



From the sea to the hills, from the plains to the mountains: The Campania region, a rich journey through our flavours

Vincenzo De Luca President of the Campania region

Text

Luciano Pignataro

Translation

Francesco Policastro

Graphic Design

Giuseppe Durante

Opera Srl (Salerno)

Photo

Michele Calocero

Antonio Caggiano

Giuseppe Durante

Archivio EPT Salerno

Printing

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Fish plate from the agro-picentino pestano area The Provincial Museum of Archaeology in Salerno 4th cent. BC.

The Campania area is possibly the Italian region that more than any other can boast a variety of world famous places: Capri, Amalfi, Sorrento, Ischia, Naples, Positano, Paestum and Pompeii are just a few to mention.

Yet within our invaluable heritage, there are so many other places that are just as extraordinary but less known, like the natural landscapes and the little villages of the Cilento and the Vallo di Diano, the inlands of the Sannio and Irpinia, the Phlegraean Fields and the Caserta area. We are talking about places that are not only incredibly beautiful, but preserve a great quantity of land and sea gastronomic products that make our agriculture and stockbreeding an extraordinary resource.

A wealth that today still sees our lively local communities engaged in agricultural, cultural and commercial success. A great number of our productions of excellence are protected by the European labels PDO and PGI; our wines, mostly from autochthonous varieties, many also have DOC and DOCG labels. Not forgetting that

the Mediterranean Diet conceived in the Cilento area and the 'Art of the Neapolitan Pizzaiolo' have been declared Unesco World Heritage. The Campania region combines absolute beauty and biodiversity, by emphasizing this cutting-edge sector, both in the agricultural techniques and in the protection of the traditional craftsmanship. This guide book has an innovative feature: it intends to present in a simple and clear manner a product and the community that represents it, through quick indications of the symbolic locations and the traditional recipes. A forty stage memorandum that goes along all five of the provinces, enhancing the respect for traditions but also practical experiences and modern farming, discovering well known and less known places. Here the qualities of the regional food and wine, act as a great driving force for new and alternative tourism opportunities, based not just on word of mouth but on precise indications and organized itineraries. So have a pleasant journey and bon appétit in Campania.

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Naples, the Art of the Neapolitan ‘pizzaiolo’, World Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the Mediterranean diet

The Art of the Neapolitan Pizzaiolo has been recognised by Unesco as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. A result that confirms Naples as the world capital of pizza and that clearly distinguishes it from all the other leavened products that are called the same way, but that actually are not. This is not the case of the Neapolitan one, that boasts over two centuries of officially proven history. This outcome is a consequence of the beginning of the new millennium, this pizza legacy, always considered as marginal, has now radically changed pace. There are two new great features that are affecting the transformation of this sector and of this job compared to the past. The first one is the unstoppable expansion outside Naples. Not just limited to the region, but all over Italy and abroad. And secondly, the figure of the pizzaiolo has changed. He is becoming more and more an entrepreneur or involved in managerial positions. The pizza has become a catalyst of investments and the Neapolitan one seems to be the most copied model, not just for the presence of Italian immigrants all over the world, but as a consequential effect of the propaganda done by two associations, the ‘Verace Pizza Napoletana’ and the ‘Pizzaioli Napoletani’, that have placed their little flags everywhere. There is a profound difference with the early emigration during the years right after the Second World War: the export model today, is certainly a more precise one, based especially on the quality of the ingredients. We are not talking about improvised pizzaioli that call Neapolitan an oven baked product that has nothing to do with anything similar to the original Naples version, but real and proper Neapolitan pizzerias, perfectly capable of rivaling with their more famous and notorious maestros in their homeland. To eat a pizza that melts in your mouth, topped with buffalo mozzarella, olive oil and San Marzano tomatoes in New York, in London, in Shanghai as well as Sydney or Tokyo, is now a perfect reality, that can be experienced by anyone. The most incredible aspect is maybe the anthropological one: the very queues that in Via dei Tribunali in Naples can be seen as a peculiar feature of the city, nowadays they can be observed in Milan just like in Paris, New York and London. It is exactly the widespread of the Neapolitan quality pizza worldwide, outside the city and surround-



ings of Naples, that has brought the achievement of the Unesco recognition. An incredible result, that has aroused the jealousy of the French, who have thought to candidate their traditional baguette! On 7th December 2017, the Inter-government Committee of the Unesco for the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity decrees to inscribe the Art of the Neapolitan Pizzaiolo in the prestigious world list, siding the Mediterranean diet whose term was coined, as many know, by Ancel Keys in Pioppi. So the two Unesco Italian food recognitions today, have roots in the Campania region. But what made the Art of the Neapolitan Pizzaiolo something so special to deserve the Unesco recognition? The mere fact that this award was assigned to a specific city product is mainly thanks to the competences acquired through centuries of hard working day-to-day experience. One cannot understand the Neapolitan pizza without considering the fact that since the 17th century, Naples has always undergone a demographic pressure. Despite the plague during the 18th century, the city was demographically second only after Paris as for size and number of inhabitants. This overcrowding condition created the beginning of an enormous urban reality, whereas the food problem was the first main daily issue that the majority of the population had to face. The history of the pizza began here, as a poor food, surely part of a sort of legacy of oven yeast based products taken from all over the Mediterranean area, nevertheless, it soon gained its own characteristics that made it different, starting exactly from the wood-burning oven, its unique oven-door opening was crafted in a half-moon shape, to quickly allow to reach high temperatures. Maybe looking at the following numbers, we can understand a substantial difference: the Neapolitan pizza is the only oven product that bakes approximately from 450°C to 480°C for more than a minute, all the other bakery products, like regular bread and flat bread, do not exceed 350°C, and so they need more baking time. The rapid, 'violent' baking, the high hydrating, allow the complete fusion of all of the ingredients: flour, tomato, oil (lard was originally used) and cheese or mozzarella. So, we can now affirm that the Neapolitan pizza is actually a child of the urban culture, all the other forms of pizza have been thought up thanks to the rural culture that produced them, either as an oven testing or as a way to recover all the working leftover pieces of bread. Pizza testing is easy: the Neapolitan one is not just simply bread, plus a dairy product, plus oil and plus mozzarella on it, but a unique blended taste. Instead, in other similar preparations, the elements are easily distinguishable, especially for the 'bread-like' aspect. That is why when Neapolitans taste a 'bread-sort' pizza they usually think: "It's good, but a Neapolitan pizza is a different matter". Therefore in the 18th century we have the figure of the pizzaiolo, who is rightly distinguished from a normal baker. It has been a long journey for the pizzaiolo, poverty and sacrifices along his way, he has withstood the collapse of the Bourbon reign, the monarchy, two World Wars, cholera and even earthquakes.

The pizza is a memory heritage of the whole community, either for those who live in Naples and for those who have emigrated for work, similar to



what nowadays champagne means for the French. Today, this job has acquired a complete new dignity, the new young generation dream to become pizzaioli, there are initiatives on the issue everywhere, the pizza doughs and ingredients are constantly examined and revised in an everyday open air city laboratory that involves thousands of people. So, in these roots, originally so poor and ancient, Naples yet again goes beyond modernity and is launched towards the future. A future where food must be environmentally-friendly and healthy for mankind.

So, what could be better than a pizza?



The province of Naples

Naples has been a great European capital, it has been the most populated city of the continent for a long time after Paris. A lifetime is not enough to visit the Palazzo Reale, Castel dell'Ovo, Castel Sant'Elmo, the hundreds of churches that are scattered around this highly devoted city. A lifetime is not enough to be completely familiar with the city's immense and lively historical centre where the narrow alleys still have the aroma of household cooking, or to immerge oneself in the depths of the mysterious underground city, to visit museums, the Reggia di Capodimonte, to go on a shopping binge in Chiaia, enjoy the no-traffic seafront promenade. And then admire the many palaces of one of the most powerful and exuberant aristocracies in Europe, of which there are plenty of visible traces in social custom. But Naples is also the administrative centre of one of the most visited and desired provinces: Capri, Sorrento, Pompeii, Ischia, Procida, Vesuvius and Herculaneum, are just a few of most renown and popular places in the world and

need no further introduction. But it is the whole province that has to be discovered, thanks to the countless towns and monuments; like the Phlegraean Fields, the cornerstone of the ancient Roman Campania Felix, with its harbour in Pozzuoli, the military fleet in Capo Miseno and the rich Patrician villas. There are magical places, like the Solfatara and the lake of Aveno, in which water, fire and land are blended together. Instead going towards south the graceful towns that surround the Mount Vesuvius resemble a beautiful great necklace, certainly must not be missed. Furthermore, there is the rich historical centre of Nola, the cities of the gulf that go from Portici with its Reggia all the way to Castellammare passing through Torre del Greco and Torre Annunziata. And lastly, Gragnano, Lettere and the Sorrento Peninsula that extends and ends at Punta Campanella. This a journey that goes straight to the soul and reveals the mysteries of history of this land, where today, an inestimable quality agriculture still manages to survive.

The Vesuvius apricot

It has certainly taken some time for the apricot to find its paramount expression on Mount Vesuvius. The fruit tree originally came from the north of China and from there it expanded to central Asia where Alexander the Great tasted it for the first time. The Romans brought it to Italy around 70 BC, but thanks to the Arabs it became widespread in the Mediterranean. In his work "Suave Villae Pomarium" the Neapolitan scientist Giovan Battista della Porta claims the existence of two types of apricot, the 'bericocche' and the 'crisomele' instead in another work the "Breve ragguaglio dell'Agricoltura e Pastorizia del regno di Napoli" attests that the apricot is the most widespread fruit after the fig in the Neapolitan area.

As all fruit trees grown on volcanic soil, the apricot can better express its fresher sweetness and its persistent taste, making it unique, also due to the incredible biodiversity: among the many varieties: the boccuccia, fracasso, pellecchiella, vitillo, cafona, liscia, ceccona, portici, the crisommole (in modern Neapolitan dialect, many terms have doubled the 'm' letter in them) we can take into account about a hundred varieties, of which 70 have scientifically been proven even though only about fifteen are actually cultivated.

The reason for this sudden impoverishment, is the progressive abandonment of cultivation, which does not help competition with the production coming from other countries. But the organoleptic characteristics of the diverse biotypes have focused attention on this fruit, in the past few years the best confectioners and cooks have literally adopted it. For sure, eating an apricot grown on the sandy volcanic terrain, rich in potassium, from the Vesuvius is certainly an unforgettable experience.

You can find them fresh during the harvesting period; June and July, or preserved in jars that maintain their unmistakable taste.

The Campania Region, with its 2000 hectares, today is still the most important region for the cultivation of this fruit, a fruit that simply tells us all about the warmth of the summer sun.



THE RECIPE

APRICOT MARMALADE

Bread and marmalade, what a treat! The forgotten '60s snack. Why not try it again in a genuine way, using this simple recipe.

INGREDIENTS 1 kg of ripe apricots; 250 g sugar; 2 green apples; The juice of one lemon.

METHOD Take the stones out of the apricots and cut the apples in small pieces. Add the lemon juice and leave to macerate for 24 hours in the fridge. After a day, the fruit will become nice and soft. Put the apricots on the stove and let them cook on medium heat for 20 minutes, after reaching boiling point. Turn off the stove and put the mixture in a mill to make the marmalade lumps chunky. Spoon into the jars, seal and place them upside down. To pasteurize them you can leave them in the oven at 90°C degrees for 45 minutes or let them boil in a large pot full of water upside down for 45 minutes. Store the marmalade in the pantry away from heat and light.

THE PLACES **Herculaneum-Pompeii**

It is not hard to imagine the existence of apricot trees in the gardens of Pompeii and Herculaneum or in the opulent farm houses built around the Volcano. This is why this fruit is the symbol of one of the most ancient and rich agricultural areas that Pompeii and Herculaneum have ever had, destroyed by the terrifying eruption in 79 AD, the major urban reference at that time in the centre of Campania Felix. When visiting the site of Pompeii and Herculaneum, what we truly suggest you to do is to eat some of this fruit.



The Schito violet artichoke

Castellammare

Mr. Veronelli after having savoured one, on one of his many tours, really fell in love for them, to the point of calling them: 'cru' a term used for high-class wine production. He knew about this ancient Pompeii artichoke, cultivated in a specific area which is still today called «the gardens of Schito». For the inhabitants of the Agro Vesuvius area, this violet coloured artichoke is harvested between February and May, according to the course of the season, and for this reason it is generally associated with the Easter festivities, more precisely Easter Monday. Even today, in the immense, fertile and populated area that goes from Vesuvius to the town of Nocera, on the road sides you can easily find grilled artichokes, prepared early in the morning on the spot. For many, it is the typical cooking fragrance on an Easter Monday picnic, for everybody it is considered a healthy product that can go with meat or eggs and many other traditional family recipes, let us not forget that in the past, families never threw food away. Starting off with the stalks, called turzilli' in local dialect, they usually served as a salad or were fried. Often the artichoke is considered a sort of stuffed dish with all sorts of good ingredients, from cheese to minced meat, or more simply, with breadcrumbs, parsley, garlic and a drizzle of olive oil before being put into the oven or on a grill. Very typical of this area are the small terracotta bowls made by the local farmers and put on top of the artichokes to protect them from sunlight. The Schito artichoke is still celebrated today in the area of Annunziata that is considered a hub for its distribution. This product has always been considered one of the finest thanks to its unique characteristics: the lacking of thorns, of being rich in iron and potassium thanks to the unique volcanic soil, and therefore always very tasty. From a technical point of view, the violet artichoke is a subtype of the Romanesco variety from which it differs, for its earlier harvesting period and for the colour of its leaves which are green with dark shades of violet.



THE RECIPE**SPAGHETTI WITH ARTICHOKE
AND SHRIMPS**

Here is a typical land-sea preparation of the Campania coast line, something you can cook that is nutritionally complete and delicious.

INGREDIENTS 500 g of tagliolini pasta; 2 artichokes; 12 shrimps; salted ricotta grated (optional); valerian q.s.; 1 clove of garlic; extra virgin olive oil; 1 glass of white wine; salt and pepper q.s.; vegetable stock q.s.

METHOD Wash the artichokes, julienne them and let them brown with the garlic and the mantis. After a couple of minutes add the white wine and brown together, then add some stock and finish off the cooking. After salting, peppering and adding valerian, strain the tagliolini pasta, and mix them together with the sauce in the pan for about two minutes.

WINE MATCH Lacryma Christi white wine of the Vesuvius area

THE PLACES Castellammare

Castellammare is located in a very strategic position, giving it an important role in the history of ancient Rome. At the beginning it was a fortified town, then a residence for rich patricians that inevitably benefitted by the presence of the spas there, it was then eventually destroyed by the eruption in 79 AD. The town's position is the very reason for its rebirth, starting from its harbour, that today is generally used as a marina for millionaire yachts, the beautiful promenade, its churches (in particular the cathedral of Santissima Assunta and San Catello), the buildings (The Farnese, seat of the Municipality). We also recommend two gems to see apart from the spas: the castle and the Reggia di Quisisana, a breathtaking place on the hill side, founded by the Angiò's, used by Giuseppe Bonaparte, Murat and the Bourbons. You cannot leave without visiting the gardens.



Fossa Rabbit Ischia

Seen from the outside, the custom of breeding rabbits on an island surrounded by a sea abounding in fish may seem nonsense. But it is only a superficial impression because deep inside, the soul of the people of Ischia is actually of a farming one, therefore the real symbols of this Green Island are the vines and of course as I mentioned the local rabbit. Being a highly prolific animal, for this reason in the past, it was chosen by the locals to be raised here, the local population had always been fighting to gain their daily ration of proteins to complete their more common and plain vegetable diet. Wild rabbits have always populated Ischia, here a specific breeding technique has been developed through the years that exploits the characteristics of this animal. Digging holes and putting in rabbits is certainly not enough, these rodents could instinctively and easily dig escape tunnels. So a stone wall was thought as a solution. It is built (parracina) so that it cannot be dug through and at the same time some ready-made pits are positioned around to allow the animals' instinct to freely dig their own tunnels with no way to escape anyway. In these labyrinths the rabbits are fed with natural food and so they can live in a sort of semi wild state consequently developing a unique meat quality. Of course this practice is slowly losing importance but it is still possible today to find some rabbits being bred in this traditional way, it also maximizes the farming space which is minimum. So, Ischia's rabbit recipe (Coniglio all'Ischitana) is considered today a National dish of the Green Island. What is considered a generally accepted recipe, in reality is deeply different because every family on the island has its own secret one, that usually simply consists in the use of different aromatic herbs that come from Mount Epomeo. Breeding rabbits is also an emblem of the traditional local farming, which is usually a two-level agriculture, based on vines, vegetables and greens that are integrated by fruit trees. The fertility of the volcanic soil, which is rich in potassium, has allowed the community to live and prosper since the coming of the Greeks right up to today. Though the island still maintains a great biodiversity, its local agricultural income has been surpassed by the coming of the tourist industry in the last few decades.



THE RECIPE

ISCHIA'S RABBIT RECIPE

Here is a typical preparation, mind you, there are a great number of variables of this typical island dish according to the aromas and herbs used.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 1 whole rabbit; 2 glasses of white wine; 10 tomatoes; 1 whole garlic bulb; vegetale stock; extra virgin olive oil; hot pepper; parsley and fresh basil, thyme, rosemary.

METHOD Chop the rabbit in a dozen pieces. Warm up some oil in a deep pan and put the pieces in, fry them lightly at medium-high temperature with the garlic bulb. Let the pieces brown for about twenty minutes, turn the pieces over every now and then for a better browning. Then place the rabbit in a terracotta pan and sprinkle white wine over. Let the wine steam and evaporate and then add the herbs and the rest of the ingredients. To complete the cooking add some vegetable stock or water. Allow it to cook for at least half an hour and add salt q.s. Serve the terracotta pan directly on the table placed on a wooden chopping board.

WINE MATCH Red Ischia wine

THE PLACES Ischia

Ischia is a touristic attraction which needs no presentation at all. But it is an island that can be discovered even more by those who have the will to do so. Churches, monuments, wonderful views, spectacular vineyards located high up in the mountains, mysterious jagged coastlines are actually a map for the more curious and authentic travellers. It is a hospitable island, where it is hard not to come back again after one's first visit.



Agerola Fiordilatte

Nomen omen: The Lattari mountains, famous for having always produced milk. Goat's milk, sheep's milk and even cow's milk that comes from the Sorrento side. Agerola fiordilatte is surely one of the finest dairy products around, it was originally made from the Agerola cattle breed selected in 1845 by general Avitabile. Yet again, another milestone placed by the Bourbons to underline the importance that they gave to agriculture and zootechnics. It is a fresh cheese made from stretched curd obtained from unpasteurized whole cow's milk. It can be prepared in various forms, round shape, as a knot, or braided according to the cheese maker's tradition. It has a milky taste, slightly acidulous, and it goes perfectly well with tomatoes. Throughout the centuries this dairy skill of the Sorrento Peninsular has supplied the city of Naples therefore gaining a great reputation. Right before the advent of buffalo mozzarella, all through the 20th century, the fiordilatte from Agerola was the principal topping ingredient of the pizza margherita. After passing some hard times, now the old fashion is coming back because many gourmets have been demanding it, thanks to the production which has considerably been improved and updated in the past few years. The two elements that characterize Agerola fiordilatte are the use of unpasteurized milk (that comes only from the Agerola breed) and the acidification that takes place naturally and lasts about 12 hours. If you eat it fresh and there is no one around to try and stop you, you could go on eating it forever, it is really that good. When the fiordilatte is a day or two old, it is perfectly adapt for cooking, apart from pizza, it is a regular ingredient in many traditional dishes.



THE RECIPE**MOZZARELLA IN CARROZZA**

This is a recipe that recalls a feast at home, when our mothers used some left over bread and fiordilatte, they made an irresistible delicacy. In fact the main feature of this recipe is that it is considered more a household speciality rather than just plain street food.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE About 450 g of Agerola fiordilatte; 16 slices of stale “cafone” bread about 1 cm thick; 200 g of fine-ground flour; 8 eggs; 100 g whole milk; olive oil for frying q.s.; 2 tablespoons of suet; salt q.s.

METHOD Cut the fiordilatte in 8 slices more or less the same size as the bread slices. Place a slice of fiordilatte in the middle of two slices of bread, softly squeezing them together trying to make them as compact as possible. Do the same for the other ‘carrozze’. Flour them and soak them in the egg yolks that you have previously whipped adding a dash of milk and a pinch of salt. They have to be well soaked in the egg mixture and be absorbed in the most uniform manner, trying to seal the bread edges. Heat abundant oil in a frying pan; when at highest temperature, slide in the ‘carrozze’ two or three at a time, to avoid the temperature to suddenly drop, and fry them until golden. Then place them on some sheets of kitchen paper to soak up the exceeding oil, serve piping hot. The perfect result is in the crust’s crunchiness, but frying is no easy job. In fact what determines an excellent fry is that the oil temperature must never drop down too low, so one needs to be patient and fry only a few at a time. In the Neapolitan cooking history book, the three authors, Lambertini, Volpe and Guizzato, regarding the mozzarella in carrozza, wrote: “Here we are at another pillar of our cuisine, honour and pride to all those Neapolitan housewives, who have the inborn ability of knowing how to fry ‘mozzarella in carrozza’ as Brilliant Savarin used to say”

WINE MATCH Lacryma Christi white wine of the Vesuvius area

THE PLACES Agerola

Agerola is the last bordering Municipality of the province of Naples before crossing over, into the Amalfi Coast area. The town, has just over 7,000 inhabitants and it is renowned for its fiordilatte, the town also gives the name to the local rusks (pane biscottato). Our suggestion is to take some time for a stop here to visit the beautiful churches (San Matteo, San Martino among the many), the convent of San Francesco di Cospiti and the Palazzo Acampora. If you are fond of trekking this is the right place for you because the town is part of the picturesque pathway called the ‘Sentiero degli Dei’(the Trail of the Gods) that starts right from Agerola and ends in Positano and offers incomparable views of the coastline.



Pomodorino del piennolo del Vesuvio PDO Vesuvius

There is a really special relationship between the tomato and Vesuvius, something that regards cultivation and is more part of the local way of life. The people who live on the slopes of the volcano cannot ever do without, even when it is not even that necessary you can always find it in a dish. The tomato is considered a natural acidifier in recipes, it has found on the volcanic soil a perfect place to grow also thanks to the constant luminosity of southern Italy. Once the Pomodorino (cherry tomatoes) del piennolo was almost extinct, so the Slow Food Association took it under its protection: it is a typical southern custom to preserve fresh products as much as possible: here the tomato is collected together in a bunch and is left hanging in well-ventilated places. Doing so, this typical summer sun food can be eaten during the autumn months and even in winter. From a scientific point of view, there are many ecotypes, that have been farmed in the past two hundred years by producers that have taken strange names like "lampadina", "patanara" and "re Umberto". The pomodorini preserved using this technique tend to be darker and have a tougher skin compared to normal fresh ones, nevertheless the pulp inside is preserved wonderfully. In 2009 the European Union recognised the PDO label for this production, referring exclusively to the Municipalities of the Vesuvius area, part of the Municipality of Nola, Boscoreale, Boscotrecase, Cercola, Ercolano, Massa di Somma, Ottaviano, Pollena Trocchia, Portici, Sant'Anastasia, San Giorgio a Cremano, San Giuseppe Vesuviano, San Sebastiano al Vesuvio, Somma Vesuviana, Terzigno, Torre Annunziata, Torre del Greco and Trecase.

Practically the surrounding area of the towns near the volcano crater. In the past years the piennolo del Vesuvio has been a commercial success, especially thanks to the revolution that has taken place in the pizza world, that has chosen it as a topping or ingredient in many preparations giving way to its consumption and considerably improving the income of the local farmers. To give an "nzerta" or in other words a bunch of pomodorini as a present, is considered as one of the best gifts to give, even as a gesture to ward off ill-luck. "E mise 'a nzerta appesa", (you have hung a piennolo) is a saying that means: take it easy, you have done a good job, and now things are getting better.



THE RECIPE**SPAGHETTI WITH POMODORINO
DEL PIENNOLO DEL VESUVIO**

Why not prepare the Italian dish par excellence, our Tricolore!

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 200 g of spaghetti; 15/20 pomodorini (cherry tomatoes) del piennolo; 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil; 2 cloves of garlic; some small leaves of basil.

METHOD Pull out of the 'nsera about fifteen pomodorini, taking care to choose the perfectly ripe ones. Wash them and leave them to drain for a few minutes. In the meantime golden the garlic cloves in a large pan. Then, carefully take the cloves out of the pan before they burn and add the pomodorini del piennolo cut in halves. Pay great attention to the cooking time: it is better to slightly undercook them, otherwise they may start to shed water and the skin peel off. Cooking them for ten minutes is usually sufficient. Once the spaghetti is ready and very al dente, drain it and mix it in the pan together with the pomodorini. Add the fresh basil leaves and serve immediately.

WINE MATCH Campi Flegrei Piediroso or a red wine of the Vesuvius area

THE PLACES The Vesuvius Crater

All the towns of the PDO area have beautiful historical centres, magnificent churches, important sanctuaries like the Madonna dell'Arco in Sant'Anastasia, castles, excavations like the so called Villa di Ottaviano in Somma Vesuviana. But maybe the most charming place to go, is where it all really started, the crater of Vesuvius that since 1944 is dormant, one of the longest pauses in its millenary history. That is why being able to visit it today is considered a real privilege. The visits are well organized by expert guides. The territory founded in 1995, is part of the National Parks organization.



Provolone del Monaco PDO Vico Equense

In the region it is considered the Queen of cheeses furthermore it is a protected thanks to the European label PDO. We are talking about an extremely great status in the cheese world, it has been highlighted by the gourmet cuisine that has begun to use it in many of its top preparations, as a flavour enhancer. Its distinctiveness is in the use of kid milk curd that gives it a spicy taste besides the extraordinary raw ingredients, the milk from the Sorrento peninsular produced by the selected Agerola breed, a cross of the Frisona, Bruna and Jersey with the indigenous, through the years by the breeders. Unfortunately the great request makes people consume it fresh, but if you manage to find one rather mature you will experience the whole complex evolution of this unique cheese. In fact the taste comes from the quality of the milk of the animals that graze and eat the grass of the Mediterranean scrub and that is then processed raw. There is no precise information regarding its name, a popular legend tells that the sailors who transported the cheese to Naples protected themselves with a habit that made them resemble monks. Maybe, like for many preparations, its origins come from one of the many convents along the coast line, once guardians of superb gastronomic specialties. The production area indicated on the PDO label regards the municipalities of: Agerola, Casola di Napoli, Castellammare di Stabia, Gragnano, Lettere, Massa Lubrese, Meta, Piano di Sorrento, Pimonte, Sant'Agnello, Sorrento, Santa Maria La Carità and Vico Equense. It is very easy to recognize this cheese, even for the less expert because it has a sort of elongated melon shape, weighing minimum 2,5 kg and maximum 8. The European regulation provides that the maturing period cannot be under six months, after this time it begins to change to a typical yellow colour, intensifying little by little as time goes by. Another typical characteristic is that the rind is very thin.



THE RECIPE**THE NERANO SPAGHETTI WITH COURGETTES**

The legend tells that this recipe was invented in the pantry of a restaurant of Marina del Cantone. Anyway, it has become a summer symbolic dish of the Sorrento peninsular. Everybody here, has a special secret.

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 400 g of spaghetti or mezzi vermicelli; 700 g of courgettes, or one small per person; extra virgin olive oil; garlic; salt; black pepper; 200 g of Provolone del Monaco coarsely grated; 4 or 5 hand cut basil leaves.

METHOD Cut the courgettes finely, fry them in extra virgin olive oil and dry them on a sheet of kitchen paper. In the meantime you will have started to cook the pasta and have prepared a creamy base in the pan, browning or as Ugo Tognazzi used to say 'making them sweat...' a couple of garlic cloves in six tablespoons of olive oil, paying attention to never reach burning point, until the fluids will not have been completely drained. Turn off the heat. At this point submerge the courgettes in boiling water for a few seconds, purée a part of them, let's say about a third, to be ready to prepare a dense double sauce adding a pinch of salt and a drizzle of olive oil, pour the sauce in the pan taking the garlic cloves out. Drain the pasta al dente, put the puréed courgettes in the pan adding thin cut courgette discs too and cook at low temperature, add the spaghetti and cream, all the ingredients together while suddenly raising the heat for a short moment. Turn off the heat, add the Provolone del Monaco and let it be absorbed by the pasta. Serve adding very little pepper and basil.

WINE MATCH Lacryma Christi white wine of the Vesuvius area

**THE PLACES Vico Equense**

Vico Equense is famous for its many starred Michelin restaurants. But it is also a centre where the origins date back to 7th century BC., a town where the Roman patricians enjoyed staying, then it was later populated by the Angevins and the Aragonese. You must not miss the churches, among them you can find the Santissima Annunziata, once already Cathedral of the diocesi di Vico, the Sanctuary of Santa Maria del Toro, that has a great number of frescoes inside, the Sanctuary of San Michele Arcangelo on the Monte Faito, the main church of the saints Ciro and Giovanni. Then there is also the castle di Giusso built in 13th century. Worth visiting are also the Spas of Scrajo founded at the beginning of 20th century. So here in this town you can find, not just a sea resort but also plenty of culture and many inland rural and farming excursions.



The Sorrento Lemon PGI

Maybe this is the symbol of the new cuisine of the Campania region, the one that comes from the Michelin stars of the Sorrento peninsula, that has quickly spread throughout the whole region. It is considered a natural acidifier that practically resolves any kind of problem while cooking, flavouring dishes and making them lighter. The positive health benefits of these citrus fruits is part of a long list, so there is no need to continue, though we can say; like an apple..., a lemon a day keeps the doctor away. But what do the Sorrento lemons have that got them the PGI European label? First of all, are we dealing with a specific ecotype, also known as the *Ovale di Sorrento* or *Limone di Massa* but usually named *Massese* for everybody. Considering the average standard, thanks to the pedoclimatic conditions (soil, light) it has an acidity which is quite marked, the peel instead, non excessively thick, is rich of oils. The second element is the cultivation, which is rather particular because it takes place under the "pagliarelle", in other words underneath straw mats connected to poles that usually cover the whole plant to protect it during the winter months. The lemon culture, brought by the Arabs to Sicily, has left many well documented important traces here since 1500 AD., so many to be quoted even by Torquato Tasso, who was a Sorrento native, apart from Giovanni Pontano and Giambattista Della Porta. The cultivation initially found safe grounds in many convents in the zone, where the monks were usually engaged in producing the famous *Limoncello* liquor, later in time lemons were grown in gardens everywhere to finally characterize the whole landscape. The Municipality areas that are involved in the production of this drink are: *Massa Lubrense*, *Meta*, *Piano di Sorrento*, *Sant'Agnello*, *Sorrento*, *Vico Equense* and the *Island of Capri*. As we have already mentioned, the use of lemons in cooking is distinctive, especially in pastry making there are so many recipes that contain this precious juice and peel, but we can often find their use in first and main courses. Finally, it is common to find water and lemon mixed and served to passers-by, which is generally considered a sign of great kindness during the hot summer days.



THE RECIPE

LIMONCELLO

Was it invented in the convents or by the local fishermen? Who knows, one thing is for sure, a real mania exploded from that day when a local restaurant owner in the early '90s decided to serve it chilled, and not at room temperature like other liquors.

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 1 lt of water; 1 lt of alcohol ; 500 g of sugar; 12 organic Sorrento lemons.

METHOD The best lemons to use are those of the early blossoming because they are much more richer, picked preferably at sunrise when the aroma is at its peak, they are then washed and peeled very thinly being careful to avoid the pith the white part that would give the liquor a bitter taste in one's mouth. The peels stay infused in pure alcohol for 48 to 72 hours. Then a syrup made of water and sugar is added and then strained. At the end of the process the alcohol proof of limoncello is, according to the portions of water and sugar, between 30°C and 50°C degrees. And lastly, when and how do we drink it? It is often used in the traditional Neapolitan patisserie, flavoured with lemons and lemon cream, it is surely an ideal match. But even just a little sip of it once in a while, or especially when just chilling out, maybe on a boat at sea or wherever you prefer.

THE PLACES Sorrento

Sorrento does not need any kind of presentation, it is where the local population have been living on tourism since the end of the 19th century thanks to its extremely mild climate. Lemons are found all around the town, in gardens, in the middle of the roads and in the thousands of shops that sell typical products and souvenirs. The place has been launched in the past years again thanks to the enormous success of the Limoncello liquor and its cuisine, it is a true symbol of this territory. Churches, convents, sea, excursions, there is so much to do and see in this town where tourism is considered a mass but also an elite attraction. Surely, Sorrento can be considered the touristic capital of southern Italy.



The Gragnano pasta PGI

Italy is the only country in which in a sequence of dishes during a meal, there is a first course "il primo". Ah..., the invention of pasta, the invention of a joy while eating, apparently it all began in Amalfi with the 'dunderi pasta' but it is in Gragnano the place where throughout the past centuries it has reached its form of excellence from the 16th century when the early pasta factories were built. What is the reason for its incredible success? Of course the water, the quality of the prime ingredients used, the craftsmanship and the talent that has always characterized, and still does, the people of Gragnano. In particular the possibility of perfectly drying the product to then preserve it thanks to its continuous ventilation in a municipality in which the territory is located between 350 and 600 metres above sea level. It got to the point in the past, where the town itself had to adapt itself to the needs of the urban development, so the need to dry the pasta was then done along the town road sides, exactly the same way one would hang out the washing. In 1845 Ferdinando II di Borbone allowed the pasta makers to supply the Royal Court and since then Gragnano has become the recognized city of maccheroni, term which generally means pasta. The formats are countless, there are dozens and dozens, the main division is between the pasta with a smooth surface 'liscia', generally more appreciated by the connoisseurs, and the grooved surface pasta 'rigati', that better holds the sauce. During the 20th century this ancient tradition was about to be lost due to the industrial production processes, but since the beginning of the '90's there has been a progressive revival thanks to the ancient formats that the industry had initially put aside, and also the growing sensitivity of the consumers. The role of pasta has been fundamental for the demographic development of Naples because it offered a caloric solution to the population of the 'mangiafoglie' (the local population were called that way because at that time, only ate greens, this was before the advent of pasta): the quality of the product, its digestibility, has made it the most important food, considering that the local fantasy has brought out thousands of combinations like in no other place in the world: with legumes, vegetables, fish, meat, almost nothing cannot go with pasta, even in some dessert preparations you can find it. The expertise of the 'monzù' and the household cooking have brought it to real cult status, setting a gastronomic style all over Italy and making it extremely appreciated all over the world, to the point where spaghetti with tomato sauce is recognizable anywhere as Italian, becoming without doubt the gastronomic symbol of our country. This same phenomena, unfortunately, has not involved pizzas and lasagnas!



THE RECIPE**PASTA AND PEAS**

How to choose the most representative recipe for this product? Found it! A Gragnano pasta with legumes, a symbolic dish of the Mediterranean diet, because it is complete from a nutritional point of view.

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 200 g of freshly shelled peas; 1 onion; 70 g of diced jowl bacon; 250 g of mixed Gragnano pasta; 40 g of Parmesan; vegetable stock q.s.; extra virgin olive oil q.s.; salt q.s.

METHOD Cut the onion very finely and let it brown in a pan for at least 10 minutes then add the diced jowl bacon. Continue the cooking for a few minutes and then add the peas in. Pour the vegetable stock abundantly over (consider that this water will be also needed to cook the pasta, therefore it is better to put a little more than usual) and let cook for about twenty minutes. Scoop up a couple of ladles of peas and put them aside. Drop in the pasta in the same cooking pot of the peas (if the cooking water dries up, add some hot vegetable stock). In the meantime blend the peas. At the end of the cooking add the salt, pour the pea purée and the Parmesan. Serve warm.

WINE MATCH Penisola Sorrentina white wine PDO

THE PLACES Gragnano

Pasta, panuozzi, pizza, wine. Gragnano seems to be like the town of plenty and it is a pity that many people, who usually head towards the Sorrento coastline skip this stopover. Luckily some pasta factories have organized themselves to welcome visitors to see their pasta manufacturing plant and to see the 'Valle dei Mulini' the place where it all originated, it is one of the most interesting attractions to visit when in Campania. But do not forget to visit the wonderful churches too like: the Santa Maria dell'Assunta, the Madonna del Carmine, the Corpus Domini, the San Giovanni Battista and the San Sebastiano.



The San Sebastiano al Vesuvio Bread

The reputation of the bread from San Sebastiano started between the two wars and since then it has never changed. Important, above all was the wheat, which during the 19th century came from the Benevento area and was mixed with the wheat from Volla: a superb base material that was then processed in San Giovanni a Teduccio by the steam mills. As time went by, the "i panizzatori" (bread makers) of the Neapolitan quarter called Cercola and of Portici introduced the new technologies of that time, introducing the Rolland kneader, the gas ovens or the airstream Thillory ones, while in San Sebastiano the bakers wanted to keep their traditional wood-burning oven. This bread is considered very elastic, it has a wonderful golden crunchy crust and a soft inside; it has an oblong and flattened shape, better known as 'palatone'. Traditionally it should last for at least eight days always staying fresh and elastic. The cozzetto, or cuppetiello (end part of the bread), was used to steal some of the ragù sauce while still in the pot or it was used as a snack during the day called "supponta". Today it is often called "cafone" which is a generic positive word, that means something genuine, not a fake, named this way by the Neapolitans living in the city referring to whatever comes from the countryside. Certainly, San Sebastiano al Vesuvio is not the only town famous for its bread in Campania, although it surely is the most renowned place and it is a pity that the traditional production process still is not protected by a regulation even if the Campania Region does consider it among the typical regional productions.



THE RECIPE**BRUSCHETTA BREAD WITH OIL**

It is a symbol of the Mediterranean diet, a healthy and nutritious mouthful. This was a children's afternoon snack before the arrival of all the industrially made ones. More than a proper recipe, we can simply give you some suggestions on how to prepare one.

METHOD Cut the tomatoes some time earlier and leave them to rest adding some oregano and/or basil or any other aromatic herb that you may prefer, so that they have the time to release their juice and absorb the herb aromas, drizzle over some olive oil. Toast the bread slices separately without making them get too hard and above all without burning them, just that much enough to eliminate the excess bread humidity, and so you are able to dip them in the plate with the tomatoes. Take a slice out, add a fresh slice of tomato and enjoy!

**THE PLACES San Sebastiano al Vesuvio**

San Sebastiano was almost destroyed during the last eruption of the Vesuvius in 1944 but fortunately it has been rebuilt properly and in an orderly manner. Today it is a sort of town terrace on the Gulf where many have decided to move to escape the city chaos. What certainly must be visited is the Sanctuary of San Sebastiano Martire its cupola dominates the whole town centre, the chapels of San Vito Martire, San Domenico, Santa Maria di Costantinopoli, the two private ones of the Virgin Pompei in the Masseria del Monaco Ajello and of the Convento Francese. The two Vesuvian villas are quite impressive, Figliolia and Tufarelli di Sopra. Among the historical buildings there is the Palazzo Falconi, the convent, Palazzo Sparano a Casaluca, the Canonica del Piore and the farm houses that clearly show the historical agricultural tradition of this town.





The province of Avellino

The Irpinia area is considered the green lung of the Campania region, the reign of agricultural biodiversity. It is worth recalling that the area is also the main water reserve of Naples, the Piana del Sele, and the Apulia region, thanks to its unlimited sources that come from the two mountainous ranges: the Terminio-Cervialto and the Partenio. The administrative seat Avellino is an orderly man-sized city that has completely recovered from the 1980 earthquake. Nowadays, Piazza della Libertà is a magnificently restored space, considered one of the accesses to the historical centre where one can find the wonderful Duomo. Certainly worth visiting is the Bourbon prison right in the heart of the urban area where today, many important events take place. This city constantly has a cool mild climate throughout summer, due to the surrounding green hillsides. A visit to the Sanctuary of Montevergine nowadays is an unmissable trip, as has always been even in the past centuries, when visitors arrive they pass

through and admire the pure and lush landscape of the Valle di Lauro. The itinerary to the Terminio-Cervialto is just as fascinating, it is a mountainous range that has an average height between 1600 to 1800 metres, this is where the Lago Laceno ski resort centre, the only one of the region, is located. Taking a walk all the way through the little towns of Montella and Bagnoli Irpino, which are rich of history and have been completely restored, here anyone can breathe wonderful fresh mountain air. Other great wine route excursions, are all directed towards the river Sabato valley to the Taurasi territory. Here the landscape gradually begins to change, and this means we are near the area of Baronìa and the high plains of the Formicoso, at 800 metres above sea level, a dream-like open place, that connects Irpinia to the Lucania area and Apulia. Exactly among these locations, much beloved by Federico II, there are ancient villages like Bisaccia and its castle or like Calitri famous for its charming historical centre.

The Montella chestnut PGI

The Southern Apennine Mountains are considered the Campania region's backbone, renowned and rich for its chestnuts. For many centuries, the flour produced from the chestnuts had fed the populations of the inland because it could be well preserved for a long period of time, an excellent remedy against poverty and that allowed the people to resist the assaults of their enemies. A food considered so important, that the Lombards issued the regulations on how to protect its cultivation. The tradition is very antique originally coming from Asia minor around the 6th and 5th century BC. The Montella chestnut has gained the European label PGI and it is referred to 90% of the chestnuts produced from the Palummina variety (the name comes from a vague resemblance to a pigeon) and the remaining come from the Verdole variety. The size is usually medium-small with a thin skin. We are in the Terminio-Cervialto area a real green lung and above all a great water reserve for the Campania region. A commercial preparation is the "castagna del prete" (the priest's chestnut), in other words the one that is baked with all of its shell still on, after being dried and then rehydrated. The production area includes the municipalities of Montella, Bagnoli Irpino, Cassano Irpino, Nusco, Volturara Irpina and the district of Bolifano di Montemarano. It is the very first case in which a fruit and vegetable product obtains a PGI label. The chestnut culture is an integrated part of the local life and the gastronomy of the people from the mountainous area: from savory to sweet you can use it in many preparations and today it still has an important source of income not just for the product itself, but also for the use of the wood. We are in the heart of the Regional park of the Picentini.



THE RECIPE**CHESTNUT, MUSHROOM AND BEAN SOUP**

Here is a very popular preparation, we have chosen it because it is considered a nutritionally complete dish: the wisdom and the hunger of time ago, combined carbohydrates and proteins in a tasty way.

INGREDIENTS 500 g of dried chestnuts or freshly peeled; 200 g of diced boletus mushrooms; 150 g Borlotti beans; 1 onion; 200 g of potatoes; 1 small bunch of aromatic herbs (bay leaves, sage and rosemary); 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil; salt and pepper q.s.

METHOD In two different containers, soak for a whole night the Borlotti beans and the dried chestnuts in salted water, aromatize with a couple of bay leaves. In a casserole add some oil to brown the thinly cut onion and let it flavour. After a few minutes add the beans and the chestnuts well softened and drained. Add the washed mushrooms cut in medium cubes. Peel and cut the potatoes in chunky pieces, mix them together with the chestnuts and beans, pour over water to totally cover the ingredients, add the herbs, salt and let boil for an hour and a half. When the potatoes tend to crumble and the chestnuts and the beans become soft the soup is ready. Serve preferably in terracotta bowls, in order to keep the soup warm, add a drizzle of oil and a pinch of pepper and some bread croutons.

THE PLACES Montella

The town has been inhabited for unmemorable time, it is located at the foot of the Terminio mountain, its centre, counts approximately 800 inhabitants, and it has had a particularly important role during the Medieval period with the Gastaldate strategically located between the principality of Benevento and the Salerno one. Apart from the beautiful landscape resources for those who love trekking and excursions, there are so many things to be seen, starting from the monastery of San Francesco in Follini, founded personally by San Francesco on his return from a trip to the Gargano area. Furthermore, there are the twin churches of San Michele Arcangelo and the Madonna Santissima Addolorata. Of great interest is the Complesso del Monte that includes the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Neve, the Monastery and the Lombard Castle. Not to mention: the beautiful noble palaces: Abiosi, Villa Elena, Bruni Roccia besides those that have been damaged due to the earthquake in 1980.



The Montoro copper-coloured onion

Putting aside the period in which tobacco was considered as a great income, we can say that the history of Montoro is strongly linked to the cultivation of the homonymous copper coloured onion, about 40 hectares of cultivation (potentially almost 200), a community dedicated to the manufacturing of the bulb vegetable to produce the traditional 'nser-ta' ("bunch" of onions braided simply using the dried stems) or in a small crate. The Montoro copper-coloured onion takes its name from the shiny copper coloured reflexes of its "dried outer leaves" the so called "tuniche" that cover it; the "globish" shape can be quite similar to a spinning top or slightly flatter, inside the narrow streaks (catafile) colours alter, harmonically, from white to violet. The cultivation method is traditional, it has been the same for the whole territory of production, seeding is planned in the autumn season before harvesting. There is the field transplanting phase between January and February (the plants are bedded out, manually one by one, in binary lines, waiting to see the bulbs grow, after some months), the summer harvesting is between June and July, the field desiccation and then the storage (in specifically well-ventilated wooden structures), lastly there is the packaging and commercialization stage. Copper colored body and streaked white and pink core, the Montoro copper-coloured onion is wonderful on display, magnificent in smell, sweet, tasty, delicately aromatic and persistent, raw or cooked (it has a high resistance capacity to "heat" due to the great preservation capability thanks to the great level of dry substances) it is one of the really special products of the Irpinia area.



THE RECIPE**GENOVESE PASTA**

Why Genovese? According to Jeanne Caròla Francesconi, the *Liber de coquina* quotes the De Tria Ianuensis (namely the Tria Genovese), the Cavalcanti duca di Bonvicino cites a similar recipe. Actually, there really is no effective information and so the chronicler can easily have had fun in inventing anything he wanted: what is for sure is that Genovese (and Genovesi) is a name, besides being a toponym, it has been well known in all the reign for centuries. There are, those who anthropologically talk about restaurant owners from Genua who cooked meat and onions on the harbour piers to which later in time the Neapolitans added pasta to it. But of this preparation there is no real trace nor is it popular in the Liguria Region. Another hypothesis or story, slightly more romantic, tells of a monzù (a professional cook) from Geneva (*Geneve*, therefore Genovese) who introduced this variation of the *soupe d'oignons* to the Royal court or in some aristocratic kitchen. Well maybe the truth is much more banal, but we will never ever really know.

INGREDIENTS 400 g of Ziti pasta; 3 kg of Montoro copper-coloured onions; 1 kg of round shoulder steak (lacierto e spall); 1 stalk of celery; 50 g of suet 100 g of extra virgin olive oil; salt q.s.; a few bay leaves; black grain pepper q.s.; 30 g of tomato concentrate; a glass of white wine.

METHOD Peel and thinly cut the onions and keep them for two hours under a trickle of lukewarm current water. Dice the celery and put it aside. Rinse if necessary the meat and cut it in chunky pieces. In a large deep pan melt the suet with the oil, brown the meat on all of the sides, add the white wine and allow to simmer. Add the tomato concentrate, the bay leaves, some crushed pepper grains and finally the sliced onions. Cook it all for six hours with the lid on, if necessary add some water and stir it now and again to avoid it sticking on the bottom of the pan. Salt before serving.

WINE MATCH Greco di Tufo or Campi Flegrei Piediroso

**THE PLACES Montoro**

Montoro today is the fusion of two municipalities and 15 hamlets, this took place in 2013 with a popular referendum. Considered a crucial traffic point, it has been disputed for a long time and has been a border line between the principality of Salerno and Benevento. Regarding the Lombard castle, greatly restructured between the 14th and 15th century, only the central building still exists, a high quadrangular tower and a turret. Among the beautiful churches to be visited, we can suggest Santa Maria di Costantinopoli (1577), modernized in the 18th century, and embellished by a magnificent baroque portal; in the inner nave a golden wooden choir and a painting by De Masi of the 18th century are protected. An evocative place of worship is also the cave of San Michele, where a statue of the saint is safeguarded, there are many rock paintings and religious byzantine frescos. It is an excellent place to start off for an excursion towards the Pizzo di San Michele and the Regional park of the Picentini.



Caciocavallo Podolico of the Alta Irpinia

The caciocavallo is the symbol of the dairy tradition of southern Italy. It all started from the technique of “a pasta filata” (curd stretched soft cheese) that has been perfected in southern Italy in the past centuries to allow a high storability and salubrity of the cow milk cheese. The curd, obtained through the milk heating and coagulation, undergoes a second heating, until it becomes elastic and can then be handled without breaking. The mozzarella, scamorze, provoloni and of course the caciocavalli are all cheeses obtained using this method. The Caciocavallo Podolico is a cheese that is more inclined to long term maturing. Especially the large-sized ones (from 4 to 8 kg) that can reach, when perfectly intact even four or five years of aging. In these cases, the cheese can offer an extraordinary complexity in taste, a range of aromas that only a superior milk like the one from Podolic bred animals can guarantee. Many prefer to mitigate the strong savor siding the cheese with chestnut honey or strawberry tree. It works wonders, even though you may risk not to appreciate the organoleptic qualities. The Caciocavallo Podolico is extremely esteemed and it is produced with the milk of a specific breed, the Podolica, which still exists on the southern Apennines. Once it was the dominating breed. All of the Alta Irpinia, land of transhumance from the Apulia Region up to the Terminio mountains, has developed the dairy craftsmanship and in the past few years it has had a quality improvement, for example with the cave aging technique. From Calitri to Vallata, there are many dairy factories that work producing these types of cheese that enhance strong and complex tastes.



THE RECIPE**THE HANGED CACIOCAVALLO**

It is not so much a barbeque you need for this, as one might imagine: what is really required is a professional piece of equipment, built by specialized companies that after years and years of study and research have been able to put together the innovative know-how to allow a chef to prepare a cooked-not cooked preparation, at controlled temperatures.

Take a ball of cacio (from which the original name "caciopalla"), which then underwent a name change to caciocavallo. Take the rounded form from the small head of it (the smaller ball is above the bigger one).

You proceed placing it over a low fire guiding the cheese with a harmonic-balanced dangling movement, drawing in the air a piece of circumference that goes from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ according to the level of softness. Careful though it is not over yet... the completion of this specialty has to pass the final stage: it is not so simple as it may seem, even for this operation you absolutely need the mastery of the technique that consists in cutting the slices quickly before they melt over the fire. To be eaten on a slice of 'cafone' bread type or wholemeal bread. Unforgettable!

WINE MATCH Coda di Volpe

THE PLACES **Calitri**

Calitri is one of the centres of excellence, producing the caciocavallo podolico. It is an ancient town, the crossroads between the Basilicata Region and the Apulia- Alta Irpinia area. Its historical centre, damaged by many earthquakes, is surely very picturesque, now that it has been reconstructed there really is plenty to be seen, starting from the churches of San Canio, Santa Lucia, Immacolata Concezione. It is also considered as a reference point for excursions towards the nearby towns of Bisaccia and Lacedonia or in the Vulture lucano.



The Carmasciano of Rocca San Felice

This cheese has ancestral origins due to its name and the place where it is made. Let us begin from the place, this is where the Samnites and the Romans battled for a long time and here the lands were granted to the soldiers after their victory. Carmasius, soldier, anius fondo. But it is this place that determined its uniqueness: we are talking about the mephitis, a stagnant lake in the area of Rocca San Felice, Torella dei Lombardi and Villamaina in Alta Irpinia from which carbon hydrate and sulphuric acid continuously come out. A mortal mix for many animals in fact we can still see many carcasses in the surroundings, but it is dangerous even for man. All the air smells of sulphur and from here derives the adjective mephitic. And yet from these difficult conditions this excellent cheese originates because the local sheep graze on a mineral terrain that then gives an unrivalled taste. In the ancient times the goddess Mephitis was venerated as a guardian by the people from the Irpinia area. The procedure is simple and ancient: raw milk is put into a caccavo (a copper cauldron, in Neapolitan they say la 'caccavella') and the coagulation takes place with the lamb or kid curd which gives a spicy tone. After having broken the curding and having let rest, the soft cheese is put into a straw 'fuscelle' and scalded with hot whey. The production zone is very limited, apart from the municipality of Rocca there is the neighboring municipality of Torella dei Lombardi. The recommended consumption of this cheese is after 4-5 months but obviously the longer it matures the better it tastes, just like all great cheeses. The taste is matchless and incomparable, this pecorino cheese that is usually very hard to find, instead nowadays it is being launched by some keen producers again.



THE RECIPE**LAGANELLE PASTA, BROAD BEANS AND PECORINO CHEESE**

Here is the seasonal dish that can be done throughout the year using dry broad beans instead of the freshly picked ones. Even in this case it is a traditional dish very complete from a nutritional point of view and extremely tasty.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 400 g of shelled broad beans; 500 g of hand-made laganelle pasta using bread wheat and semolina of durum wheat (70% + 30%); 1 Montoro copper-coloured onion; 100 g of Carmasciano; a half glass of extra virgin olive oil; a bunch of basil leaves; 1 slice of lard; 2 glasses of Fiano or white wine.

METHOD In a large pan, you have to golden the copper-coloured onion in the oil and add the diced lard obtained from the thick slice previously cut. Let it cook for a couple of minutes and then add the broad beans. Stir for a few minutes and then you can simmer with the wine. In the meantime you shall have put on the burner a pot to boil the pasta in slightly salted water (to better enjoy the freshness and the aroma of the broad beans), when the water starts to boil, drop in the pasta and wait for about five minutes to cook. Drain, taking care to put aside a couple of ladles full of the pasta cooking water. Place the pasta in the pan where you have previously left the broad bean mixture (the half of the beans you had earlier blended). Lastly, add some Carmasciano pecorino.

WINE MATCH Fiano of Avellino

**THE PLACES Rocca San Felice**

Rocca San Felice is a small town with less than a thousand inhabitants, at about 750 metres above sea level. It has a beautiful square dominated by secular trees, the Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore, the Sanctuary of Santa Felicita e la Cappella di Maria Santissima di Costantinopoli must surely be seen. But the major attractions are the Castle and the archeological area of the Valle dell'Ansanto where you can find the Mephitis.



The dairy products and cheeses of the Terminio-Cervialto Lake Laceno

Thanks to word of mouth many know that the whole area of the Terminio Cervialto is full of dairy factories that work on dairy products and cheese productions. This tradition that involves both the Serinese and the road that goes from Avellino and takes you to Montella has a specific motif: we are at the starting line of one of the great itineraries of the transhumance, the one that from the Apulia region in summer moves towards the pastures where there are plenty of local water sources, a real water supply that practically serves the whole Apulia region, and also a great part of the Campania region. Considering the local territory conditions the production of dairy products and fresh cheeses was a logical choice: the high quality of the milk of the animals still living in a natural state, the characteristics of the mountain pastures that is perfect for the cattle are two elements that make these lands a renown district for these sort of dairy products especially the braided soft cheese, obtained thanks to the several breeds locally raised, among them obviously the podolica. Being a territory of transit and with the construction of the Ofantina – this is the name of the road that takes you from the chief town to the mountains – this road has helped make this area an absolute excellence even though, as sometimes happens, many good things never really become official as they should, it is often still today only a word of mouth.



THE RECIPE**THE CAPRESE**

At the beginning of the 20th century, right on the Island of Capri the tomato and cacio salad, became incredibly popular. Thanks to the presence of a great number of intellectuals, loafers and onlookers coming from all over the world, on the trails of some azure trying to escape from the depression of their modern and boring cities. This place is where the caprese was invented, considered an existential life style, a time when nobody was concerned about calories when eating, it was even enjoyed by the inventors of the futurist cuisine, those who were constantly at war against pasta. A dish, a raw ante litteram, well ahead of its times, far from the long cooking recipes, the taste is simple but complex, intense and persistent. Decades have gone by and with mass tourism the caprese has ceased to be a cru dish of Capri, it has become a universal patrimony, a way to dream of the Mediterranean even when one is forced to have a quick everyday snack in the street anywhere in the world.

INGREDIENTS FOR 1 PERSON 2 tomatoes; 100 g of fiordilatte; a drizzle of olive oil; oregano and basil at will.

METHOD Cut the tomatoes in thin slices, perfect is the “cuore di bue” (ox heart) variety. But even the fresh San Marzano quality will do fine or other types apt for salads. In a deep plate place the slices of tomato, add olive oil, oregano and basil leaves and let it rest for an hour at room temperature. Then take an elongated plate put a slice of fiordilatte and then a slice of tomato alternatively. Let it rest again for a little while more, do not add salt because it is already in the dairy product. Enjoy!

WINE MATCH Rosato Irpinia PDO

**THE PLACES** **Lago Laceno**

Il Laceno (also known as Piano Laceno) is located on a plateau at about 1050 metres above sea level, at the feet of the Monte Cervialto, not very far from Montella and the Altopiani di Verteglia and the Monte Terminio. The built-up area of the hamlet, mainly has hotels, restaurants, villas and residences, that were built all around the homonymous lake. The location is surrounded by various mountains: the Monte Cervialto 1809 m. above sea level, the Monte Rajamagra 1667 m., the Monte Cervarolo 1558 m. and Montagna Grande 1509 m. We are in the core of the Regional park of the Picentini, this name derives from the population that was deported by the Romans during the Punic wars. It is considered an incredibly natural green lung with many little villages scattered here and there, for visitors there is plenty to be discovered and visited.



The Black Truffle

Contrary to what people usually think, the Black Truffle in its many varied forms is very present along the whole Apennines ridge. As it has often happened in the past, and still does today, the products of southern Italy lose their origins to become something else due to a series of commercial passages that are always directed northwards. In our region the Sannio, for example, it has always been a land of white truffle hunters. The black truffle of Bagnoli Irpino is one of the few exceptions where this much desired natural product is strictly connected to its land of origin. This is the merit of the local community that exhibits the truffle proudly and that organize a yearly festival that attracts thousands of people to the town. The black truffle can be found from October to January with the help of specialized dogs who dig them up. When choosing a dog for this kind of activity, the Lagotto and the Cocker Spaniel, are the best choices for their capabilities and docility. The truffle is a hypogeous mushroom, in other words it grows underground in a spontaneous manner near plant and tree roots, especially the poplars, lime trees and oak-trees that grow in clayey and hilly terrains. The best harvesting periods; for quality and size are throughout the autumn and winter seasons, above all when there are periods of heavy rains and snowfalls. Essential for its fructification and the growth of the black truffle of Bagnoli Irpino as many summer rainfalls are needed as possible, this element guarantees a nutritional supply for the truffle spots that begin to blossom (fioroni – the early products) that will then later leave the spot for the 'sporata' which are ready to fructify in autumn. When there is a good year the black truffle can touch the quotation of 150 Euros per kilogram.



THE RECIPE**FETTUCCE PASTA WITH DRIED SALT COD AND BLACK TRUFFLE OF BAGNOLI**

The idea for this recipe is to combine two very popular foods in Irpinia, the dried salt cod and the black truffle.

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 200 g of fettucce pasta; 300 g of dried salt cod fillet; 1 tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil; 1 tablespoon of grated Parmesan 1 nutmeg; black pepper in grains to be ground up q.s.; 200 ml of full milk black truffle of Bagnoli Irpino at will.

METHOD Heat the oil at low temperature in a small pan. Dice the dried salt cod fillet and let it cook for about 3-4 minutes. Add the milk and the parmesan previously emulsified and continue cooking for another three minutes. When the sauce mixture begins to clot turn off the stove and add some grated nutmeg, Pepper lightly. In the meantime you will have started to boil the water for the pasta, with just a pinch of added salt. Drain the fettucce al dente and let the pasta cream together in the sauce with the cod for a couple of minutes. Before serving, add some thin layers of truffle on top. The milk sauce which is slightly spicy is used to balance the savouriness of the cod and to reach a perfectly balanced point with the delicacy of the truffle.

**THE PLACES Bagnoli Irpino**

Bagnoli is a pleasant town at 650 metres above sea level with just over three thousand inhabitants. The place can be used as a starting point for excursions in the Regional park of the Picentini. Certainly worth visiting before leaving the town is the lovely historical centre and a number of churches and monuments that are quite remarkable, evidencing its history that began here again with the Lombard arrival. Here there are places worth seeing: the Chiesa Madre Collegiata Santa Maria Assunta, the Complesso monumentale di San Domenico, Palazzo della Tenta, Fontana del Gavitone and Torre dell'orologio, the Convento dell'Ordine di Santa Caterina and the Chiesa di Santa Margherita. An interesting aspect is the presence of two castles. The first one is of Lombard origin, erected around 870 AD, when the principality of Benevento was divided, this then gave way to the creation of the principality of Salerno; the second one is of Norman origin, it dates back to the years between 1050 and 1100 AD. We still can clearly admire the well preserved castle walls.





The province of Benevento

We are in Campania, of course. But in some ways maybe not, bearing in mind that the city of Benevento had been a pontifical enclave until the Unification of Italy. Today, the city's central 'front parlour' is where you can find a group of wonderful palaces on the main 'Corso' that counterbalance the contiguous narrow streets of the Lombard historical centre. From the Chiesa di Santa Sofia to Trajan's Arch, to the Hortus Conclusus by Mimmo Paladino, Benevento nowadays is a sort of open air art and history museum still off the main mass tourism routes making it certainly worth being visited.

So, if the administrative centre is so beautiful, its province is indeed no exception. The Valle Telesina route, the only Campania vine-based panorama, that runs for many kilometers through rich town centres, allows you to reach the historical towns of Ponte, Torrecuso, Solopaca, Guardia Sanframondi, San Lorenzello, Cerreto Sannita where the town reconstructions after the devastating earthquake in 17th century have made them now perfect places to visit. Furthermore, there is the town

of Telese with its renown spas, and moving not faraway you can reach Sant'Agata dei Goti a really enchanting architectural gem town rich of churches and palaces. No less interesting is the walk along the valle Caudina, with its many historical centres, or towards the Molise region passing through the town of Morcone. The journey is certainly not over yet, in the Sannio area there is the Parco del Taburno that is a limited bio-diverse and uncontaminated area and then the Fortore river that passes by the town of Pietrelcina, birthplace of Padre Pio, to then reach san Marco dei Cavoti and San Bartolomeo in Galdo, two little towns that seem to be literally suspended in a time lapse surrounded by a perfect nature.

The vines and the olive trees dominate the landscape of this province, where the wide open spaces facilitate the breeding of high quality sheep and bovine. Churches, noble palaces, archaeological remains, little towns and so on: if one could put together all the weekends of a year, there surely would not be enough time to discover all these still relatively unknown beautiful places.

Caciocavallo of Castelfranco in Miscano

We are really at the extreme borders of the Sannio, Irpinia and Daunia area. Hereabouts the main activity is the cattle-breeding that has become an important value as it was founded on autochthon breeds; it is not a coincidence that here the Regio Tratturo Pescasseroli-Candela used to pass this way, this highway of the transhumance can still be traced today, by the occasional small flatland that has escaped land conversion, by the old stone fountains and drinking troughs for the animals in transit. Here, this caciocavallo is produced in a hand-crafted manner throughout the year using cow's milk; the spring milk is superb, when the cattle graze in the open air, before being brought back to the cattle sheds to spend the cold winter period. The maturing can be of just a few hours or a few months (2 or 3) and gives a fresh product like scamorza, or of over a year that gives a complexity of fragrances, aromas, intense and persistent tastes. To do it you need to use milk, whey, salt, water, calf curd and occasionally when needed, even some lyophilized enzymes. The typical feature of this caciocavallo must be especially found in the manufacturing technique that starts from the raw milk. Still today many producers use a system of spontaneous acidification caused by the use of a deal vat. Another aspect is the 'cauda' that consists in adding the whey to the curding until covering it all over to facilitate the maturing that usually takes 2-3 hours.



THE RECIPE

PASTA AND POTATOES WITH CACIOCAVALLO OF MISCANO

This is one of the most loved recipes for grown-ups and children, in Naples provola cheese is used, whereas in other inland places they prefer using the fresh caciocavallo.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 4 big potatoes; 400 g of mixed pasta formats; 200 g of Miscano caciocavallo; 1 piece of pigskin; celery, carrots and onions q.s.; Grana cheese at will; salt and pepper q.s.; extra virgin olive oil.

METHOD Take a pan and brown the celery, carrots and onions in extra virgin olive oil, add the potatoes previously peeled and diced. Let golden and add two glasses of water. Cover with a lid and let cook at low temperature for four hours. Halfway through the process put in the pigskin. Add the pasta in the cooking water, and boil. When the pasta is ready, add the diced caciocavallo, the cheese and pepper.

WINE MATCH Sannio Falanghina PDO

THE PLACES Miscano

The town has less than 900 residents but it is certainly worth a visit. A visiting 'must' are the ruins of the ancient vicus romano Aequum Tuticum at the junction between via Traiana and via Herculea. Also Casale Tre Fontane an architectonic complex of the Renaissance along the Medieval via Francigena, on the boundary with Greci. Another place to see are the ruins of the town walls and of the Medieval castle, the Chiesa della Madonna delle Grazie, with the convent that now is seat of the municipality, the Cappella di San Lorenzo and the Chiesa di San Giovanni. Inevitable is the tour of the dairy factories that produce this caciocavallo surrounded by an uncontaminated nature.



The Marchigiana meat and the White Bullock of the Central Appennines PGI San Giorgio La Molara

There are five Italian white cattle breeds: Chianina, Romagnola, Marchigiana, Maremmana, Podolica. For how strange it may seem, the third type takes its name from the region but it is bred above all in southern Italy and in the past few years with great success in the Fortore river area in the province of Benevento. It is a cross breed between marchigiana bovines of Podolica origins not improved and with Chianina bred cattle and, then further on by the union of this cross-breed Chianine-Marchigiane with Romagnola breed bulls. Only in 1932 began an analictic selection that has brought to today's Marchigiana type. It is the third meat breed in Italy and is part of the PGI labelled White bullock of the Central Appennines together with the Chianina and the Romagnola obtained by animals of both genres aged between 12 and 24 months. Of this PGI label that recognizes these regions: Romagna, Toscana, Umbria, Marche, Abruzzo, Lazio, Molise, in Campania there are the provinces of Benevento and Avellino, in Benevento thanks to the presence mainly of the marchigiana breed. The heart is the Fortore river area, especially San Giorgio La Molara. Most of the cattle-breeding in the Sannio are small and medium sized farms, that raise the cattle in a traditional way, using the pastures and cereals and forages produced on the farm: this contributes to improve the organoleptic characteristics and authenticity of the meat and above all makes the product a healthy one. The qualities of this non-intensive breeding meat are starting to become successful on the regional market and not only there. The cows are excellent mothers and conceive calves that averagely weigh 45-50 kg, they are big sized bovines, the female adults weigh around 800-900 kg, male adults from 1200-1500 kg.



THE RECIPE**OVEN COOKED VEAL FILLET**

An Italian classic cuisine that with the finest cut of the Marchigiana meat will be a great success.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 1 kilo of fillet cut meat; 30 g of butter; 2 tablespoons of olive oil; rosemary sprigs; 4 cloves of garlic; 1 glass of white wine; salt and pepper q.s.

METHOD The preparation of this meat is very simple and there are only a few steps to follow. To start, tie up the beef fillet with some cooking string and insert some rosemary sprigs to flavour it. Then allow the meat to brown inside a casserole, in which you add 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, the garlic, rosemary and the curled up butter. When the fillet has browned a bit, pour in a glass of white wine and then salt and pepper at will. Put it all in the oven for 30 minutes at 200°C. When cooked, serve the dish flavouring it with the leftover meat sauce.

WINE MATCH Taburno Aglianico

THE PLACES San Giorgio La Molara and the Fortore river

Only three thousand inhabitants live in this small town, but it is considered an absolute reference for those who seek for this highly prized quality meat in the centre of the Fortore territory. The historical centre is very attractive it has a spectacular view of the river, you can also visit the ruins of the castle and especially the surrounding area. The Fortore river goes through the provinces of Campobasso, Benevento and Foggia and its name characterizes the entire eastern area of the Sannio: it is an uncontaminated territory rich in pastures and wheat, far from the tourist flows, which is worth visiting for its enchanting little villages in particular: San Bartolomeo in Galdo and Molinara.



Burried Potato of the Taburno

In the whole district of the Taburno the cultivated potato is the mountain type, indeed, its characteristic is the preservation method: burying. An ancient rite that consists in digging holes in the medium-high mountain range terrains, in each one the tubers, harvested during the first waning moon in September, they are placed protected by layers of fern leaves and by the soil to cover the hole, along the sides that allow water to run underground. The method, dates back to the period of the brigandage, it has been recuperated thanks to the will and the commitment of the Slow food movement and the Comunità del Cibo Patata Interrata di Montagna del Taburno, founded in 2010. A project that began with the help of the pizzaioli brothers Francesco and Salvatore Salvo from San Giorgio a Cremano, they were the first to buy one year ahead of time the whole production to then use it in the preparation of croccchè. This idea has given way to a series of awareness initiatives that have given back pride to the many local producers.



THE RECIPE**POTATO CROCCHÈ OR THE NEAPOLITAN PANZAROTTO**

This is an excellence of Neapolitan street food and the Campania region, absolutely irresistible. The success of this potato crocchè depends on the quality of the ingredients and the frying.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 1 kg of potatoes; 100 g of grated pecorino cheese; parsley q.s.; Salt q.s.; black pepper q.s.; 100 g of dried mozzarella or provola; 3 whole eggs; flour and breadcrumbs q.s.; frying oil.

METHOD Cook the potatoes in boiling water. Peel and mash the potatoes after cooking.

Put the mashed potatoes in a low pan and compact all the potatoes to become very firm. Let it cool down and add all the other ingredients: the egg-yolks, parsley, pepper and the pecorino cheese. Knead it all to make a homogeneous mixture. Roll out some small balls, in the middle of them insert a strip of mozzarella. Close it and shape as a crocchè (a sort of oblong form). Cover it with flour, then damp it in the albumen and lastly roll it in the breadcrumbs. Let the crocchè rest in the fridge for a couple of hours. Fry and place them on some kitchen paper to soak up the oil.

WINE MATCH Sannio Falanghina PDO

THE PLACES Taburno

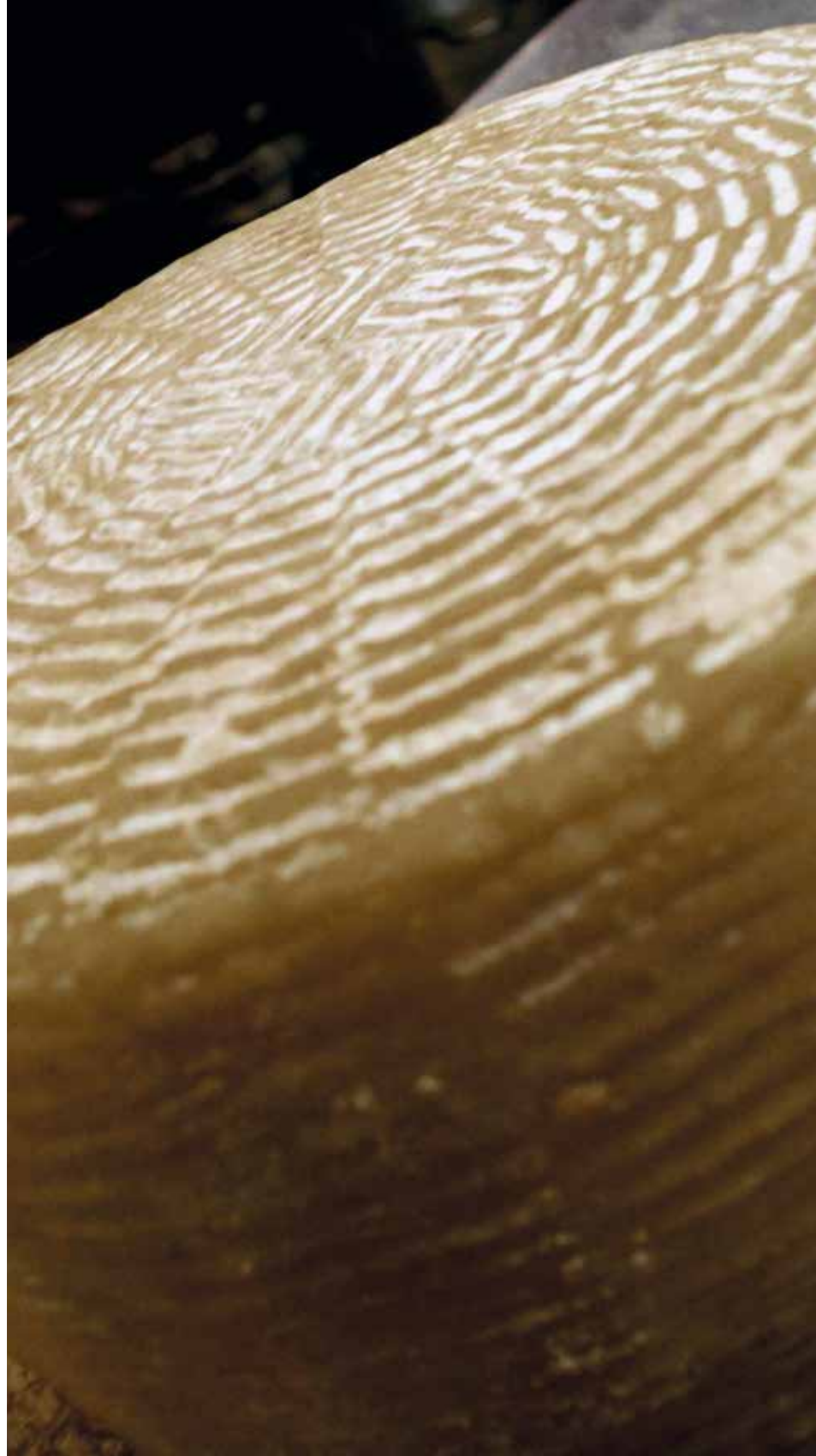
The massif of the Taburno-Camposauro, today Regional park, is entirely in the province of Benevento. In particular the Monte Taburno occupies part of the municipal territories of Montesarchio, Bonea, Moiano and Tocco Caudio. There is the National forest of the Taburno at over a thousand metres sea level, which has white oak trees (of artificial planting) and beech-trees. The fir-wood has been planted around 1846 by the Bourbons who had already passed some laws against the wild deforestation of the massif. From the peak (1393 m.) one can see a vast panorama of all the Valle Caudina. This a place for excursions, trekking, visiting little villages and the many successful wine-producing companies.



Laticauda Pecorino Benevento

The sheep of the Laticauda breed originate from the casual crossing between a local population, attributable to the Apennine sheep, and the Berber or Barbaresca sheep of north-African origins, imported to Campania during the Bourbon reign. We are talking about a north African breed that was introduced by the Bourbons in 19th century because it was particularly adaptable to warm climates and to draught periods. Imagine what far-sightedness decisions were made at that time. The name comes from the most evident physical characteristic of this sheep the broad tail, from the Latin word *latus* that means broad – *cauda* means tail: a sort of adipose excrescence, expanded at the base, that works like the humps of camels and dromedaries, it collects fat during the period of abundant pastures and exploits it during the periods of great draught to insure the survival of the species with milk production that is needed for the newborn ones. From the high quality milk, excellent pecorino cheese is produced that has unique organoleptic characteristics. The goodness and the fragrance of this cheese is the synthesis of a natural process that has its strong points in the flock feeding and the milk processing. It is a cheese with a washed and oiled crust hand worked by an expert cheesemaker with over thirty years of experience that, according to the maturing, is able to release aromas sometimes delicate other times more savoury and spicy. The maturing is variable, so it can be that it comes out a straw-yellow colour crust with an ivory inside and sweet on the palate if not so mature, or it may tend to have a reddish crust and fatty on the inside content and having a sharp taste when it is left to age. The Laticauda sheep is a breed that produces about half a litre of milk a day and is an integral part of the l'Arca del Gusto di Slow Food project.

It is present along the ridge of the Campania Apennines, but most of the sheep are concentrated in the province of Benevento.



THE RECIPE**OVEN LATICAUDA LAMB**

The Easter and Christmas recipe, typical in all the southern households. Easy to prepare, it just needs a little bit of care during the cooking.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 1 Laticauda lamb; 1 glass of red wine; 350 g of potatoes; extra virgin olive oil; parsley; rosemary; oregano; onion; carrot; Salt.

METHOD The evening before cooking, put the lamb meat in abundant water and vinegar after having carefully washed it and chopped it up into pieces. In the morning rinse it and place it on a roasting pan dressing it with oil, cut carrots, a thinly sliced onion, and a glass of red wine. Cook it in the oven at 180°C for about an hour checking that it does not stick to the bottom of the pan, if necessary, add further wine or warm water. When cooked, take the lamb out of the pan and put in the ring-chopped potatoes that have already had a pre-cooking, they must stay in the oven at the same temperature as the meat for about twenty minutes. At this point add a few sprigs of rosemary and a pinch of oregano.

WINE MATCH Sannio Aglianico

**THE PLACES Taburno**

From Trajan's Arch to the Chiesa di Santa Sofia, Benevento is a small city gem still far from the touristic mass flows. And yet a visit there is a source of enrichment, from the ancient Lombard centre to the magnificent and elegant Palace of the main high street. From the Hortus Conclusus by Mimmo Palladino to the churches. This is certainly a centre where one can adventure on excursions in the surroundings, from the Taburno to the Fortore, a livable man-sized place.



The Red Sausage of Castelpoto

In every household it is common to make a special kind of sausage, in this case, the red sausage links its name to the town. The pig breeding – since ancient epochs has been characteristic of the Sannio area – it is still performed in the traditional way: the local breeds, originally black, have been crossed with the passing of time with the more recent white breed, obtaining pigs having a sort of spotted skin pattern, that are today used for the red sausage production. The companies are working on the re introduction of the black pigs guaranteeing the production line that starts from the feeding: cereals and forages, rigorously not GMO, cultivated only in the local area. Once the pig is sectioned, the pork cuts are chosen for the following preparation of the sausage paste, they are purified in every part that is not usable: cleaned of the fat, tendons, connectives and nerves. At this stage we have the mincing of the meats, chosen exclusively among the following cuts: shoulder, leg, loin, fillet and neck. Then you begin to prepare the mixture with the exact combination of salting that includes: salt, wild fennel, infused garlic (obtained by infusing garlic bulbs and put in water for 24 hours), pepper and peppers (in dialect papauli), the latter is the real peculiar aspect that distinguishes the Castelpotano product from all the others of the nearby zones. Getting back to the processing, so the minced meat is processed with salt, the wild fennel, the pepper and the peppers powder. After having prepared this mixture, however, it would still be too dry and so right at this stage the infused garlic is added (in a percentage that varies from 1 to 1,5%). It all then is well blended together. At the end of the sausage machine, the casings are fit to be filled, these are usually cleaned pig intestines (left in lukewarm water and washed with vinegar and water). Once the mixture is ready, according to the jealously kept antique secret recipe which every single producer has, all of the preparation is introduced in the casing and, so, patiently each sausage is tied up manually. The tying is done using simple string and the final product is duly pierced. The red sausage can also be eaten fresh, but it is at its best after a period of curing.



THE RECIPE

SAUSAGES AND 'FRIARIELLI' (BROCCOLI RABE)

A much loved recipe by all Neapolitans, a perfect balance between meat and vegetables. A highly recommended winter dish.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 2 pork sausages about. 400-500 g; 3 bunches of 'friarielli'; 2 cloves of garlic; olive oil q.s.; fresh hot pepper q.s.; salt q.s.

METHOD Clean the friarielli broccoli, breaking off the stems and the damaged leaves. In the meantime put the sausages in a pan and cover with water. After about 10 minutes, start lightly pricking with a fork the sausages, in order to allow part of the fat to end up in the cooking water. Cook for another 5 minutes. Eliminate all the cooking water, and in the same pan add the oil, a squashed garlic clove, letting it all slowly brown for about 10-15 minutes. In a separate pan, let the other squashed garlic clove to brown in the oil and add the friarielli, salt and cover with a lid, after a couple of minutes, take the lid off, spice the content up with the hot pepper and continue the cooking with a high temperature for about another 5 minutes. Add the sausages in the pan with the friarielli and allow them to flavour for another 5 minutes. Serve hot. They are also very good to eat even cold as a filling for any wood-burning oven bread, a great way to have a great snack.

THE PLACES **Castelpoto and surroundings**

In Castelpoto one can visit the Castle, the Chiesa di San Nicola da Mira, San Laureato Martire and S. Andrea. Not to be missed is the Roman bridge on the Calore river. A wonderful location for excursions on the Taburno or also along the Valle Telesina, lands of wine and olive oil.



The San Lorenzello Taralli

Producing Taralli is an art that cannot be learnt in any school lesson. What is essential is experience. Explaining, describing the production process in every point is complicated. Making them is very simple. All in all any type of job is based on experience, which is then based on further experience and so on and so forth. The ingredients are fundamental, starting from the flour. For oven baked products one must use soft wheat flour. A good flour is soft at touch, its white colour must tend to be yellowish, it sticks on your fingers when you put your hand in it. Less white means a lower quality. Good bakers always put in account the "strength" of the flour, a property especially (but not always) connected to the contents of proteins. A "strong" flour absorbs a greater quantity of water in the dough and makes it more resistant. Another crucial element is the yeast. The most ancient known is the so called "pasta madre" (Sourdough), a piece of pasta dough that is put aside and preserved from previous baking processes. Once it was prepared in the bread chest ('a matarca), ancient piece of furniture like a chest, having two front doors. In here the dough process took place. You scraped the bottom of the bread chest and what was collected (it had become acid), warm water and flour was added to it and then the mixture was left to rest at room temperature. In San Lorenzello there still are some small factories that continue in this traditional manner, saving each time a small portion of the dough that will work as yeast during the next production process. The alternative to this is the use of brewer's yeast, that can be found fresh in cube formats or dry in bags. And now the dough. Water has an important role, not only to mix the flour and the yeast, but also because the yeast itself needs it. The water is added lukewarm (temperature about 20°C/30°C), before pouring in the water you can dissolve the salt needed in it. The quantity depends by the 'Strength' and level of the flour refinement, flours that absorb from 35% to 40% of their weight in water are generally used. As for the salt instead, the percentage is around 2% compared to the flour weight. Salt savours the product and improves the elasticity of the dough. The last secret of the



Laurentini Taralli is in the local olive oil that gives the final product its friability. The percentage of the flavouring usually exceeds 20% of the flour weight. The finishing touch is the use of wild fennel. Once defined the compositions it is time to work the dough. Today there are special machines, but in the past it was done manually, it took a lot of effort and enhanced the mastery of the women engaged. With the following processing small 15 cm dough sticks are prepared. Here is the step that characterizes the typical Laurentino Tarallo, the braiding. Simply overlooking the concept of a typical product: the fundamental element becomes the product making itself, the expertise in the braiding method that has been handed down for centuries. The Taralli are then left to rise on a floured cloth. Yet another delicate phase of the rising. You must keep the Taralli away from drafts, in a not too cold nor too warm environment. At the end of the rising process (time varies according to the weather conditions and other factors) the Taralli are submerged for a moment in warm water, not boiling. They simply have to go in and out of the water to then be placed on well-oiled oven trays. Now we are ready for the final stage, the oven baking. Traditionally the best Taralli are baked in wood-burning ovens, this is another operation that needs great experience. At the end of the various phases of the production process the oven must reach the correct temperature. The Laurentini bakers use different types of wood, what is important is the length of each branch: the best ones are those coming from the top of a tree plant, longer and lesser wide that guarantee a quicker flame when needed. The baking lasts for about an hour at moderate temperature.

THE PLACES San Lorenzello

The town, founded after the destruction of Telesia by the Saracens, has just over two thousand inhabitants and it is near other very nice places like Telesse, Faicchio, Cerreto Sannita and Castelvenere, the town with the greatest number of vines in the Campania region. It is also famous, like Cerrato, for its wonderful ceramics. Certainly worth visiting are the two churches, San Lorenzo and the Congregazione della Sanità. Not to be missed is also the former convent of the Carmelite fathers. Along the via Regia (we are near Pietaroja where the little dinosaur named "Ciro" was discovered) on the banks of the river Titerno there is the Parco di San Sebastiano that has "Città dei Dinosauri", a didactic park with an territorial extension of over 10.000 m². Inside the city of dinosaurs one can admire 15 fiberglass replicas scale 1:1 placed in an enchanting naturalistic environment. Monte Erbano dominates the historical centre, it is so called because it is rich in aromatic official herbs. Almost at the peak of the mountain there is special place called "Valle Santa" from which one can admire the breathtaking panorama of the Valli telesina and titernina.



The San Marco dei Cavoti Torrone

There once was a Samnite shepard who one day, mixing milk and honey on the fire, discovered a dessert with a delicious taste. The story of the 'croccantino' still goes on today in San Marco dei Cavoti thanks to the companies, about ten, that continue to offer the traditional recipe invented by the father of the torrone (a special kind of nougat), Innocenzo Borrillo. The ingredients are the traditional ones: almonds, selected honey, nuts and a very thin wafer. The passion behind this production is always the same, exactly like the choice of the prime ingredients. There is only one minor violation which is, that the bar is covered with fine dark chocolate. A similar dessert captured the ancient Roman's taste, who were very fond of the cuppedo, from which the dialect words 'copepta' for the torrone and 'copetari' for the makers. The exquisite 15 grams of this almond and nut snack have the merit of making San Marco world known, to the point that whoever comes here cannot go away without having watched the making of the giant 'croccantino' and having bought plenty of 'baci'. Traditionally called this way by the inventor, the previously mentioned Innocenzo Borrillo who really managed to take the product to reach an almost angelic taste. Born in 1871, the Cavaliere (State of Honour for Work Merit) worked for years in various Neapolitan pastry shops – among the most famous ones De Nozzo in via Toledo, Caflich in the busy via Chiaia and Van Bol & Feste in Piazza della Borsa – when he returned back home, he gave way to his enormous genius to create a perfect combination of almonds, roasted nuts and sugar, covered in chocolate icing. In the name of the family, his grandson called Innocenzo



junior today continues the tradition without having changed anything of the historical one hundred-year outlet. The furniture are original lacquered in green, and on the walls you can see all the prizes and diplomas that the Borrillo's have been awarded in the past decades, while there you can also go back in time and admire the old framed product boxes, put on display on the right hand side of the store. Another name strictly linked to this tradition is Saverio Serio, who had an idea to bring something new to the classic Benevento, honey, sugar, albumen and almond bar, he created the 'Il Preferito', produced in two varieties: the first one covered only with dark chocolate and the other with chocolate glazing, the latter is today no longer available. When coming to choose where to buy this delight you are simply spoilt for choice: there are 8 stores that sell the torrone, according to the traditional methods and most of them can be found along the central via Roma.

THE PLACES San Marco dei Cavoti

San Marco dei Cavoti is one of the most charming towns of the Fortore area. The little village is of medieval origins, that at that time was inhabited by a colony of Provençals following the King Carlo I d'Angiò, and has so many interesting places to see. Among these the Museo degli Orologi (The Clock Museum), hosted in an historical building in via Rovagnera. Inside you can find 52 examples of tower clocks that make this museum a unique gallery in the world with timepieces that go back to about 1400 AD, that were part of a private collection of a local master clockmaker Salvatore Ricci, from the year 2000 the collection has become property of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche. In the centre of the town, you cannot miss the Torre Provenziale, you will also find Piazza Risorgimento paved with local calcareous stones, the buildings Jelardi and Colarusso overlook the piazza, and in the middle one can admire fountain decorated with four dolphins in cast iron. Porta Grande is a gate of the medieval centre that takes you from via Roma to the Chiesa Madre. Today it is an integral part of the adjoining Palazzo de' Conno-Jansitie property of the municipality. The Chiesa Madre is located on the top of the medieval centre and it is the result of a complete renovation. The open space in front of the Chiesa is the Belvedere Grazionella, today it is named after Belvedere Monsignor Michele Marinella, from here, you can enjoy a wonderful view of the town and the nearby countryside. Do not miss the many other churches.





The province of Caserta

It is written Caserta, it is called Reggia (the King's Palace). Or vice versa. It is one of the most Majestic legacies of the Bourbon period that is now part of this territory, and for the benefit of the whole region too, this incredible construction has been a project that began from a dream. The surrounding area of the Reggia and its gardens, is where the new city has developed and later in time restored and today it certainly is worth a day's visit, as also Casertavecchia (the old part of Caserta), it is a clinging little hillside village which seems almost frozen in time.

Here in the city of Caserta is the administrative seat of its large province, the so called 'Terra di Lavoro' (the land of work), that during the times of the Bourbons extended all the way to Nola and northwards even touching Latina. In these places where the Campania Felix started during the Roman period, they used to cultivate the most important wine of that age, the Falerno. The whole area from Mondragone to Sessa Aurunca, today preserves traces of the ancient farm houses and the archaeological sites that can be all easily visited. But the province also has other very important

centres: the magnificent Capua that can boast an enormous quantity of Roman remains and beautiful noble palaces, Santa Maria di Capua Vetere is located exactly where the rich Capua used to be, a place with so much past history for instance there is the spectacular amphitheatre, and lastly Aversa, the town known as having a hundred churches. These are the three magical off- route mass tourism places worth seeing that can give a visitor a journey in time like dimension. The province of Caserta is not just an area of plains and zootechnics, but also a place for biodiversities: simply heading north of Caserta, to Caiatino you can discover silent and extraordinary villages and enjoy fabulous weekends seeing new things and eating great food. This journey can take you all the way up to the borders of the Lazio region, around the extinct volcano of Roccamorfin, to Teano where there was the historical encounter between King Vittorio Emanuele II and Garibaldi, and finally to a town called Galluccio, an important centre for its local wine. It is a province worth being discovered and being loved, an area rich of millenary history.

The Roccamonfina Chestnut

We are in the magical territory of an extinct volcano (it has been active for about 600,000 years, since 50,000 BC), a further reserve of mineral water for the region, immersed in oak woods and chestnut trees and completing the landscape there are olive trees and vines everywhere. The chestnuts have always been an important source of nourishment for the populations for centuries and the Roccamonfina chestnut is still today very renowned for its qualities thanks to the volcanic soil and to the pedoclimate conditions where the trees grow. Among the several chestnut trees cultivated, the most typical are the Tempestiva or Primitiva and the Paccuta. The former as the name suggests, anticipates all the others, it is present on the market during the early part of the month of September. It can boast a very high level of sugar, the skin is of a dark brown with little streaks of white, while inside it is milky white, firm and sweet. The latter instead has a more rounded shape that inspires its name: it is a medium sized fruit, with a rather delicate taste and is cultivated especially in the Teano territory. Other popular cultivations in the Roccamonfina area are the Rosselle (Russelle), the San Pietro chestnuts, the Ricce, the Napoletanelle (Napulitanelle), the Mercogliano and the Tardive (Mazzare). Having so many different varieties, we have an availability of chestnuts almost all year round.

For Roccamonfina, this fruit is considered identitarian, and they are called 'vrole' because this word comes from 'vrollaro' which is the name of the typical perforated pan where they are usually roasted in. There are also plenty of local legends. The most important one tells about Francesca San Bernardino da Siena who in the early 15th century went on a pilgrimage to the Caserta area, precisely near Roccamonfina, to pay homage to the Madonna dei Lattani. When the Friar arrived, he thought about building a convent in that location so he needed to know if the will of God was with him, he stuck in the soil his dry chestnut stick that immediately blossomed. Historically, there are documents that go back to the beginnings of the 19th century which prove the custom that chestnuts have been cultivated for the past two centuries.



THE RECIPE**THE CASTAGNACCIO**

Nowadays, not easily found in restaurants, but it is still possible to find it in the right trattorias in the hills and mountains, it represents the legacy of the times in which the chestnut had saved many communities from famine in the past centuries. Of course today, in many households it is still present, in its many family recipe variations.

INGREDIENTS FOR 10 PEOPLE 200 g of chestnut flour; 30 g of suet; 30 g of sugar; 50 g of dark chocolate; 3 eggs; 1 bag of baking powder; 50 g of candied fruit, pine nuts and almonds; 50 g of grated nuts; some bread crumbs; olive oil q.s.

METHOD Sieve through the flour and mix it with the suet. Add the sugar and the egg yolks. Separately, whisk the egg albumens until firm in a bowl and let the dark chocolate melt in bain-marie. Mix all the ingredients then add the bag of baking powder, dry fruit and crushed nuts. Pour into a non-stick pan previously greased with oil and with a sprinkle the bread crumbs. Bake for an hour at 160°C.

WINE MATCH Falanghina Passito

**THE PLACES Roccamonfina**

Traces of civilization date back to 6th century BC. when the territory was inhabited by the Ausoni or Aurunci of whom we still have remains today, in many toponyms. Roccamonfina is the centre of a very pure environmental system, on the borders of the Campania and Lazio regions, where there are many other little villages and interesting archaeological areas. The town, located at just over 600 metres above sea level, has about 3,500 residents and many places to see: the Chiesa Collegiata di Santa Maria, the Chiesa di San Michele Arcangelo, San Giovanni Battista, the Chiesa and Convento of San Domenico, the Santuario di Maria Santissima dei Lattani founded by San Berardino da Siena. Not to be missed is the little medieval town of Cerquarola, the megalithic walls and the Palazzo Colletta.



The Alife Onion

Between Alife and its onions there is an ancient bond, for which the inhabitants of the surroundings are known as the 'onion' population; in this definition there is a double meaning a homage to the onion and an acknowledgment to the people of Alife for their gentle ways, but at the same time strong in temperament. The onions have always been cultivated in this territory; the copper colour has remained dark, the shape spherical, quite flattened on the poles; the average size is (from 200 to 400 g); it has a sweet, intense and aromatic taste but not sour; excellent consistency, crunchy and firm pulp, white coloured with violet streaks.

When eating one of these onions you can easily trace a sweet taste when an early pick or slightly sharp with the late ones. It is a typical product, very common throughout the Caserta area and the Alto Lazio.

The onion cultivation is on very natural fields using natural organic fertilizers: this allows to obtain a genuine product, that has a tender consistency and a typical taste. The cultivation is done in winter and the harvest is at the beginning of June until the end of August. Well known in the whole Alife district is the particular technique of 'nziertare le cipolle' used to preserve them, braided together, manually, with threads from a graminaceous plant two metres high, that has a stem with a diameter of at least a centimeter, collected in marshlands, and then sundried. A braid has about 12-13 onions, with an ideal weight of 250-300 g each. The older farmers recommend not to let the onions 'scampaniare' (dangle), so as to avoid ruining them; after they are hung on long horizontal poles in the many farm warehouses.



THE RECIPE

ONION AND ALIFE WAX BEAN SOUP

A wintery recipe, nutritious and complete, typical of the farming culture of the southern Apennines.

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 6 Alife onions; 250 g of Alife wax beans; 1 stalk of celery; extra virgin olive oil q.s.; salt q.s.; a few slices of local stale wood-baked bread; hot peppers at will.

METHOD Cook the beans in plenty of water, with a stalk of celery, and add salt at the end. Peel 5 onions and cut them in rings, put them in a pan, salt, cook at moderate temperature until the onions begin to sweat without changing colour; at the end drain the water and let them rest. Separately brown the other peeled and cut onions with extra virgin olive oil. Lastly put everything in a pan and let simmer, adding extra salt if necessary. Serve them hot, garnish with bread slices and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.



THE PLACES Alife

Alife is located in the south west of the historical district of Sannio Alifano. It is on the slopes of the southern part of the Matese massif, almost in the centre of a natural amphitheatre, in a verdant flatland that takes its name (pianura alifana), with the Volturno river and other streams that run through. It once was a bishop's see, and it boasts an incredible number of churches that should not be missed: Maria SS. Assunta and Carlo, Maria SS. Immacolata della Congrega, San Caterina d'Alessandria, San Francesco and, outside the walls, the beautiful sanctuary of Maria SS. della Grazia, San Sisto Extra Moenia, San Michele Arcangelo, San Michele Vecchio, San Giovan Giuseppe della Croce. There are also a great number of archaeological traces of the Roman era.



The Conciato Romano cheese Castel di Sasso

In this small town called Castel di Sasso, a hamlet that is at a short distance from the main high located part of the village, is the world of the Lombardi family, Le Campestre, a place built with sweat and tears and tragic moments. It is the world of a family that represents what is nationally considered a hard working, hospitable, simple family. A family that is so simple that well conciliates today's world with the traditional farming culture. This is where the Conciato Romano was reborn thanks to the great intuition of Liliana Lombardi, initially helped by Fabio, who died young in an accident at work, and then by Manuel and his wife Eulalia. Cheese was produced to guarantee the protein reserves in summer, when sheep do not produce any milk, it was an almost forgotten cacio in its traditional amphora preserving treatment. Fresh milk is put lukewarm in bain-marie with the kid or lamb curd. You leave it for a short while so it can clot, the curd starts breaking and you keep it in warm water for another half hour. That is how the cheese is made. You salt it on one side and, twelve hours later, on the other. Then you take it out of the 'fuscelle' (small baskets) and you place it to dry in a 'casale', a simple piece of open furniture made of shelves of beech-tree boards, for two weeks. When the drying phase is over, the more typical and engaging part begins: the forms are washed using the cooking water left over after having cooked the 'pettole' (a hand-made pasta form), which is rich in starch, the forms are placed and dried on a linen cloth and after are put in terracotta jars preserved with oil, vinegar, hot peppers and pimpinella, a wild aromatic herb. The cheese, this way 'preserved', is put in the jar and sealed. It can stay in this 'preserved' way for a period that goes from six months to two years during which it matures. This preserved cheese, is also a great taste enhancer: it goes well with almost everything and this is why it has been adopted by most expert Italian restaurant owners and even by some pizzaioli (pizza makers).



THE RECIPE**PACCHERI PASTA WITH CONCIATO ROMANO, BROCCOLI AND CRUSCHI PEPPERS**

In this recipe the Conciato Romano has an important role as a flavor enhancer. What is important is not to cover the vegetable tastes.

INGREDIENTS FOR 2 PEOPLE 200 g of Paccheri pasta; 20 g of Cruschi peppers; 20 g of Conciato Romano; 1 clove of garlic; 200 g of Broccoli from Bari; extra virgin olive oil q.s.; do not add salt, there is plenty of cheese!

METHOD The preparation is very simple and fast. A recipe like this makes me think for a reason why people prefer to buy industrialized food. Put the paccheri pasta in a pot of abundant water. Up to two litres. Quickly boil the broccoli for a minute and toss them in the pan after having fried the cruschi peppers in olive oil. A couple of tosses in the air and they are ready, adjust the temperature to medium. Add the Conciato Romano and stir. Lastly unite the paccheri pasta al dente to the mixture, toss it again for a minute.

**THE PLACES Castel di Sasso**

Just over a thousand inhabitants, the town has two little villages to be visited, Sasso and Vallata. But it can also be used as a starting point for beautiful excursions in the surroundings starting off from the beautiful Capua, full of palaces and Roman ruins, in Caiazzo and Pontelatone, little towns that are surrounded by the green countryside, the former has a lovely historical centre the latter is the homeland for the Casavecchia wine. A place where to spend a weekend off the normal touristic tracks in the heart of a beautiful uncontaminated landscape, full of history.



Mozzarella and buffalo Ricotta PDO Caserta

Mozzarella like chocolate is a food that is impossible to resist. It has ancient tradition that only in the past quarter of a century has reached an incredible and unstoppable commercial success. Its history goes far back in time: in 12th century, when buffaloes began to be appreciated for their milk production, this allowed their breeding on the plains of the Volturno and Sele, in early documents there is evidence of how the Monks of the monastery of San Lorenzo in Capua were used to offer some cheese called 'mozza' or 'provatura' (when smoked), sided by some bread, to the pilgrims of the Capitolo Metropolitano, who each year, as an ancient tradition, went on a procession to the Chiesa del Convento. Only towards the end of the 18th century the mozzarella became a widespread product, also thanks to the Bourbons, who had a great buffalo breeding with an experimental annexed dairy factory for the milk processing, in the Reggia di Carditello site, the Royal estate in the province of Caserta of the Spanish dynasty. After the Italian Unification in Aversa, the 'Taverna': a real wholesale market of the mozzarella and its dairy by-products made using the same milk, in fact ricotta is a perfect example, that, every day, the product quotations would be fixed according to the production and the demand. Business was regulated by regular contracts that became effective from the 1st September until 31st August of the following year, signed by the buffalo owner who also processed the milk and was the distributor of the product. The refrigeration management, the development of technology, the founding of the Consorzio (Consortium) and the increase in controls have improved the quality of the product and facilitated the constant increment of the production extending the market firstly towards the city of Naples and all of the Campania region, then all over Italy and worldwide. The mozzarella was the first to get the PDO label, then it was the turn of the ricotta, this label protects the consumer because it clearly states which are the dairy factories that obey the rules. Although the production is also in other areas, the province of Caserta is still largely the first as for the number of animals and quantity of the product.



THE RECIPE

THE FILOCHE MOZZARELLA

A recipe that every mother would make at home for her children. On its own it was considered a complete dinner. It can be sided by some local bread.

INGREDIENTI PER 1 PERSONE 200 g of sliced mozzarella; salt q.s.; 4 eggs; pepper q.s.; a drizzle of olive oil.

METHOD Whisk the eggs vigorously, add a pinch of salt, and some pepper. Grease a pan with some oil, and heat it, add the egg mixture and allow it to cook very low and slowly, to avoid burning the underneath part of the filocche. This omelette must not be flipped over, but cooked only on one side. At this point, add the sliced mozzarella (better of the day before), on one side of the omelette and then fold the other side over to seal it. End the cooking a couple of minutes after. The filocche will finally be ready when it has a golden colour outside and the mozzarella inside is chewy and elastic, making the omelette soft and very tasty.



THE PLACES The Royal Palace of Caserta

The Royal Palace of Caserta was a desire of King Charles of Bourbon, it was such an important project he really wanted to rival with the Palace of Versailles. Actually, we are talking about the biggest Royal Palace in the world. It was Charles himself who wanted it built in the inland of Caserta because he thought that Naples was too vulnerable militarily speaking. The task was assigned to the great architect Luigi Vanvitelli. The king asked that the project included, apart from the palace, a great park and the arrangement of the urban surroundings, with the supplying of a new aqueduct (the Carolino aqueduct) that passed through the annexed San Leucio complex. The construction of the palace began in 1752 and was completed in 1845 even though it was already inhabited by 1780. Charles conceived it probably as a fixed residence of the dynasty connecting the Royal Palace to Naples with a sort of highway, but soon his heir Ferdinando preferred to stay in Naples using it as a hunting residence instead of Portici. The dimensions still today are impressive: 1,200 rooms and as for the windows there are 1742 of them, a length of about 249 metres and a height of 37,83 metres over a 47,000 m². It became too big even for the Savoia family who in 1919 handed it to the State. Still today a visit to the complex is one of the best things anyone could do staying in Italy and at least two days are generally needed, to enjoy the outside of the palace, not less grandiose and full of things to see.



The Melannurca Campana PGI Maddaloni

It is a natural medicine which we should all learn to take and not as the saying says that an apple a day keeps the doctors away.

The Annurca, may not be nice to look at compared to other biotype apples, but it surely is the most delicious and healthiest of all. Its territorial presence in the boasts over 2,500 years of history because we have evidence that cultivations were made even in Roman times, since it was very appreciated it became a fundamental element of the landscape exactly like in the frescoes found in Herculaneum that show them in the Cervi household. The fruit is medium-small size, with a flattened-rounded shape slightly asymmetric, with a little stalk, short and fragile. The peel is smooth, waxy, rusty in colour in the peduncular cavities, it is yellow and green, with red streaks on 60-70% of the ripe surface, it reaches 80-90% after the reddening on the terrain. The 'Melannurca Campana' PGI is highly nutritious for its high contents of vitamin (B1, B2, PP and C) and minerals (potassium, iron, phosphorus, manganese), rich in fibres, standardizes the intestine functions, it is diuretic, especially good for children and elderly people, it is often indicated in ill people's diet especially if diabetic. Even for the exceptional relation between acids/sugars, its organoleptic qualities cannot be found in any other apple varieties. A recent research done by the Department of Food Science of the University of Napoli Federico II has demonstrated that the 'annurca' reduces by half the oxidative damages to the gastric epithelium cells. The same care for the market is absolutely typical and unique. In fact the apple gets a 'Tan' before being boxed according to a very ancient practice that only perfect pedoclimatic conditions like in Campania. The harvesting of this fruit, begins in mid September to avoid them to decompose. After the ripening stage begins the 'Arrossamento' (reddening) with the constant exposure to sunlight for 10-15 days. The apples are placed on the terrain on 'Melài' or 'Pòrche', they are portions of terrain covered with straw mattings made from the threshing and limited by side grooves to allow the water flow. The apples are constantly turned over manually one by one (Avutàte) until they reach their typical colour that characterizes their extraordinary taste. This latter operation was usually done by women in the past. The Melannurca has two varieties: the 'Sergente' and the 'Caporale'. The former, has yellow-green streaks on the peel and an acidy taste, while the latter, is sweeter, red with little white dots. The production area of the 'Melannurca Campana' PGI includes 137 municipalities of the Campania region. The most intensive production areas are: in the Neapolitan area the Giuglianese-Flegrea, in Caserta the Maddalonese, the Aversana and the Alto Casertano, in Benevento the Caudina-Telesina valley and the Taburno, in Salerno the Irno and the Picentini.



THE RECIPE**THE ANNURCA APPLE AND CUSTARD TART**

There are dozens of recipes that can be done with apples, which often in our popular traditions, are even combined with pork meat. Here is a suggestion from the 'Istituto Alberghiero Duca di Bonvicino di Napoli' (Hotel-management school in Naples) published on the website www.mysocialrecipe.com

INGREDIENTS FOR 12 PEOPLE 250 g of '00' flour; 125 g butter or suet; 125 g sugar; 1 egg; 1 bag of vanilla; the peels of half a lemon and half a grated orange; 250 ml of milk; 2 egg yolks; 40 g starch or flour; 125 g castor sugar; ½ vanilla berry; orange and lemon peel q.s.

For the decoration: 4 annurca apples; sugar q.s.; cinnamon powder q.s.; melted butter q.s.

METHOD Knead by hand or by the use a mixer for all the ingredients, form a small loaf shape and let it rest for about 30 minutes in the fridge. Mix all together making a homogeneous dough, cook at low temperature mixing with a whip, until it boils, then let it cool. Tart preparation: cover a 20 cm cake pan with puff pastry, make holes in it and put on top a sheet of oven paper and some kitchen salt inside. Bake at 180°C for about 13-15 minutes. When ready, take out the tart, take off the oven paper with the salt and spread the cream over. As for the decorations, slice some apples, put the slices after having taken out the core, place them on the tart forming a circular decoration, sprinkle over some sugar and cinnamon, complete with some melted butter and put it in the oven once again for another 15 minutes at 180°C. When cooked, let it cool before serving.

**THE PLACES Maddaloni**

The Oscii, that already knew about the annurca apple, they founded this centre from the rural roots. This place is rich in history and it is worth visiting starting from the Sanctuary of San Michele Arcangelo and Santa Maria del Monte, at 427 metres above sea level and it is almost 1,000 years old, the arrival point of the via Crucis. Also to be seen is the Basilica minore of the Corpus Domini with the altar designed by Luigi Vanvitelli, the Chiesa Santa Margherita, the Museum of the Ancient Crafts and Farming Civilization, the Civic one, which is very important for the archeological ruins and the archeological museum of Calatia. Not to be missed is the Convitto nazionale, the most ancient school institute in Caserta, the Borgo Antico dei Fornali and the Mulino Ducale of the 17th century and lastly the Castle, symbol of the city. Dreamy and impressive, the Carolino aqueduct (ordered by Charles of Bourbon) planned and built by Vanvitelli to bring water from the Monte Taburno to the San Leucio complex.





The province of Salerno

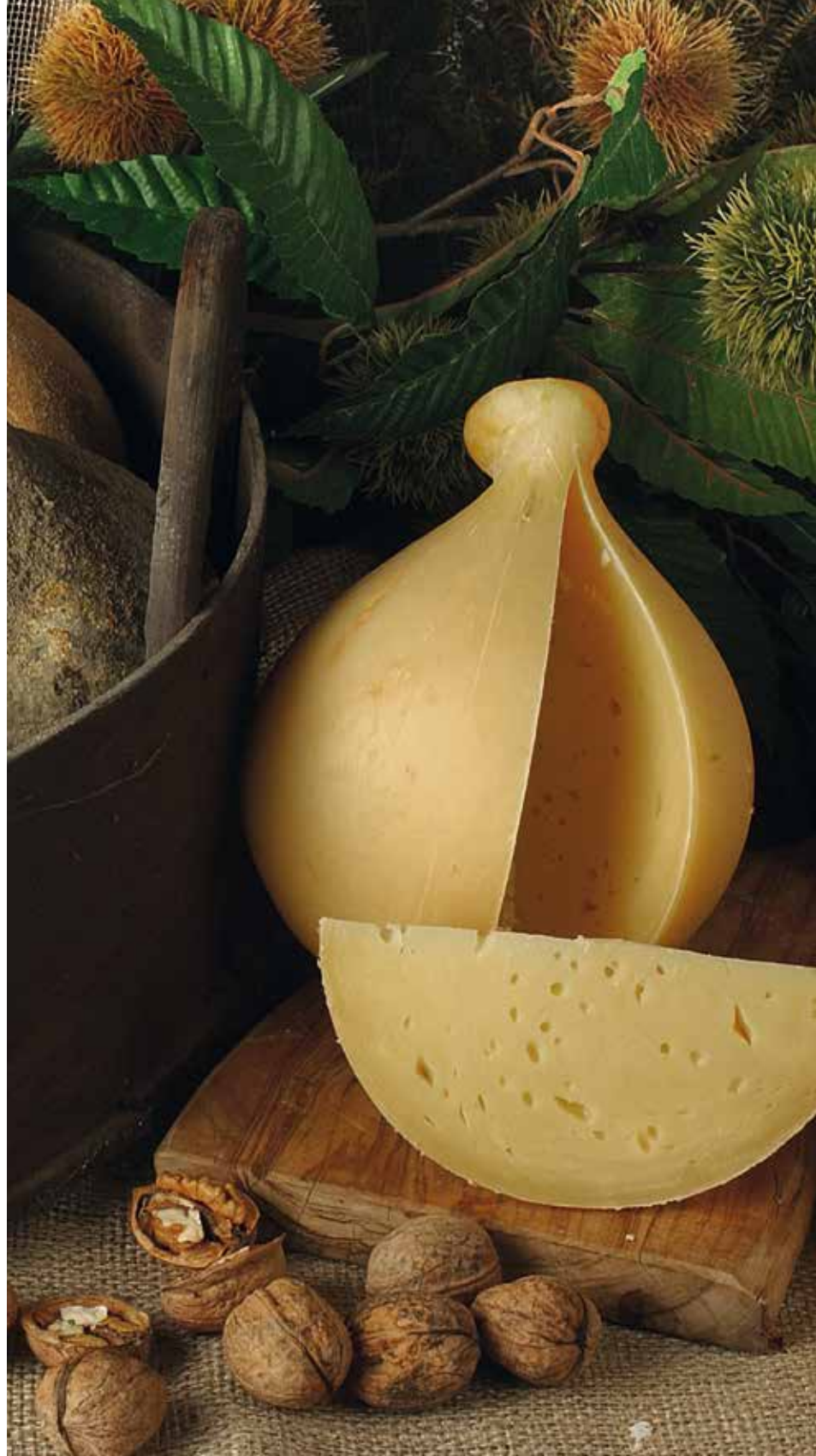
It has almost 5000 square kilometres, the second largest and tenth as for inhabitants in Italy: a province but actually many provinces in one. Salerno is the second main city of the Campania region, it has become a tourist destination thanks to the complete recovery of the city from the centre to the suburbs, to the new avant-garde architectural works and the efficient transport connections. The Duomo, the historical Lombard centre, the sea-front promenade, the palaces, the museums, together make the city an exciting attraction that combines many sorts of realities. The Amalfi coast is certainly one of them, with the towns of Amalfi, Ravello and Positano renown world over and many other centres not less important nor less beautiful, bursting of culture and history. Then we have the fertile plains of the Piana del Sele, and its thirty kilometre coastline, and the spectacular temples of Paestum with its local museum. Even the little known inland hills, are rich of small towns: like Giffoni Valle Piana with its world known Film Festival for children, or Mercato San Severino with its castle and Fisciano where today there is the university.

Northwards there is Cava dei Tirreni, the city of arcades and monuments, considered an open air 'front parlour', the Agro-Nocerino Sarnese area, rich of little towns, churches, and the thriving business of the food canning and preserving industry as well as agricultural sector, that has benefitted of the natural soil fertilization by the Vesuvius. Furthermore the Regional parks of the Picentini and the Lattari and the National park of the Cilento, are the second biggest in Italy after the nearby Pollino, not to mention the WWF oasis of the province of Salerno, which is one of the most protected in Europe for its territorial extension. The Cilento and the Vallo di Diano together with the Alburni area, can be considered a real and proper subregion both from a geological and landscape point of view. The routes of Pertosa, the historical centres of Teggiano and Padula, the spectacular Certosa di san Lorenzo, and then the two highest mountains of the region; the Cervati and the Gelbison, and lastly the gems of the Cilento coastline that go from the town of Agropoli to Sapri, reveal yet another world worth discovering.

Caciocavallo Silano Padula

It is called Caciocavallo Silano, enthusiastically celebrated by Cassiodoro, wrongly considered a product from Calabria. Actually it is a typical cheese of the southern Apennines its quality is guaranteed by the prime materials, the cow's milk comes from the cattle bred in a natural and semi-natural state. An ancient tradition, the name dates back to when there was the custom of hanging in pairs the freshly made forms mounted on wooden poles placed near the fireplaces. A technique which was described for the first time by Hippocrates and retold by many other Latin authors. The area that goes under the PDO label recognized 10th May 1993 regards the inland areas of Campania, Calabria, Basilicata, Apulia and Molise: one of the most suitable territories is the Vallo di Diano where most of the Caciocavallo Silano is commercialized thanks to the motorway connection of the Salerno-Reggio that passes right through the area. The dairy factories that produce this semi-hard steamed cheese, with a weight that goes from one to two and a half kilos, are obviously dozens, the consumer is protected by the acquired European label. There are a couple of exceptions in the Sannio area and one in the Piana del Sele, all the factories that produce it are in the Vallo di Diano, historically the gateway to the Basilicata and consequently Calabria too.

The production of the Caciocavallo Silano begins putting the veal curd in fresh milk at a temperature of 36-38°C. When the curd reaches the desired consistency, after some minutes, it is broken to obtain nut-sized lumps. Successively, the curd begins to mature until it starts to stretch. At this point a typical operation takes place, the making of a sort of cord to then obtain the desired form. After this, each piece of the cheese is sealed in the upper part and submerged in boiling water. This is done manually. The minimum amount of time for maturing is a month.



THE RECIPE**EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA**

An Italian recipe that in southern Italy will put meat aside for a long time.

INGREDIENTS 6/7 long violet Neapolitan eggplants (aubergines); 400 g ripe tomatoes; 50 g grated pecorino; 300 g of sliced spicy Caciocavallo; Silano (not fully mature); some basil leaves; 1 golden onion cut coarsely; 1 glass of extra virgin olive oil; 3 eggs; 6 tablespoons of fine-ground flour or q.s.; abundant frying oil; table salt and pepper q.s.

METHOD Wash and dry the eggplants, cut them, without peeling the skin off in long half centimetre thick slices and salt them for about an hour placing them in a colander and generously sprinkling table salt over (3 tablespoons of salt). When the eggplants will have expelled the bitter vegetation liquid, rinse under cold running water, squeeze them and place them to dry side by side on a cloth. In the meantime whisk the eggs to foam with some salt and a tablespoon of pecorino; cover the slices of eggplant with flour dip them in the eggs and then deep fry a few of them at a time, until they golden, in abundant frying oil, picking them out one by one with a skimmer and placing them on straw paper to absorb the grease. Meanwhile, in a small pot or low pan pour a glass of olive oil and let a sliced onion sweat, then add the peeled and coarsely chopped up boiled tomatoes. Add salt, pepper and let the sauce cook for about 15 minutes. Take the fried eggplants and layer them in an oiled cooking tray with some salt and sauce; sprinkle very little salt each eggplant layer and spread the sauce over, some pecorino some slices of caciocavallo and some hand broken basil leaves. Put the tray on a low fire and let the Parmigiana simmer for about 20 minutes. After the cooking, let the Parmigiana rest for a few hours until cool so it can be eaten firmly.

WINE MATCH Tintore of Tramonti

**THE PLACES Padula and the Vallo di Diano**

Inhabited since ancient times and well guarded by the Romans for its strategic position, the Vallo di Diano has many great places to visit, like Teggiano, Sala Consilina, Atena Lucana, Polla, Montesano, the greatest attraction is Padula that, apart from having a lovely historical centre, it is famous for its enormous Certosa that, after many ups and downs, it finally has been renovated and brought back to its ancient splendor. The visit to the monument, that covers five hectares, is so interesting to take a whole day: three cloisters, a church, the cells, the kitchens, the library, the Lucano museum will take the visitor around the complex that was the will of Tommaso II Sanseverino and completed during the baroque epoch.



The Paestum Artichoke

It is considered one of the symbols of the Mediterranean diet, the artichoke is one of the basic ingredients of the gastronomic culture of central and southern Italy: besides being the real protagonist of so many recipes, going from starters to desserts it even boasts extraordinary nutritional qualities for the welfare of our body and in particular for our hepatic system. But why Paestum? The roots of its cultivation in the Piana del Sele date back to the epoch of the Bourbons, in fact the statistical office already in 1811, reported the presence of artichokes in the zone of Evoli, today's towns of Eboli and Capaccio. The early specialized artichoke cultivations were carried out by farmers of the Neapolitan area who implanted 'carducci' ecotype nearby the famous Temples of Paestum. The real and proper diffusion of the artichoke in the Piana del Sele dates back to around 1929-30, thanks to the vast land clearances and the important agricultural transformation brought in by the land reform. We can even find further evidence in the book of economic geography by Migliorini in 1949 who confirms the presence and the importance in the area. The Paestum artichoke PGI, the European label obtained in 2004, well known also as 'Tondo di Paestum', is similar to the Romanesco variety. The rounded shape of its heads, their compactness, the absence of thorns are the main peculiar quality characteristics. Even the ripening precocity of the artichoke can be considered a positive element helped by the cultivation environment the Piana del Sele, that allows the Paestum artichoke to be ready on the market before any other artichoke of the Romanesco variety. Other typical characteristics of the product are the average size of their heads (not more than 4 per stalk per kg of the product), peduncle under 10 cm, green colour with violet-pink shades, fleshy receptacle and a really great taste. The commercial characteristics of the Paestum Artichoke are also a result of a careful and hardworking cultivation technique that the farmers of the Piana del Sele have made perfect in decades. The cool and rainy climate during the long production period (February-May) also gives a typical tenderness and sweetness to the product. The production area is located in the Municipalities of Agropoli, Albanella, Altavilla Silentina, Battipaglia, Bellizzi, Campagna, Capaccio, Cicerale, Eboli, Giungano, Montecorvino Pugliano, Ogliastro Cilento, Pontecagnano Faiano, Serre.



THE RECIPE**STUFFED ARTICHOKEs**

This typical recipe is common during the winter-spring seasons all over the Campania region, from the Piana del Sele to the Vesuvius.

INGREDIENTS 6 artichokes; 200 g of soaked bread; 2 tablespoons of breadcrumbs; 100 g of Caciocavallo; 40 g of black olives; 20 g of capers; 1 egg; 1 clove of garlic; 1 lemon; olive oil; salt and pepper.

METHOD Take off the external leaves, the hardest ones, clean the stalk and cut it at the base of the plant. Cut the artichoke eliminating the top tip and put the stalks and the artichokes in water and lemon. The lemon is necessary to avoid the product to blacken. Prepare the mixed stuffing. In the meantime, chop the parsley and the garlic finely and mix it all with the grated caciocotta, the provolone cut in pieces, the breadcrumbs, olives, capers, salt and pepper and a drizzle of olive oil. Fill each artichoke inside. Put the artichokes in a baking tray, sprinkle with olive oil, then add in the tray three centimetres of water and salt and cook the artichokes in the oven at 180°. Cook for 30 minutes, then let them cool down before serving.

WINE MATCH Cilento Rosato

THE PLACES Capaccio Paestum

The Piana del Sele is today one of the most complete territories from a gastronomic point of view, it is not a case that the Michelin guide has recognized a star to three restaurants. There is a stretch of seafront for about 20 kilometres, advanced buffalo zootechniques, with the state of the art agricultural culture in the area combine with the great biodiversities of the hillsides. The central part is based on the temples and the archeological area of Paestum where you can find some of the best preserved remains of ancient Greece. The local museum is one of the most important in the world, not to be at all missed. Agriculture and tourism are the principal resources of the territory thanks to a network of far-sighted entrepreneurs that have made it a continuously growing hub.



The White Artichoke of Pertosa

Pertosa, the town of the caves, together with the neighboring towns of Auletta, Caggiano and Salvitelle make a unique and uncontaminated territory that connects the Sele valley to the Vallo di Diano. In these four small towns we can find the white artichoke of Pertosa of the low part of the river Tanagro, this river passes through all of the cultivation areas on the hillsides that go from 300 to 700 metres above sea level. The name expresses its most evident characteristic: it is an artichoke very light in colour, a pale green, silvery white. The inflorescences are big, rounded, bloated, without thorns, with a distinctive hole at the top. The peculiarities of the White artichoke of Pertosa are many, but above all we must underline its resistance to low temperatures, its delicate colour (a light green, almost white), the sweetness and the extraordinary delicacy of the inside bracts. These features make it an excellent artichoke to be eaten raw, maybe with a local extra virgin olive oil dip. Here is an ideal gastronomic match that puts together the two highly important agricultural vocations of the area: the tiny artichoke fields (always almost about a hundred square metres), in fact, traditionally alternate with the olive trees cultivation.

In the '80s the variety was risking extinction, but thanks to a group of farmers the cultivation was resumed and it has become an important source of territory income.

The production generally begins towards the last ten days of April and continues until the end of May, depending on the seasonal performance. The principal artichoke heads are usually eaten freshly and cooked in numerous ways, instead the secondary heads are preserved in extra virgin olive oil, or transformed in cream and preserved in extra virgin olive oil too.



THE RECIPE**ARTICHOKES IN OIL**

The art of preserving food has allowed humanity to survive until the advent of the refrigerator. A craftsmanship that is slowly disappearing and for this very reason it is considered so precious. The white artichoke is very suitable for this type of preservation managing to keep intact its freshness and taste.

INGREDIENTS 2 kg of artichokes; 1 litre of water; 1 litre of white vinegar; 6 cloves of garlic; salt q.s.; extra virgin olive oil q.s.; mint, bay leaves and parsley.

METHOD Boil a large pot of water and vinegar. When at boiling point salt. Now put in the pot the artichokes, already cleaned and cut in small chunks or whole if quite small. Allow to cook for no more than 8-10 minutes, medium-low heat. So as to avoid them becoming too soft, and preserving a crunchy consistency. When the cooking time is over, drain them and let them dry heads down on a clean cloth for 10-12 hours. Now start chopping the garlic cloves in very small pieces, exactly like the herbs you have chosen. Put the drained and dried artichokes into sterilized jars, together with the herbs and the garlic. Fill up the jars with plenty of olive oil, before sealing the jars. Let them rest for a few weeks before eating. Remember that once opened, they must be consumed as soon as possible and stored in the refrigerator.

WINE MATCH Cilento Rosato

THE PLACES **Pertosa**

The town is famous for its caves, it is the only speleological site in Italy where you can navigate an underground river, entering right into the heart of the mountain. It extends for over 3,000 metres in the massif of the Monti Alburni, on a path where stalactites and stalagmites decorate every space with different shapes and colours. A unique and exciting visit. Certainly worth seeing are the two sites of the Mida Museums. The first one is in piazza De Marco, that hosts the speleological and archaeological Museum: it has an exhibit that documents this exceptional archaeological underground site of the Grotte di Pertosa-Auletta, with its pile-dwelling underground system unique in Europe, is the proof that human attendance can be dated back to 40,000 years here. The museum site in via Muraglione, hosts the Museo del Suolo (Museum of the territory), the first one in Europe: an exhibition surface of about 1,500 m² with an interactive and multimedia tour inside the mechanics of the ecosystem, discovering fundamental resources like aria and water, that must be preserved and protected.



The Cicerale Chickpeas

On the hillsides of Agropoli covered with Mediterranean scrubland, right where the road ends the municipality of Cicerale had an idea that to make people come and visit the town it would be enough to simply give more sense to the municipal insignia: "The land that the chickpea prefers" recites the Latin inscription around a little chickpea plant. In 1998 the municipality chaired by Mimmo Corrente, before the institution of the municipal denominations began, adopted a severe production regulation that requires the organic cultivation certified Aiab and bans any irrigation. After the regulation approval the municipality gave to its citizens the seeds and the organic fertilizer: and that was how the chickpea, that had been certainly cultivated there since the year 1000, traces in documents prove it, became once again the protagonist of the town that took its name from it. With some sales promotion at the National Fair of the organic products 'Cilento Delizie', arranged in the little streets and alleys of the hamlet of Monte Cicerale and the result was that the production increased enormously and the cultivation has extended. The chickpea of Cicerale is one of those products that anyone today would willingly boast about. The harvest, at the end of the month of July, is very tiresome. Once the seed is mature the plants by now withered are rooted up in the fields and left to dry, until they are dried enough for the threshing. The plants are placed on jute sacks, covered and are beaten with large wooden canes or are threshed with a small machine placed near the field and hand powered. The rugged terrain and the presence on the plants of pods growing near to the terrain prevents the use of a self moving threshing machine. The chickpea of Cicerale is rather small and it is characterized by a slightly darker colour than usual; due to its low content of humidity when harvested it can be preserved for a long time and tends to get quite big during its cooking. The chickpea is an important legume in the farming diet of the central-south of Italy and it is also part of the Neapolitan gastronomic culture, where it is usually eaten with mixed pasta formats and some hot pepper.



THE RECIPE**SCIALATIELLI PASTA WITH CICERALE CHICKPEAS**

A nutritious and complete recipe, where the Scialatielli hand-made pasta invented on the Amalfi Coast, takes the place of the traditional lagane pasta.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE For the scialatielli pasta: **300 g double-milled durum wheat flour; salt q.s.; 1 tablespoon of the Cilento extra virgin olive oil; cold water q.s.;** For the sauce: **360 g homemade Scialatielli pasta or of a good artisan brand ; 200 g dried chick peas of Cicerale; a handful of almonds; extra virgin olive oil q.s.; 1 clove of local garlic with its papery skin salt q.s.; 2 bay leaves; 1 stalk of celery; 150 g of smoked provola at will.**

METHOD For the scialatielli pasta Place the semolina in a rounded crater form, add salt and gradually pour the cold water in the centre and then mix manually to obtain a firm dough, add oil, and make a bun shape and then roll out with a rolling pin. Avoid making a very thin sheet of dough and then cut in double strips. Alternatively you can use a modern pasta maker to home make it. The night before preparing the recipe put the chickpeas in water, the morning after drain them and soften them in plenty of water with bay leaves and celery. As soon as it starts bubbling, allow it to foam, lower the heat; let it cook for about two hours. In a deep large pan brown the garlic with oil, add the almonds and half of the softened chickpeas and let them cook for five minutes. Blend the other half of the chickpeas in their water reducing them to a dense cream, join with the sauté and salt. Separately, you soften the scialatielli in abundant water and salt and drain them very al dente; cream them in the pan with the mixture of chickpeas, almonds and sauce. At will you can add some diced smoked provola creaming on a medium heat. Transfer it all in a table soup plate and serve very hot.

WINE MATCH Cilento Fiano

**THE PLACES Cicerale**

A town that has just over a thousand inhabitants, near the gateway for the Cilento area on the hillside that overlooks Agropoli. The hamlet of Monte Cicerale is enchanting, it is part of the Parco del Cilento and the nature here is absolutely uncontaminated. Certainly worth visiting is the Diga dell'Alento (the Alento Dam), a ten minute drive from here, it is a place where many protected species live, to be enjoyed using specific pathways. Other places to see nearby are the little towns of Prignano, Ogliastro, Torchiara, Rutino and Laureana, that have plenty of holiday farms, churches and noble palaces.



The Cipollotto Nocerino

Not many people know that the Cipollotto Nocerino PDO is, after the tomato, the most important cultivation in the Agro Nocerino sarnese area covering a specific surface of about 1400 hectares. A cultivation that goes back in time as can be seen in some of the frescoes in Pompeii and that continued in the following centuries as documented by the Scuola Medica Salernitana (Schola Medica Salernitana). By the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century the ecotypes that are referred to as the 'Cipollotto Nocerino PDO' are reported and described in the Agronomy manuals and in the catalogues of the most important seed producing companies. This is a confirmation of the important role that the agriculture of the Agro area has had in the demographic development of the metropolitan area of Naples. With the recognition of the PDO label, the production territory has been clearly defined, an area that is continuously fertilized by the presence of the Vesuvius. Precisely 21 Municipalities have been recognized between the provinces of Salerno and Naples: Angri, Castel San Giorgio, Nocera Inferiore, Nocera Superiore, Pagani, Roccapiemonte, Sarno, San Marzano sul Sarno, S. Egidio del Monte Albino, San Valentino Torio, Scafati, Siano e Boscoreale, Castellammare di Stabia, Gragnano, Poggiomarino, Pompei, Santa Maria La Carità, Sant'Antonio Abate, Striano e Terzigno. The distinctive characteristics are a harvesting size from 2-4 cm (they are part of the onions considered of medium-small size), the cylindrical shaped bulb with the outer skin, flattened at the poles, with a slight enlargement at the base of the leaves, the inner and outer skin is completely white, juicy pulp and with a sweet taste, the colours of the leaves are an intense green, linear in form with a pointed tip. Being an onion that is harvested in spring (from March to June) it is used above all for a fresh consumption until the end of summer. It is perfect for salads and other simple light preparations. Another benefit of the Cipollotto is thanks to the manual skills of the producers that place on the market a product practically ready to cook, that does not need further cleaning, a result that comes from secular craftsmanship in the agricultural-commercial sector typical of the Agro area. The European recognition of the PDO arrived in 2008 and it has helped to enhance the product besides protecting it from attempted fake ones.



THE RECIPE**THE ONION FRITTATA**

The cipollotto must be consumed fresh. So nothing better than a good old onion frittata (omelette with onions) that no matter what you may think, it is very digestible besides being tasty and healthy.

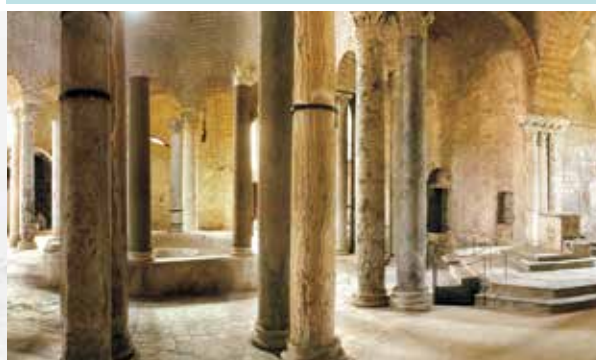
INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 1½ kg of Cipollotto nocerino; 6 eggs; 80 g Parmesan and 80 g of grated Roman pecorino; extra virgin olive oil q.b.; salt q.s.; pepper q.s.

METHOD Peel and clean the onions and cut them very finely. In a deep and large pan pour a drabble of extra virgin olive oil, the onions, cover with a lid and let the onion sweat for about ten minutes. Allow the onions to cool and whisk the eggs with salt, pepper, grated cheeses. Add the mixture to the onions, stir in an even way to spread it all over the pan and let cook on medium heat. Toss over the frittata a couple of times to avoid it burn. Then let it rest for a moment before serving. A great idea for a snack if there is some left over: take the corner piece of a San Sebastiano loaf of bread, the remains of the frittata and a fresh salad tomato with a basil leaf. What more can you ask for!

WINE MATCH Paestum Rosato IGT

THE PLACES Nocera dei Pagani

The town has at least 4000 years of history, this area since 1806 has been called Nocera dei Pagani and that Giuseppe Napoleone divided in 5 Municipalities, the two Nocera's (Inferiore and Superiore), Pagani, Sant'Egidio and Corbara. A first class agricultural hub developed thanks to unique pedoclimatic conditions: sunlight, volcanic soil, abundant water. In Nocera Inferiore there are three basilicas not to be missed: The Cattedrale di San Prisco, Basilica and Convento di Sant'Antonio and Basilica di Sant'Anna. Worth visiting is the Palazzo Fienga that overlooks the Agro area, the Palazzo Lanzara and the Palazzo Ducale. In Nocera Superiore there is the early Christian Baptistery of Santa Maria Maggiore and the Basilica Santuario di Materdomini besides the archeological area of the monumental necropolis that shows the importance that the centre has had since the Roman epoch. Pagani hosts the Basilica Pontificia of Sant'Alfonso Maria de Liguori and the Sanctuary of the Madonna delle Galline from which one of the most popular events of southern Italy originates. Sant'Egidio del Montalbino and Corbara are the two access towns to the Amalfi Coast that can be reached passing through the Chiunzi pass. The historical centre of Sant'Egidio is stunning, in its territory we can also find: the Torre di Chiunzi, the Abbazia di Santa Maria Maddalena in Armillis, the Roman Aqueduct, the Chiesa di San Lorenzo and San Diodato Martiri. In other words, an urban area of about 100,000 inhabitants with many traditions and things to see besides being a high precision agricultural reference and a National hub in the canning industry.



Colatura di alici of Cetara (Percolated anchovies)

According to many historical gourmets the 'Colatura' should come directly from "garum" and from 'liquamen' of Roman times and since then many recipes have come down to us today; all of them used as raw materials more or less fat fish with their guts with some salt and spices then put out in direct sunlight for periods of twenty to thirty days even up to months from which a liquid or semisolid sauce was obtained, having an extremely strong flavor that covered every other one. This was used as a substitute for salt and to flavor and enrich food. What has fermented can be appreciated and therefore pleasant for some people, but also synonym of decomposed and so revolting for others. The choice of the best level of fermentation varies according to the cultural tradition. In Cetara, town of tuna and anchovy fishermen, a Saracen soul under the coastal dominion of the Republic of Amalfi, it was a liquid that was homemade obtained by the salting of the anchovies fished at the beginning of summer to be ready for use during the winter season. The origins of the 'Colatura' date back to a specific episode that took place around 13th century by Cistercian monks of the Antica Canonica di San Pietro a Tuzolo, on the homonymous hill near Amalfi. The monks used to salt the anchovies fished between May and August in barrels whose staves, in time became loose, were of no use to store wine anymore. The barrels were placed on pairs of parallel wooden beams, walled at half a metre high from the floor, they were the so called 'mbuosti'. Little by little the salt seasoned the anchovies letting them lose their remaining liquids that 'percolated' through the gaps of the barrels and filled the place of a strong and pleasant smell and the monks had the idea to use it on cooked vegetables like broccoli, potatoes, etc.

Another version that regards the monks again at the same time tells about a ship that was transporting 'terzigni' (wooden containers) of salted anchovies, and after a storm, when the cook went down to the hold to take some salted anchovies to eat he was struck by this intense aroma that was coming from the liquid that was percolating through the movement of the staves that had been loosened by the storm. In both versions the discovery of the 'Colatura di alici' was disclosed by the monks to the fishermen who made some changes in the process using for some productions also a sort of 'cappuccio' (a sort of cap) to improve the filtering. At the beginning it was the Confraternita delle Alici, then with the Associazione Amici delle Alici, and then again the Slow Food association and the engagement of the municipality, the fact is that Cetara has become the reference for this kind of flavouring that now is running for the recognition of the European label.



THE RECIPE**SPAGHETTI WITH THE COLATURA DI ALICI (PERCOLATED ANCHOVIES)**

Once it was a poor man's recipe for Xmas Eve, today a food reference for all gourmets. Here it is, in its simplest version, the way it used to be prepared at home.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 400 g of spaghetti; Colatura di alici of Cetara; 1 clove of garlic; parsley; spicy peppers; extra virgin olive oil.

METHOD Put in a salad bowl the chopped garlic, parsley and hot pepper in olive oil. Cook the 'pasta al dente' without any salt, drain and put them all together with the flavouring. Add the colatura at your taste.

WINE MATCH White wine of the Amalfi Coast

THE PLACES Cetara

It is a small fishing town, it once was considered like the holiday outdoor resort of the Agro Nocerino Sarnese and of Salerno. Thanks to the activity of four of its main restaurants: Al Convento, Aquapazza, La Cianciola and San Pietro, it has become a gastronomic reference point, the first district of this kind in Campania. The town's beaches are an enchantment for most of the year, the local festivity for San Pietro is an event not to be missed. Its local harbor turns into a chance for a visitor to see the whole coastline by boat. The town is easy to reach because it is at only six kilometers from the Vietri exit on the Napoli-Salerno motorway. The place is full of history and of battles between Christians and Saracens, today it still has the same population as it used to have during the Italian Unification, about 3,500 inhabitants. Certainly worth a visit is the watch tower, completely renovated and today of public property.



The Controne bean

Simply looking at it, you seem to be admiring a pearl. The Controne bean is of the rounded variety, so surely it is a legume of Italian origin and not imported after the discovery of America. The town is in the Alburni, very near the Calore river where it is said otters live, a pure uncontaminated eco system where there has always been an agriculture of self-substantiation and therefore has been able to maintain unchanged a great heritage of biodiversity. The white bean has a peculiarity of its seed, like its pod it is completely white. It has a very low tendency to break during the cooking and so it needs less time than any other standard bean. It has like a rounded oval form, small, with unique organoleptic characteristics which makes it highly sought after in the sector of its niche market into which it has slowly entered. Its thin skin, practically imperceptible, gives it a high digestibility. The seeding of the ecotype 'Fagiolo di Controne' takes place during the first and second ten days of the month of July in order to have the full blossom during the first half of September. The picking of the dry bean pods takes place in November.

In the territory there is an abundant quantity of water thanks to the many water sources, whose waters, being rich in kaolin, give nutritional and organoleptic distinctiveness to the 'king of beans'.

The cultivation of this legume, much loved by gastronomic connoisseurs, is certainly one of the strengths of the territory where other legume cultivations have also began like lentils. In Controne the bean production involves many of the town's inhabitants, even though only a few have a significant cultivations. The other plants can be found in small gardens here and there in the countryside. Even those who produce in major quantities can count only on limited small plots of land: the geographic configuration of the zone and the inclination of the territory do not allow extensive cultivations. Therefore we have a product that has a strong local identity that involves the whole small community.



THE RECIPE**BEAN SOUP**

If in the main coastal towns beans are usually cooked with standard pasta, generally short or mixed formats, the inlands instead prefer to cook them with handmade fresh pasta like 'lagane' or even more simply with piece of stale left over bread.

INGREDIENTS FOR 6 PEOPLE 500 g of Controne beans; 100 g of cherry tomatoes; 2 wheat flour biscuits; extra virgin olive oil; 1 clove of garlic; 1 piece of lard; fresh parsley; 1 stalk of celery; pepper; salt.

METHOD Put the beans in bain-marie for a couple of hours and then cook them for about an hour. Prepare a sauté of garlic, lard and a drizzle of olive oil, then unite the beans and the cherry tomatoes, with the celery, finely chopped fresh parsley and cook for about half an hour. Just before serving add a dribble of olive oil and a sprinkle of pepper. You can also enrich the soup with some left over bread placed at the bottom of each plate.

WINE MATCH Cilento Aglianico

**THE PLACES** **Controne and the Alburni**

In the town of Controne today we can find just under a thousand inhabitants, this place is a fine starting point to discover the Alburni, the karst massif that overlooks the Piana del Sele, gateway to the Vallo di Diano. The best period to visit the town is obviously during the bean festival, whose first edition dates back to 1983 and it takes place on the last Saturday and Sunday in the month of November. For those who enjoy naturalistic walks Controne is one of the most uncontaminated places in Italy.



THE WHITE FIG OF THE CILENTO PDO

It is impossible to imagine how important figs have been for the survival of the farming communities in the past centuries. It is not a case that traces date back to the 6th century BC of the presence of this tree plant is considered a constant source of energy for man. When figs are left to dry, they could be used for the whole year round and be part of forgotten recipes sweet and sour. Bread and figs was a favourite snack that farm workers would bring with them in the working fields. Around, mid 15th century there is evidence in the 'Quaderno doganale delle marine del Cilento' (1486), the existence of a flourishing production activity and commerce of dried figs, sold on the main Italian markets as a food excellence. Even today fig trees, together with olive trees, are the milestone plants of the Parco Nazionale del Cilento.

The product is protected by the European label it is the variety that comes from a specific ecotype of the cultivar Dottato, that has been selected and spread in the Cilento area in the past centuries: the "Bianco del Cilento" (The White Fig of the Cilento) that takes its name to the light yellow colour of the dried fig skin, that becomes brownish for the fruits that go through an oven cooking. The pulp has a doughy consistence, with a very sweet taste, of an amber yellow colour, with achene usually empty and an inside receptacle almost full. These characteristics, that are considered of excellence for the commercial category of dried figs, are the distinctive features of the 'Bianco del Cilento' PDO on the markets. The famous 'cilentani' are fig skewers with bay leaves, stuffed with almonds and nuts. In the past decades figs have been dipped in chocolate and many artisans have enhanced the taste in new ways, like the 'soppressata di fichi secchi' (a sort of dried fig salami). When it is Xmas time, there are always plenty in every household, they are a symbol of prosperity, and an identity fruit just like in the Calabria region. The production zone of the 'Fico Bianco del Cilento' PDO includes 68 municipalities, in the southern part of the province of Salerno, from the hillsides of the coastal area of Agropoli up to Bussento and in most of the area of the National Park of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano.



THE RECIPE**WHITE FIG TART WITH BUFFALO MILK RICOTTA**

It is a very easy dessert to make, it combines two territory products.

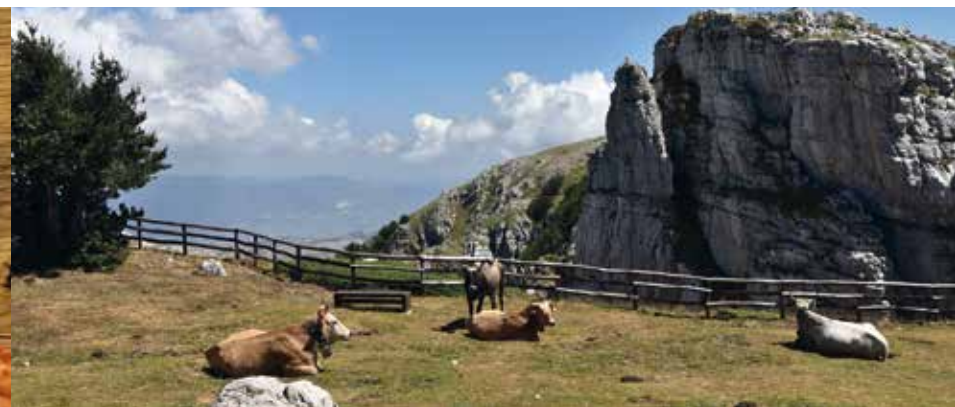
INGREDIENTS 250 g of puff pastry; 500 g buffalo milk ricotta; 2 eggs; 4 tablespoons of sugar; 10 white figs of the Cilento.

METHOD Pass the ricotta through a potato masher and mix it with sugar and eggs. Place $\frac{3}{4}$ of the puff pastry in a non-stick baking tray, pour in the mixture. Cover it with peeled figs split in two parts, lastly cover the tart using the remaining puff pastry in any pattern you prefer. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for about 45 minutes.

WINE MATCH Fiano Passito

THE PLACES The National Park of the Cilento and Vallo di Diano

It is the second largest park in Italy, the protected area includes 181,048 hectares in the southern part of the region, surrounded by the Piana del Sele on the north side, the Basilicata in the east and south and the Tyrrhenian sea west. It covers, almost the total of the territories of 80 municipalities. From 1998 it has become a World heritage site of Unesco (with the archaeological sites of Paestum and Velia and the Certosa di Padula), in 1997 Biosphere Reserve and since 2010 it is the first Italian National Park to become a National Geopark. Its resources are enormous, it goes from the almost one hundred kilometres of poorly exploited coastline to the highest mountains in the Campania Region, the Cervati and the Gelbison. We may mention just a few like: the archaeological areas of Paestum, Velia, the Certosa di Padula, the Natural Arch of Palinuro.



The Amalfi Lemon PGI

The lemon of the Amalfi coast is not really a good looking one, compared to its more elegant relative from Massa Lubrense. It has a thick and rugged peel and a very irregular shape, an elongated and not rounded form. But the 'sfusato' lemon of the Amalfi coast is certainly very good inside, it has a juicy pulp and its beautifully fragrant, almost without seeds. The typical terrace cultivation of this citrus has remodelled the downward slopes of the coast and furthermore has given a dash of yellow colour to the landscape. Here the cool air of the nearby Monti Lattari and the sea breeze that comes from the coast create the ideal conditions for the cultivation of this lemon variety, and whose excellence, uniqueness and beneficial properties have been recognized having obtained the European label PGI in 2002. A recognition that confirms what our ancestors already knew: the 'sfusato' of Amalfi is the richest in vitamin C among all the lemon varieties. In the times when Amalfi was a Maritime Republic, it was decreed that on board of every ship leaving the coast there always had to be a stock of lemons on board, necessary to cure scurvy, a disease due to the lack of vitamin C. The Amalfi lemon, initially was called 'citro'. Only from the beginning of 13th century it began to be called with a word of Arabic origins, the so called 'limunzello'. The Arab influence has meant that the Scuola Medica Salernitana (Schola Medica Salernitana) started to practice scientific experiences imported from all over the Arabic world for which there was a request for Amalfi lemons. The use of lemons for medical purposes, and not only, began to spread even more thanks to these experiences, from the second half of 19th century, when the inhabitants of the coast started to sell to markets the lemon in faraway places. The lemon of the Amalfi coast is even today cultivated according to the traditional agricultural techniques, letting the lemons trees grow in the typical terraces, called 'macerine'. The cultivation is done under a structure made of chestnut wood poles, variable in height, when in the wintery season the structures are covered in order to protect the plants from the cold. The plants are at a fixed distance one from another: for each cultivated hectare there are over 800 plants, that corresponds to a maximum productive capacity of 35 tons of lemons.



THE RECIPE**LEMON ‘SOSPIRI’ CAKES**

You can use lemon as you like when cooking, but the most delicious way is certainly when it comes to pastry making.

INGREDIENTS FOR 6 PEOPLE 6 ‘Sospiri’ sponge cakes (pear shaped sponges); 500 g crème patissière; ½ litre of whipping cream; 300cl of fresh whole milk; 2 lemons; 6 lemon leaves; 50 cl of limoncello.

METHOD Cut the ‘Sospiri’ in half with a knife and take away the inner part where the cream will go. Using a brush wet the parts with limoncello liquor and let rest. Whisk the cream and add a part in the crème patissière in order to create the chantilly cream that has to be aromatized grating a lemon peel over and adding a few drops of limoncello. With this lemon chantilly cream, fill the ‘Sospiri’ using a spoon. With the remaining chantilly add some more whipped cream and mix and then slowly add some cold whole milk. In this stage it would be better to manually work the lemon sauce, because it will be according to the expertise of the pastry chef how much more milk is needed for the desired density and luminosity required. At this point, dip the ‘Sospiri’ heads down into the sauce and using a fork overturn them and place them on a plate checking that the sponge is completely covered. Using a pastry bag finish off the ‘Sospiri’ with a swirl of whipped cream, a piece of lemon peel on the top, some grated fresh lemon peel sprinkled over and a decorating leaf. Allow to mildly cool in the fridge and serve.

WINE MATCH Limoncello

**THE PLACES Amalfi**

As commonly known, Amalfi reached its maximum splendor in the 11th century, after which a rapid decadence began, in 1131 it was conquered by the Normans and in 1135 and 1137 sacked by Pisa. In 1343 it was almost destroyed by a seaquake. Today it has just over 5000 inhabitants and it is the most important town on the Amalfi coast, a great starting point for any excursions, especially the fascinating one along the Valle dei Mulini among the many paper mills. Of the many monuments the most important one is the Duomo in Arab-Sicilian style and dedicated to Sant’Andrea, patron saint of the town. In fact more than simply talking about the Duomo, one should talk about its complex, since the building is made up by the super positionings and sidings of various churches in different epochs. We can also find the Chiesa di Santa Maria a Piazza, the Basilica del Crocifisso and Museo Diocesano, the Chiesa and the convent of Sant’Antonio. Staying in historical hotels and walking around narrow streets, we can see the gastronomic offer here is absolutely at high levels thanks to the many restaurant owners who work quality wise, among them there is also the oldest Michelin starred restaurant in Campania. The desserts here cannot be missed at all, just go and visit one of the historical pastry shops, heirs of the monastic tradition. Lemons here are everywhere, in bars, shops, it definitely is the identity fruit of the town.



The Marron of Roccadaspide PGI

The chestnut culture has been fundamental for the survival of the communities all along the central-southern Apennines. As we have seen for the provinces of Caserta and Avellino, also in Salerno it is possible to find a wide presence of chestnuts that outline the local landscape in an unmistakable way over 250 metres above sea level starting from the Picentini mountains, up to the Cilento passing through the Alburni. This ecotype has come right from the Irpinia area that has had a cultivation and commercial success taking the name Marron of Roccadaspide and obtaining the European label PGI. From the end of 19th century the chestnut productions of the area, considering their excellence, have slowly established themselves not only on the national markets, and consequently the sector has been affected to further cultivation technical improvements and quality standards. The fame of the 'Marrone di Roccadaspide PGI' continued helping the widespread especially in other municipalities of the chestnut area of Salerno and the Cilento. In the '40s an important flute grafting intervention on a 'franco' or wild rootstock, using side grafts coming from the area of Roccadaspide, extending the production zone. This kind of varietal conversion in time, has gradually consolidated in fact today all the new graftings of the area use this cultivar. The production zone of the 'Marrone di Roccadaspide PGI' is located in the province of Salerno in particular in the area of the Alburni, the Calore river and a part of the Cilento, it mostly coincides with the territory of the Parco del Cilento and Vallo di Diano. The municipalities included in the area are 70. The variety is part of the genetic group of chestnuts that are present in Campania that relate to the cultivar-madre 'Marrone di Avellino'. The distinctive characteristics of the 'Marrone di Roccadaspide PGI' are evident in the average size of the fruit (80-85 pieces of fruit per kilo) of a generally spherical form, sometimes rounded. The shell is thin and of a dark brown colour, tending reddish, with dark stripes that are not very evident, and easy to peel off. The seed has a thin epispem, smooth, not very deep in the seed and a milky-white compact pulp. A distinctive character of this product is the great sugary content that makes it delicious even when eaten freshly and the texture is crunchy and not floury. For the excellent technological characteristics of the fruit it is among the few varieties of Campania chestnuts that can be defined botanically and as a product 'marron type' and for this reason it is particularly requested for industrial processing that absorbs at least 90% of the production.



THE RECIPE**ROASTED MARRONS**

When the festive season comes, Christmas and roasted chestnuts, there is nothing better. But which is the best way to make them?

INGREDIENTS FOR 6 PEOPLE 1 kg of fresh chestnuts.

METHOD Clean the chestnuts one by one with a damp cloth. Then using a sharp pointed knife make a cut on the rounded side of each chestnut. When ready, place them in a chestnut roaster, cover with a damp towel and put them on a low fire, taking them off and putting them back occasionally, as long as they do not burn. Once ready, serve and eat piping hot.

THE PLACES Roccadaspide

Thanks to its strategic position that allows the control of the Piana del Sele, Roccadaspide has had a history full of events beginning from the early pre-Roman settlings and in time throughout the medieval age and the 19th century. Still today, with its eight thousand residents, it is a referential point of the territory. The town is in an uncontaminated zone, with many agricultural traditions and of beautiful nature along the river Calore. The Castle is monumental it was reinforced by Federico II after the conspiracy by the Barons of Capaccio. There are also many churches, in particular the Assunta e della Natività di Maria, besides the remains of the Convento dei Francescani and of the Convento di Sant'Antonio.



Mozzarella and buffalo milk Ricotta of the Campania region in the Piana del Sele PDO

Piana del Sele

Regarding mozzarella and buffalo milk ricotta we have already widely talked about them in the chapter dedicated to the province of Caserta. If we are presenting the mozzarella once again, it is because the Piana del Sele, that is the territory between Salerno and Agropoli, about 500 square kilometers, is the second area of production in this region.

The Piana del Sele has been breeding buffaloes for hundreds of years. They used to live in a natural wild state mainly because they were used as animals for working in the fields thanks to their great adaptability to hot and humid environments in marshy terrains, exactly like the fertile fields were seen by the visitors at the epoch of the Grand Tour. Driven by curiosity by what was told about the majestic remains of the Greek and Romans, artists and intellectuals around the year 1700, when arriving in Paestum after adventurous journeys, found apart from the splendid temples also numerous buffaloes freely grazing among the ancient remains stuck in the minds of artists who used them as characteristic elements on canvas and prints, not to mention famous quotations. Only from the 17th century we know that the processing of buffalo milk began in the 'bufalare', typical circular brick buildings in which there was a central chimney where the expert cheese makers made cheese out of the milk. At that time mozzarella as we know it did not exist, in fact in the 'bufalare' the production was mainly based on a dry stretched curd that was later smoked to make it preserve longer, a far away relative of today's smoked provola. It is still possible to see the old 'bufalare' in the Piana del Sele, they are easy to reach like the one in Gromola and the one inside Villa Salati both in Paestum. In the province of Salerno until a few decades ago the many cattle breeding farms that were owned principally by noble baronial families produced milk destined to the cheese factories in the Caserta area. Towards the end of the '20s, one of the historical families that produced buffalo mozzarella, the Raimondo family, moved from Cancelli and Arnone to Paestum and together with other historical families of the Piana like the Di Lascio, Bellelli, Salati, Barlotti, Iemma families, have given way to collaborations and family ties that prove the union, as has always been, of the symbolic areas of the buffalo mozzarella production, the Salerno area and the Caserta one.



THE RECIPE**MANFREDI PASTA WITH RICOTTA**

The pasta format is called 'Manfredi', it is very appreciated by the population in Naples. Its peculiarity is the double curling on both sides of each piece of pasta. We will prepare them with the ragù sauce made with San Marzano tomatoes PDO and flavoured with fresh sheep milk's ricotta and basil. To prepare this dish at home, a custom was to use a child 'o piccirill', who had the task to stir the ricotta in the ragù sauce in a soup plate. The recipe is registered on the web site www.mysocialrecipe.com.

INGREDIENTS FOR 5 PEOPLE For the ragù sauce: **4 cans of peeled tomatoes (4 x 2,5 kg); 3 cans of concentrated tomato paste (3 x 400 g); 2 golden onions; 1 kg of spare pork ribs; 700 cl. of olive oil; 1/2 lt. of white wine; salt q. s.;** For the pasta: **1 pack of Manfredi pasta; 400 g of ricotta romana; 100 g of grated grana padano; 10 basil leaves; Neapolitan ragù q. s.;** Products used: **500 g of Manfredi pasta; preserved San Marzano tomatoes.**

METHOD To prepare the ragù: pour into a deep large pot the oil, the meat and the onions and let them brown at high heat. Take the onions out and add the white wine on the meat. Add the concentrated tomato paste in the pot, let the mixture melt and blend together and lower the heat temperature. Pour in the puréed tomatoes, without using a mixer, stir for a short while, increase the heat and add salt. The pot must be covered with a lid until boiling point, then you must place the wooden spoon in between the lid and the pot to allow the pot to be semi-opened. Lower the heat and stir occasionally, after an hour you must taste the sauce to check if more salt is needed. The cooking time is approximately 2-3 hours until the oil surfaces. Dissolve the ricotta with the ragù sauce until it reaches a reddish colour. Cook the pasta in abundant water, respect the cooking times for al dente, drain it and mix with two ladles of ragù sauce and the dissolved ricotta. Add the cheese and stir a little more, serve and decorate with basil leaves and extra ragù on top.

WINE MATCH Paestum Aglianico IGT

**THE PLACES La Piana del Sele**

The second largest flatland of the Campania region is over 500 square kilometres of which more than the half of the surface is for agricultural and zootechnical use. We are in one of the most advanced agricultural and traceable European territories, furthermore in a very interesting environmental context. After the ancient splendor it became an unhealthy and marshy place with the crisis of the Roman Empire. Only in the 19th century the Bourbons began to reclaim the lands ending in the 20th century, just after WWII, it finally became a productive investment hub. Apart from the temples and the local area, apart from the 30 kilometres of beaches, from a naturalistic point of view, inside the Piana del Sele there is the Natural Reserve of Monte Polveracchio, the Regional park of the Monti Picentini, the Natural Reserve of Persano and the Natural Reserve of the Monti Eremita and Marzano. Also worth visiting is the historical centre of Eboli, today fully recovered.



The Giffoni Hazelnut PGI

The rounded hazelnut of Giffoni has obtained the European recognition PGI in 1997: the kernel of the nut has a perfectly rounded shape (the unshelled nut), that has a white pulp, compact, an aromatic taste, and has the perisperm (the inside pellicle) thin and easily removable. It is furthermore ideal for roasting, peeling, and sizing, especially because of its average medium size and being a homogeneous fruit. We can already find traces of this plant in Latin literature from 3rd century BC., and thanks to archeological remains, like for example some carbonized hazelnut remains, on exhibition at the Museo Nazionale di Napoli. The spreading of this cultivation in the rest of Italy seems to have begun right from here in the Campania region, since in the 8th century AD the trading of hazelnuts, especially towards foreign countries, had its economic importance. The early traces of the cultivation of the Giffoni Hazelnut date back to the Medieval times, but it is only through commercial trading with the rest of the country and abroad, during the Bourbon epoch, that the distinctive quality value of the product is better known. Thereafter, during the 20th century, it had reached a great production expansion due to the strong demand by the confectionary industry. The territory of the Picentini and of the Valle dell'Irno, furthermore is naturally suitable for the cultivation of the hazelnut since this plant has always been in the zone growing spontaneously. The terrain of volcanic origin offers, moreover, the best conditions of fertility, and in general the quality features of the Rounded hazelnut of Giffoni can be attributable thanks to the lucky mix of environmental factors, natural and human, typical of the production area. Being a cultivation mid-to-early, the harvesting usually begins in the last ten days of the month of August, after that, the hazelnuts are desiccated to be brought to a level of humidity of 5-7% and lastly they are stored in cool and ventilated places, with no odors and humidity.



THE RECIPE**CROCCANTE DI NOCCIOLE**

An ancient recipe which in small towns means feasting. In Giffoni it is called 'Coccarda' (ribbon shaped), it is made with sugar but you can also use honey.

INGREDIENTS 1 kg. of the Rounded hazelnuts of Giffoni PGI; 600 g sugar; 1 glass of water; 2 halves of a lemon.

METHOD Roast the hazelnuts and then lightly pound them, partially crushing them. Heat the sugar pouring some water over. Wait a few seconds and add the hazelnuts. When the sugar has completely liquefied wait a few more seconds and then pour it all on a flat oiled marble surface. Using a half lemon, flatten the 'coccarda' (ribbon) to about a centimetre thick.

WINE MATCH Moscato dolce of Castel San Lorenzo

THE PLACES The two Giffoni

Just outside Salerno there is Giffoni Valle Piana, a town with 12,000 residents, it is the most important municipality of the Picentini area, today a Regional park, famous for its mountains, they take their name from the population that once lived here and were deported for punishment by the Romans. This town is world known for the Giffoni International Film Festival (children's film festival), Giffoni has a great number of very interesting monuments and a great historical background. One of the most interesting places to see is Borgo di Terravecchia, completely renovated due to its popularity, the Chiesa madre della SS. Annunziata where there is a showcase with the Sacra Spina exhibit (The Sacred Thorn), the convent of San Francesco, the Sanctuary of Santa Maria di Carbonara, the Chiesa di Santa Maria a Vico, the Tempio di Ercole which is located on a Roman necropolis. In the nearby Giffoni Sei Casali there is the enchanting little village of Sieti. Both municipalities, are surrounded by a natural uncontaminated environment, and are in a demographic growth.



The Pomodoro San Marzano PDO

There may be nothing more than the tomato that can be considered as the symbol of the Neapolitan gastronomic culture. The San Marzano is undoubtedly the most important of the many varieties of tomatoes. Today it is going through a new period of success, having risked extinction in the late '80s, by being completely abandoned by the industries. After receiving the protection given by the Slow Food association, there has been a gradual re birth, favored on one hand by the grandeur of the high class restaurants to show it on their menu, on the other hand by its rapid widespread in the pizza business. It is also considered the most imitated and counterfeited tomato, luckily though the production is extending thanks to the fact that it guarantees a good income. According to some evidence coming from the oral tradition, it is said that the very first seed of this product arrived in Italy in 1770, as a gift by the Reign of Peru to the Reign of Naples, and that it had been planted exactly in the area of San Marzano. That is what justifies its name of this famous tomato, and as time went by, and various selective actions, has reached the characteristics that we well know today. According to other stories it is only in 1902 that we have the certain presence, among the towns of Nocera, San Marzano and Sarno, of this ecotype. The intrinsic characteristics that have made this product so important and popular are: the typical bittersweet taste, elongated form with longitudinal parallel depressions, lively red colour and easy to peel. These, as also the chemical and physical characteristics, make it unmistakable, either fresh or when preserved. The protected designation of origin obtained in 1996 exclusively describes the product 'pelato' (peeled tomato) and the typology 'pelato a filetti' (sliced peeled tomato), that come from the processing of the products that belong to the San Marzano ecotype or to improved varieties (the European regulations consider two product standards). The product released for consumption must have specific technological characteristics. The cultivation technique of a fresh product provides the vertical cultivation of the plants using supports, respecting therefore the centuries-old tradition, even though, for the great number of hours of manpower needed, such technique affects the production costs. The 'Pomodoro San Marzano dell'Agro Sarnese-Nocerino' PDO is cultivated in the Agro Sarnese-Nocerino area, in the province of Salerno, in the Acerra-Nola area and also in the Pompei-Stabiese area, in the province of Naples and lastly in the area of Montoro, in the province of Avellino, all the municipalities sum up to 41.



THE RECIPE**THE MEZZANELLI ALLARDIATI**

A poor and tasty recipe.

INGREDIENTS FOR 4 PEOPLE 440g of Mezzanielli spezzati pasta; 150 g lard; 500 g of San Marzano peeled tomatoes; 1 clove of garlic; 1 hot pepper; 50 g of grated pecorino; parsley.

METHOD Using a sharp knife, the lard must be reduced to a creamy consistency 'allacciato', then it is put to melt in a casserole without adding any cooking oil then put in the minced garlic and hot pepper. After this, you add the San Marzano tomatoes previously puréed. Cook at low temperature for at least two hours. Cook the mezzanelli spezzati pasta, even with all the little broken scattered parts, the 'minutaglia', 'al dente' and sauté them in the sauce with pecorino and parsley. Serve with grated pecorino cheese at will.

WINE MATCH Gragnano or Lettere wine

**THE PLACES The San Marzano lands**

The most cultivated area here is in the municipality of Acerra, a town with many good places to see, monuments, churches, especially the Duomo. The Castello dei Conti of Acerra is where there is the Museum of Pulcinella, the Neapolitan mask. Moreover the two main squares are worth seeing here too. Pompeii, Poggiomarino, Nola, Pomigliano d'Arco and on the Salerno side, Sarno (the historical centre must be seen and the restored spinning mills), San Marzano, San Valentino Torio, all these places are all included in the PDO. We are talking about towns that, Pompeii is obviously not included, are off the touristic routes, but have plenty of history, and have always been unique pedoclimate conditions, these places are the food reserve for Naples.



- Italy
- Campania
- Regional capital
- Provincia capital
- The recipe places



Guidebook published on the occasion of the Italian Food Year 2018.