups Half-and-Half 4 egg yolks 8 tbsp of sugar 2 tbsp flour 2 tbsp starch Vanilla extract Finely grated zest of lemon	2. Next, make the filling: Heat the milk and lemon zest until nearly boiling. Meanwhile, put the eggs, sugar, vanilla extract, corn starch and flour into a bowl. Whisk together to combine. Gradually whisk in the hot milk mixture, then scrape contents back into the empty pan. Return pan to the heat and cook, whisking constantly, until the mixture is thick. Take off heat, add raisins and leave to cool completely.
Topping: Pine nuts Icing sugar to taste	3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly flour a work surface and roll out two-thirds of the pastry and cut it according to baking tray. Whisk the filling to break it up, then spoon into the pastry base and spread to level. Trim the lining pastry (if necessary) so it comes about ¾ inch above the filling, then gently fold the pastry on to the filling. 4. Next, roll out the remaining pastry on a lightly floured surface and cut out a round. Lay on top of the filling and press edges lightly to seal. Sprinkle over the pine nuts and press them down gently.
	5. Bake until nicely golden (about 50 minutes). Leave to cool for 10 minutes. 6. To serve, dust the cake with icing sugar.



Spaghetti and meatballs is

A Mather Shows Her Love with Tortelli

Parma is a city full of bicycles with a luscious and loved green park dedicated to the Duchess *Maria Luigia*, the second wife of Napoleon, at its center. Huge cuts of ham and mammoth wheels of cheese decorate shop windows. If by chance your eyes are too distracted by the whizzing bicycles passing by, the meaty, cheesy, delicious perfumes from these storefronts will enchant your sense of smell.



Fernando and Enza

secret touch is to have a husband who is willing to be your sous chef in the kitchen.

My father *Fernando* expertly scoops out the tortelli at the perfect



moment before the pasta gets too soft and breaks but after the filling is nice and warm on the inside. He has the best job in the house because he “must” taste the tortelli during the cooking process to make sure they are ready to be taken out of the boiling water. My mom keeps a tally on how many he eats at the stove side and subtracts them from his plate when she serves him. All is fair in love and pasta.



—Sara Matteis

Everyone thinks of *Prosciutto di parma* and *Parmigiano Reggiano* when they think of Parma, but the culinary traditions of *Emilia-Romagna* are so much more than that. A staple in the households of the charming Emilia-Romagna city is *tortelli di erbetta*. They’re often customized with whatever greens the home cooks had on hand, but are always centered around a generous dusting of parmigiano and good butter.

My *mamma Enza* makes these tortelli for our birthdays in October, which are one day apart. She makes them when relatives come to visit. We ate them to celebrate my parents 40th wedding anniversary and at my wedding rehearsal dinner. Any occasion is the right time to make this pasta but my mom says the



Sara and Enza

Recipe

Tortelli di Erbetta

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Enza Caparale*

INGREDIENTS

Dough:
2 ¾ cups of flour
4 medium/large or 5 small eggs

Filling:
1 ¼ cup of ricotta
1 egg
1 cup of cooked chard, cooked in a pan with a pat of butter
1 ¼ cup of Parmigiano Reggiano (aged 36 months is best)
Sprinkle of nutmeg
Pinch of salt

Sauce:
A few pats of butter
Parmigiano Reggiano

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix the ingredients for the dough together and roll it out to a thin rectangle about 1.5 inches thick.
2. Mix the ingredients for the filling together. Using a teaspoon, measure out rounded spoonfuls and put them on the dough two inches apart along one side of the dough. Fold one side of the dough over the little mounds and close the dough into little pockets being sure to push all the air out of the pockets. With a pasta cutter (or a knife) cut around the tiny mounds making the square tortelli.
3. In a big pan, melt some butter for the sauce.
4. In a large pot, boil water, add salt and a drop of seed oil. Add the tortelli, not more than 15 at a time to prevent sticking. Test the borders of the tortelli to see if they are at your desired texture. When they are ready, dip a colander into the water and gently transfer the tortelli to a dry, clean dish cloth on a counter or large plate. Dry them slightly for a few seconds.
5. In a serving dish, add the melted butter and the tortelli. Mix gently.
6. Serve the tortelli with a generous dusting of Parmigiano on top.



not an authentic Italian dish.

Stuffed Olives from Ascoli

Q *live all'ascolana* (Ascoli-style stuffed olives) are the specialty of the town of *Ascoli Piceno* and the southern *Le Marche* region. They always present on the table during holidays and special occasions, as an appetizer or a second dish. They can be served by themselves or with other fried vegetables and meat, creating the *fritto misto all'ascolana*.



Norma Santa Stipa

Usually, in the *fritto misto* includes *cremini* (fried balls of custard cream), fried artichokes and/or zucchini, depending on the season, and for the most decadent mixes, even fried lamb chops.

But the king of the fried platter is and always will be the fried olives. The green olives of Ascoli, which are kept in a saltwater brine, are called *le olive ascolane in salamoia* and are a recognized DOP product in Italy today. They



have been shipped outside of Le Marche since as early as 1875!

I remember my grandmother getting up early to prepare them for the special events in my family, like Christmas, Easter or someone's birthday. The best part was when she would start to fry them, the smell would invade the house and the children would gather around her begging for a little sample. She knew she had to prepare more than needed for the meal because at least 20 or 30 olives would not make it to the table.



The most difficult part of this recipe is removing the pit by cutting into the olive in a spiral so as to not make the olive fall apart completely. It takes some practice and much patience, but it is not impossible to learn. *Nonni* (Italian grandmothers) make the best *olive ascolane* because they have had the most time to perfect the process of taking the pit out of the olive, I am sure of this! My mom, *Norma*, continues to make this recipe with my two boys today and I hope to do the same with my grandchildren.

The olives are one of the most famous street foods in all of Italy and I see them on food trucks and at street food festivals all the time.

—Silvia Fanesi

Recipe

Olive all 'Ascolana

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Norma Santa Stipa*

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
½ lb of veal	1. Place the green olives in a bowl filled with cold water while you prepare the stuffing. 2. Heat the olive oil in a pan, add all three types of meat and brown them, add the wine and cook the meat for about 20 minutes. Let the meat cool and then mince it in a food processor, transfer the meat in a bowl, season it with the Parmigiano, salt, nutmeg, add the eggs and mix everything until you have a smooth texture. Let it rest in the fridge for about 30 minutes. 3. Drain the olives and remove the meat of the olive from the pit in a spiral form. Refill the olives with some of the meat mixture recreating the shape of the olive, then bread them one by one using flour, beaten eggs and breadcrumbs. 4. Heat the sunflower oil in a deep frying pan, add 10-15 olives and fry them until golden, place them on a dish with paper towel. 5. Transfer on to a serving dish and enjoy.
½ lb of pork	
½ lb of chicken or turkey breast	
½ cup of grated Parmigiano Reggiano	
2 lbs of green olives	
2 or 3 eggs (depending on size)	
Pinch of salt	
Pinch of ground nutmeg	
2 tbsp olive oil	
½ a glass of white wine	
1 cup of flour	
1 cup of bread crumbs	
Sunflower oil for frying	



Walking while eating is con

Carnevale Cookies From Calabria

Norman castles, medieval aqueducts and Baroque churches around the town of *Arena* are like hidden surprises around every curve. My *nanna* (Calabrese way to say nonna) Maria was born in this tiny mountainous town in *Calabria*. *Arena* was a colony under Ancient Greece so there are thousands of years of history packed into every corner of the town.

Arena was full of people when Nanna was a little girl, but after World War II, the residents started migrating in hopes of finding work abroad or in Northern Italy. The *Arenesi* people are very proud of their roots and no matter where they are in the world, they continue their food traditions and even have yearly reunions with their *paesani* to reminisce about the old times and ensure

their traditions reach the new generation.

Arena today has half the inhabitants it had when my *nanna* was a little girl. Back then there were about 3,000 people in the town and everyone knew everyone and was willing to help each other through the hard times. Even this recipe carries with it the memories of the community cooking together.



Nonna Maria

cookies on their own. Someone would bring some eggs, someone would bring flour. Then they would make the cookies all together and divide up the cookies to enjoy with their families.

Carnevale street performers used to come to our houses and visit and perform for us in the streets and we would cheer and give them cookies if they put on a good show.

—Daniele Schinella



Turdilli

Nanna Maria makes these *turdilli* throughout the year and they are a staple in my family, but when she was a little girl in *Arena*, they made them only during *Carnevale*. All the neighbors would get together to make them in a big batch because no one family had enough ingredients to make the



Guest Editor:
Danielle Abbazia

Dream of Italy Associate Editor *Danielle Abbazia* is an American of Italian descent who lives in Rome. Her family hails from *Campania* and *Calabria*. She and *Dream of Italy* editor Kathy McCabe share an ancestral hometown, *Castelvetere sul Calore*.

Danielle compiled this issue of Italian family recipes in the weeks before she gave birth to her first child, *Michele*. *Danielle* grew up in Connecticut where she earned a BA in Italian Literature and Cultural Studies. She also holds a MA in Sustainable Cultural Heritage from the American University of Rome.

Recipe

Carnevale Cookies

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Nanna Maria*

INGREDIENTS

6 eggs
½ cup of flour
1 cup of sugar
1 shot of anisette

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix dough and roll into thick strips about ½ inch thick
2. Cut strips into pieces about 1 ½ inches long
3. Roll the pieces on a basket or a gnocchi board to make the line designs
4. Deep fry in vegetable oil until they are golden



sidered disrespectful in Italy.

Nanna Elena's Venetian Artichokes

My maternal grandmother *Elena*, was born in the 1920s in the countryside just outside Venice, in the town of *Mirano*. The town is famous for a church housing a beautiful painting by *Tiepolo*. Dating back to Roman times, Mirano is right smack in the middle of the famous Roman Grid. It used to be an outpost for soldiers, to protect the nearby town of *Mira*.



Monica



Elena

therefore the diet consisted almost exclusively of bread, polenta and milk, and everything was mainly cooked in wood stoves.

My grandmother came from a poor family of farmers and she married very young, just 17, as was usual all over the countryside of Italy in those days, and had already two children by the time she was 20.

enjoy cooking. Yet she had a few recipes that she mastered, like the one which I would like to present and that my own mother perfected and passed on to me.



Artichokes are very common in Italy and above in Venice we like to use purple ones from the island of *Sant'Erasmo*. The *carciofo violetto* (violet artichoke) is very tender, tasty and it has a very delicious light-bitter aftertaste.

My grandmother was born after the enormous devastation suffered by the region during World War I. The war caused economic collapse in the Veneto causing hunger and desperation in the countryside and prompting emigration to faraway lands in search of a better life.

In those days, mothers were cooking, sewing and washing clothes, so she spent all her life looking after her children and embroidering beautiful sheets, curtains, pillowcases, tablecloths and towels for the local nuns.

The right season to taste this tender, fleshy and elongated vegetable, is from the end of April, when the first small apical artichoke buds, called *castrature*, are ready to be picked off. Harvest continues until the end of June. In the past, in vegetable plots around the lagoon, the plants used to be fertilized with *scoasse*, which is garbage, or with shells and crab shells, which would help correct the soil's acidity.

I think because of those long hours spent with the needle and thread in her hands, my nonna did not particularly

Peasant life was mainly based on agriculture and cattle breeding,

Known as *articiochi* in the Venetian dialect, they were introduced to the city's cuisine by the Jewish community, and are generally eaten raw. It's interesting that the English word "artichoke" is so close to the Venetian dialect. Perhaps Venice's trade routes with so much of the world contributed to this overlap.

The recipe says to use artichoke hearts, but if you want to use whole artichokes make sure to take the hard leaves off first and to use only the hearts and the stems. You can also add cubed potatoes to make this dish richer.

—Monica Cesarato

Monica Cesarato is a Venetian food and travel blogger who also offers food tours and cooking classes. For more information, visit

www.cookinvenice.com

Recipe

Articiochi dea Nona

[THIS RECIPE SHALL BE KNOWN AS]

FROM THE KITCHEN OF: *Nanna Elena*

INGREDIENTS	DIRECTIONS
4 big artichoke hearts, cleaned	1. Place the olive oil in the pan and heat up.
1/2 cloves of garlic	2. Add the artichoke hearts and sprinkle all remaining ingredients on top of the artichokes.
Handful of chopped parsley	3. Cook over a low heat for about 20 minutes, a little more if the artichokes are still hard.
Salt and pepper	4. Serves four.
2 tbsp of fine breadcrumbs	
2 tbsp Parmigiano Reggiano	
Olive oil	
Water	
	This is a perfect side dish, but if you have any leftover, it turns into a fantastic sauce for your pasta.

Italy is the world's largest producer of artichokes.