

MAESTRA SUZANNE DE LA FERTÉ

FOOD AND FEASTING
IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

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FOOD AND FEASTING IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

The Renaissance was about the re-discovery of the world of classical Antiquity combined with a keen desire to recreate it.

FEASTING

AMBIANCE

The eating style during the Italian Renaissance was one of refinement, elegance, and extravagance not known in the medieval times (which lingered in the north for 100 years after the Italian Renaissance).

Wide contemporary interest in feasting and all its details was evidenced by books like Cristoforo da Messisbugo's "*Banchetti, composizioni di vende e apparecchio*" (published in 1549) which provided descriptions of many such events and was so popular that there were 13 editions published between 1549 and 1626.

- The second part of the book contains recipes for both ordinary and fish days which reflect both international court cuisine and figurative foods – pastry castles and coats of arms, as well as descriptions of wooden and iron moulds used to create the eagles and fleurs de lys of the Este family arms.
- The first part of the book, contains descriptions of fourteen banquets and suppers (private and public) that Messisbugo staged during his years in office. He includes the location and the guests, describes any temporary décor and the table ornaments, notes the food served course by course (and its quantity) and gives an account of any music or entertainment presented while the guests were eating or between courses.
 - The first chapter lists everything needed to put on one of these events – from beds for guests to cutlery, from tableware to seating, from kitchen equipment to the waiters, not to mention list upon list of foodstuffs – every kind of meat, fish, game, dairy produce, fruit, vegetable, and salad greens.

SURROUNDINGS / DECOR

May 20, 1529 – Private Dinner by Ippolito d'Este, Archbishop of Milan

On this date a private dinner (for 54 guests) was given by the future Cardinal Ippolito d'Este for his brother Ercole II (the future duke of Ferrara) and his duchess, at the Este palace of Belfiore. At

Food and Feasting in Renaissance Italy

Maestra Suzanne de la Ferté, September 2015

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the time, Ippolito was the archbishop of Milan (he was only 20 years old). Beginning in the early evening (after the heat of the day was past), the male guests participated in “running the rings”, a pastime in which mounted men charged a target (rings) with lances. This ended at 9:00 when the entire company went inside a hall decorated with frescoes and attended the performance of a farce followed by a concert. The concert, described as ‘*una divina musica di diverse voci e vari strumenti*’ (a divine concert of diverse voices and instruments), was over at 10:00. After the concert, dinner was served.

In the gardens, a central table stood with two *credenze* (service tables) to its right – one for food and the other for wine. To its left, an arbor, decorated with greenery, flowers, and coats of arms, had been created. Inside the arbor sat musicians – music was the uniting theme for the dinner. Each table had four tablecloths (normally only two tablecloths were used – one for the main part of the meal and a second one for the final fruit course). Napkins were ‘variously placed and folded in a divine way’ on tables ‘marvelously decorated with different flowers and arms, with salt cellars and knives’ and fifteen sugar sculptures of Venus, Cupid, and Bacchus. ‘Above,’ the description continues, ‘was beautiful foliage with festoons and variously crafted trophies.’ The guests were led to the table by musicians and young men and women dancing a galliard that they continued to perform while the guests were washing their hands in perfumed water.

On the tables, as the 1st course, (in addition to the normal bread rolls) were antipasti – cold dishes and salads from the credenza. The 2nd course consisted of 8 dishes – trout patties, halved and spiced hard-boiled eggs, sturgeon roe, pike spleens, and other fish offal fried with orange, cinnamon, and sugar, a boiled sturgeon with garlic sauce emblazoned with the archbishop’s device, fried bream, wheatstarch soup, Catalan-style pizza with flaky pastry, and small fried fish from the river Po. The 3rd course consisted of an additional 8 dishes.

The archbishop’s sturgeon arrived at the table to the sound of three trumpeters and three cornets. Each course had its own special music and/or spectacle which utilized the entire musical resources of the Este court. There was a courtier playing a lute solo, a girl singing madrigals, ‘songs *alla Pavana* in *villanesco* which was a wonderful thing to hear’, country folk dancing a *morisco*, buffoons performing *alla Bergamasca* and *alla Veneziana*, a man costumed as Orpheus singing to a lyre, a sonata *alla alemanna* and four French girls who sang *canzoni di gorga*. The “evening” ended at 5:00 in the morning when gifts of perfumed gloves, earrings, compasses, and rings were given to the guests. As a grand finale, twenty men dressed in livery and bearing torches in their hands burst into the midst of the guests and danced one last *morisco*.

The preceding description of Archbishop Ippolito’s feast is only one of those present in Cristoforo da Messisbugo’s *Banchetti*.

Giovan Battista Rossetti, *scalco* to Alfonso II, was responsible for one of the banquets for the 1565 ducal wedding of Alfonso and Barbara of Austria. During this feast, the guests were presented with the illusion of dining beneath the sea. The ceiling was painted with waves and marine monsters, the tablecloth had waves upon it, the napkins were folded like fish, the salts were marine beasts, even the majolica plates were seashells. Its finale took the form of a triumph of Neptune with ninety sugar sculptures attendant upon Neptune.

Classical studies (especially ‘*The Letters of Pliny the Younger*’ [AD61 – c.112]) gave Renaissance individuals a vivid picture of a lifestyle they very much wanted to emulate. In particular, the rural villa – either by the seashore or “in town”. Pliny described the setting of his villas – their landscape, architecture, and gardens, as well as a leisurely lifestyle in which “the rigours of the intellect” were balanced by “a whole-hearted response to the delights of the senses”.

One wing of Pliny's seaside villa contained a dining room – something that was unknown in the Middle Ages. Actually, he had several dining rooms in both of his villas. His seaside villa had three dining rooms. One is described as ... 'exceedingly warmed and enlightened, not only by the direct rays of the sun, but by their reflection from the sea'. Another had 'a very extensive prospect of the sea, together with the beautiful villas that stand interspersed along the coast'. The third dining room was in a turret with views 'down upon the garden, and the *gestatio* (the exercise ground)'.

Pliny's Tuscan villa also had multiple dining spaces and was sited on a location with panoramic views. His "grand dining room" looked out over a large expanse of meadows with views 'up into the country'. Positioned to catch the sun, this dining room was used in winter. He had a dining room in his private suite of rooms used when he dined with close friends. A third dining room was located near his 'summer portico' and was sited, with vineyard views, to catch breezes from the Appenine valley. This dining room was used in the summer. He also had a dining spot in his garden – at the end of a row of pleached trees in a vine-shaded marble alcove that contained a basin into which water gushed. 'When I sup there,' wrote Pliny, 'this basin serves for a table, the larger sort of dishes being placed around the margin, while the smaller ones swim about in the form of little vessels and water-fowl.'

Renaissance readers could get additional information from Vitruvius, a Roman architectural writer from the 1st century. He stated that a dining room should be twice as long as its width, that there should be two of them – one facing east for springtime, the other facing north for autumn (to follow the path of the sun). He advised against decorating the ceiling of the autumn dining room because smoke would blacken it.

These vivid examples inspired the people of the Renaissance – dining conditions so very different from the castles and townhouses of the Middle Ages with their communal great halls that were so claustrophobic.

The changes in the 15th and 16th centuries, in addition to the examples found in classical texts, were also based on the desire for private as opposed to public / communal dining space. Thus was born the private dining room – used only for family and friends – called a *salatto* or *salotto* (occasionally called a *trinclinio*). Renaissance man moved away from a lifestyle where he only had privacy in the bedroom (*camera*) and initiated the first steps towards the apartment system that was to be the center of all domestic architectural plans during the Renaissance and afterwards. This style called for the *sala*, a large room that accommodated family and guests for receptions, dinners, and other entertainment; the *saletta* that opened off of it (for private use); and then, for each family member, an *anti-camera* that led into the camera.

The first treatise on architecture written since the classical texts, published in 1486, was "*De re aedificatoria*" written by Alberti, a great Renaissance architect. It was translated into Italian in 1546 and French in 1553. The popularity of the villa was due, in large part, to this manuscript. In it, was the introduction of the dining room:

The dining-room should be entered off the bosom of the house. As use demands, there should be one for summer, one for winter, and one for middling seasons, you might say. The principal requirements of a summer dining-room are water and greenery; of a winter one, the warmth of a hearth. Both should preferably be spacious, cheery, and splendid.

Although Platina does not talk specifically about separate dining rooms, he states:

One must set a table according to the time of the year; in winter, in enclosed and warm places; in summer, in cool and open places. In spring, flowers are arranged in the dining-room and on the table; in winter, the air should be redolent with perfumes; in summer, the

floor should be strewn with fragrant boughs of trees, of vine, and of willow, which freshen the dining-room; in autumn, let the ripe grapes, pears, and apples hang from the ceiling.

PRESENTATION

In the Renaissance, much more than in the Middle Ages, feasts were times to dazzle all comers. Magnificent arrays of valuables were displayed upon the *credenza* (the buffet). The historian Vasari describes the credenza in the fresco by Giulio Romano's (located in in the Palazzo del Tè) of 'The banquet of Cupid and Psyche' as 'laden with bizarre vases, basins, jugs, cups ... fashioned in various forms and fantastic styles.' This painting illustrates what one of these credenze would have looked like set up for an alfresco feast.



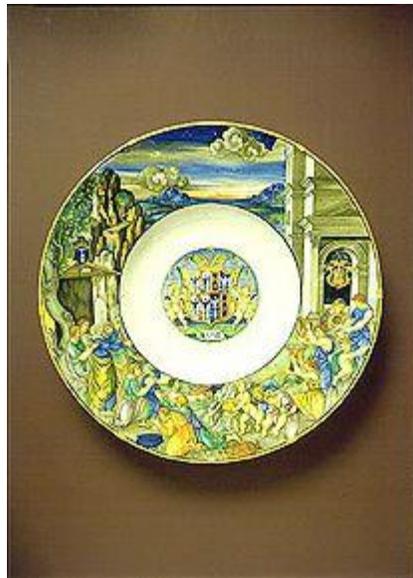
A table with shelves covered in a pure white linen cloth is framed by an artificial arbor of greenery forming the credenza. The items on it are highly exotic – a combination of classical motifs, vegetation, and monsters. These designs by Giulio Romano for the Gonzaga family still survive to the current day.

Another extreme instance of such grand display is found in histories of the wedding of Marie de' Medici, niece of the grand duke of Tuscany, to Henry IV in Signoria. For the wedding feast, a huge

credenza, in the form of a jewel-studded lily (referring to both Florence's symbol of the lily and the French fleur de lys), topped with a canopy of cloth of silver sheltered a display of two-thousand pieces of gold, silver and silver-gilt plate in addition to other items.

It is believed that these displays were never meant for use. Benevenuto Cellini recorded a commission by the cardinal of Salamanca for a massive ewer, describing it as being of a type used only for decoration on a buffet. Sets of plate were made especially for display – two queens of France (Catherine de' Medici in 1549 and Elizabeth of Austria in 1571) had just such sets given to them by the City of Paris. Phillip II of Spain had an inventory made in 1554 that makes a clear distinction between pieces for use and those for display only.

During this same time, new and more luxurious forms of ceramics were introduced that dramatically changed the appearance of the table (and also included pieces intended only for display). The earliest, commissioned by Isabella d'Este, duchess of Mantua, in 1524, was a massive faience (also known as Urbino majolica) service painted by Nicolò da Urbino with her arms and devices.



Isabella was a trend-setter. This type of painted service became one of the choicest presents an Italian prince could give to an important foreigner. One set, commissioned by Pope Paul III as a gift to Anne de Montmorency in 1553, still has pieces that survive today. The set included plates, dishes, candlesticks and flasks.

These new ceramics also changed the appearance of the table. The plate replaced the trencher as the diner's food receptacle. Increased availability in Italy meant that the practice of sharing "vessels" at a table could cease. These dishes usually had a wide border for the food with small well at the center for the sauce. These services gave the table a visual unity that was not present in the Middle Ages. At the grandest events, gold and silver plate would continue to be used on the high table while majolica was used by those below. All of these new dishes also meant that each diner had his or her own drinking vessel.

Add to these innovations the arrival of the fork. Its adoption offered yet another way for the upper classes to distinguish themselves from the peasantry. In 1492, Lorenzo de' Medici had eighteen of them. Evidence suggests that they were initially used only for special foods like salads and sweetmeats – particularly fruits in syrup. Botticelli's depiction of a wedding feast, painted for the marriage of a

relative of the Medici family shows the ladies at the table on the left of the picture holding forks elegantly in their fingers.



By 1549, Messisbugo (in his *Banchetti*) takes forks for granted. This increase in use and popularity may have something to do with pasta becoming a major part of Italian cuisine during the cinquecento.

Another new invention was the silver *cadena* – a large silver square upon which the salt cellar stands. Michel de Montaigne, while writing in his Italian journal, reports seeing *cadena*s at a dinner given by Cardinal de Sens in Rome in 1580:

... in front of those to whom they want to do particular honor, who are seated beside or opposite the master, they place big silver squares [cadena] on which their salt cellar stands, of the same sort as those they put before the great in France. On top of this there is a napkin folded in four, and on this napkin the bread, knife, fork, and spoon. On top of all of this there is another napkin, which you are to use.

One of the rituals of any major feast was the layering of tablecloths. Platina believed that the cloths should be white so as not to impair the appetite. At the nuptial banquet of Costanzo Sforza to Camilla of Aragon in 1475 the cloth was changed several times at the high table and twice for the other tables. Generally, the various 16th century manuscripts specify three table coverings – one displayed on arrival, a second “revealed” mid-way through the feast, and a third for dessert (the *colatione*). Cervio’s “*Il trinciante*” tells us that a layer of leather between the cloths prevented any stains from seeping through.

Napkins, too, added to the visual spectacle. In the Renaissance, they were starched and stiffened and folded in different sculptural ways. Such a practice was displayed at a 1513 banquet held in honor of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici in Rome – napkins were folded in such a way that they enclosed a live bird which flew away when the napkin was opened. At the banquet for the marriage of Guglielmo Gonzago to Margherita Farnese in 1581, 'the napkins ... were delightfully sculpted by pleating them into columns, arches, and trophies, which made for a very fine sight along with a multitude of flags bearing the arms of all the lords at the feast.' During the Renaissance, napkins were used continually during the feast to wipe a spoon or fork or drinking vessel. Gentlemen generally laid the napkin over the left shoulder.

STAFFING

As the quattrocento turned into the cinquecento, the Este court transformed the medieval into the Renaissance banquet by use of highly organized ritual, the exaltation of the ruler, the role of court musicians, and the presence of the public as onlookers. The greatest innovation was the emergence of a new court official to supervise all aspects of such feasts (from the largest spectacle to the tiniest detail) – the choice of location, the decoration of room and table, the shapes into which the napkins were to be folded, the servants' costumes, the menu, mechanics of food presentation, as well as the selection of music and other entertainment to be presented throughout the feast, as well as the guests' parting gifts.

The Neapolitan Este court of Ercole I, educated in Naples and married (in 1473) to Eleonora of Aragon, played a crucial role in gastronomic advances as well as the orchestration of meals. It was in Naples that the carver – the *trinciante* – was initially established as the controlling officer in charge of the order and presentation of banquets. However, the *scalco* (or steward) was the officer who eventually presided over this duty.

Ercole's *scalco* was Sotio Bonleo. Although not much was known about Bonleo, his student, Crostoforo da Messisbugo, was famous. Messisbugo was from an old Ferrarese noble family and of high enough rank to have entertained the duke twice in his own home. In 1515, Messisbugo was in the service of Alfonso I, four years later he was given the title *sottospenditore ducale* and in 1539 was given the title *provveditore ducale*. In 1533, the emperor made Messisbugo a count palatine. Messisbugo's book, the *Banchetti*, was published posthumously.

Messisbugo had two outstanding successors. The first was Giacomo Grana, *scalco* to Luigi d'Este, cardinal of Ferrara. Grana was responsible for the 1565 banquet the cardinal gave in honor of his brother Alfonso's marriage to Barbara of Austria. Even more important than Grana was the *scalco* of Alfonso II (the last duke), Giovan Battista Rossetti. He worked for Alfonso from 1557 to 1576, then served the duke's sister, Lucrezia d'Este (the estranged wife of the duke of Urbino). In 1584, Rossetti published "*Dello scalco*", in which he developed the steward's role much further than that described in Messisbugo's *Banchetti*. Rossetti lists the attributes of a *scalco* in his book – a fine presence, elegance of dress, learning, attentiveness and eagerness of response (especially to the demands of the employer) to name a few. In "*Dello scalco*", the steward has control of all supplies, the kitchen, the selection of menus, and the placement of the tables and the *credenze*. He was responsible for seating guests in strict hierarchical order, supervise the sequence of courses, the changing of tablecloths and napkins, and every detail of the increasingly ceremonial feasts.

The origins of the emergence of the *trinciante* lie in Spain in a work on carving by Don Enrique de Aragon, marquess of Villena, compiled in 1423. In Italy, the *trinciante* makes his debut in a work by Robert di Nola, the "*Libro de cucina*". He was cook to Ferdinand I of Aragon, king of Naples, and in his

book (compiled in the 1490s), he describes the roles of the cook, the dispenser, and the *trinciante*. The latter transformed a position that simply served and put food on people's plates to a senior court official responsible for turning the mundane operation into an elaborate ritual, a pyrotechnic display of strength and dexterity.

Francesco Colle, part of the Este court, wrote "*Refugio del povero gentilhuomo*" in 1520. This treatise exalts the work of the *trinciante* as "an aspect of princely magnificence" – a skill that could only be utilized by a man of noble, but impoverished, birth.

Vincenzo Cervio's 1581 "*Il trinciante*" was an even more important work. Cervio was in service of Guidobaldo II, duke of Urbino, and then, after 1540, in service to Cardinal Farnese in Rome. The carver, according to Cervio, should be a gentleman of handsome presence, well-dressed (in white), ready to please his master but careful to deport himself in such a manner as to set himself apart from other menials. The manual goes on to catalogue carving everything from game to a melon, with a blow-by-blow description of every gesture to be made in the process. Also included is how the dish should be distributed – strictly in order of rank, both in terms of priority and in judging which part of the animal carved is appropriate. The entire exercise in manual dexterity (referred to as 'carving in the air') is deliberately designed to amaze, astonish, and entertain the diners.

FOOD

The desire of the courts to emulate the banquets of Antiquity was fuelled, in large part, by the recovery and printing of texts relating directly to ancient cuisine or which contained graphic descriptions of meals.

In the middle ages, known classical texts were limited to manuscripts like Virgil's *Georgics*, which talked about the rustic diet of those who lived "close to the soil" – peas and lentils, leeks and lettuce and encouraged, with the support of the Church, centuries of fasting and self-denial.

In 1498, the earliest-known edition of Apicius' "*De re coquinaria*" appeared. This manuscript revealed a very different cuisine – one of a highly sophisticated society that cultivated the pleasures of the table without any feelings of guilt. Apicius' recipes were the impetus for cooks to compose richer and more elaborate dishes. Texts like Book XIII of Marital's "*Epigrams*" were full of references to food and, "*The Deipnosophists*" by Athenaeus (published in 1514) discusses gluttons and famous cooks, along with the customs and manners of guests and the suitability of various foods.

What was distinctive about Renaissance food? The basic medieval menu remained the same, but it was enriched and refined.

The same spices were used as were many of the sauces, but many new ways of cooking became popular. One of the writers of recipe manuscripts gave 227 recipes for beef, 47 for tongue, and 147 for sturgeon – many more than were ever present in a medieval cookbook.

There was renewed interest in fruits and vegetables and shifts in "taste". In medieval times, beef was considered unfit for the high table, but in renaissance times it (along with veal) was quite popular. Another case in point was the use of butter in more and more recipes (as opposed to lard).

Wine, too, became worth serious consideration. Sante Lancerio, *bottigliere* to Pope Paul III (1534-50), produced a record of the best Italian and foreign wines (and awarded the "palm" to Malvaglia

from Candia. Wines began to be carefully matched to courses – light white wines for the antipasti, red for roasts, and on to fortified and intoxicating wines for dessert and finally to hippocras.

In the latter quarter of the fifteenth century, sugar's popularity continued to rise as evidenced by the ostentatious display of sugar sculptures created for Ercole d'Este's marriage to Eleonora in 1473 where a procession brought Eleonora and her ladies 'one hundred very large plates full of sugar confections, all different, namely castles, columns of Hercules, birds, four-footed animals, the devices of the lord, and other confections ...' All of which anticipated the sugar banquets of the sixteenth century where both sugar sculptures (made from sugar, gum arabic, lake, white wax, incense, turpentine, and cinnabar - not meant to be eaten) and sugar confections were presented to admiring guests. Sculptors from Mantua, Padua, and Venice were brought in to make these magnificent sculptures.

MANUSCRIPT AUTHORS

MAESTRO MARTINO

Born of Swiss origin, Martino de' Rossi, also known as "Maestro Martino" published '*Liber de arte coquinaria*' in 1460. Martino did not stay long in Switzerland. Early in his career, he became the cook for the dukes of Milan, and then he went into the service of Cardinal Trevisan of Venice, patriarch of Aquileia, who resided in Rome.

PLATINA

Bartolomeo Platina was a humanist librarian and plagiarized much of Martino's work in his '*De Honesta voluptate*' that was published in 1465. Platina started out at the Gonzaga court at Mantua (at the school established by Vittorino da Feltre). Most of Platina's career, though, was spent in Rome and in 1475, he became the papal librarian.

Platina's *De Honesta* was translated into French in 1505.

SCAPPI

Bartolomeo Scappi, one of the most influential cooks of the Renaissance (of Bolognese or Venetian origin), published one of the most important gastronomic works of the sixteenth century in 1570 entitled "*Opera*". This manuscript, Scappi's masterpiece, contained a summation of over forty years of cooking at the most prestigious court in Europe. It was the first cookery book that established cooking firmly as a science. Nine-hundred pages long, it is divided into six books and is illustrated with twenty-eight engravings. The book covers everything from cooking utensils to arranging a table as a fishpond consisting entirely of edible objects. Scappi begins with a discussion of the kitchen and ingredients, then continues on with meat, fish, eggs, and sauces, then gives 113 seasonal menus covering suppers, dinners, and banquets. There is a book devoted to the work of the pastry cook and also one covering food for the sick.

ROMOLI

Domenico Romoli's book, "*La singolare dottrina dell'ufficio dello scalco*", published in 1560, is the work of a Florentine steward. Romoli, also known as 'Il Pununto', was a cook and 'secret cook' in the service

of both aristocrats and cardinals. His book records the cuisine of the Roman Curia in the middle of the sixteenth century. It contains hundreds of recipes. It also discusses the roles of the *scalco*, the *trinciante* and the *credenziere* (the officer in charge of the credenza).

COURSES

Maestro Martino's order of courses was very different from the established medieval order for feasts. Instead of beginning the meal (or feast) with fruit and/or sweet things, he began the meal with the *pietanze*: all kinds of meats (roasted, in pies, in jellies, stewed, sausages, and *mortadelle*). He promoted using native aromatic herbs (mint, marjoram, parsley, garlic, fennel, bay, sage, and rosemary) instead of imported spices. His recipes also included more sugar, rosewater, and saffron than those of earlier periods.

Platina built upon Martino's order of courses as he promoted his idea that finding pleasure in eating (*voluptas*), known to medieval man as a sin, could - under the right circumstances, be honorable (*bonesta*). He used the Greek theory of humors, the *regimen sanitatis* (from the School of Salerno) to discuss food in terms of healthy living and emphasizing the importance of clean tableware, spotless linen, and attractive décor.

Platina's Order of Courses	
<u>1st Course</u>	fruit, salad, sweets
<u>2nd Course</u>	meat, fish, or vegetables served with many aromatic sauces
<u>3rd Course</u>	fruit, nuts, cheeses, dragees, sweetmeats

RECIPES

LIBRO DE ARTE COQUINARIA (THE ART OF COOKING) THE EMINENT MAESTRO MARTINO OF COMO

White Garlic Sauce (Agliata Bianca)

Translated from Libro de arte Coquinaria (100)

Take well-blanchéd almonds and grind them, and about halfway through add as much garlic as you like, and grind them well together adding a little cold water so that they don't become oily. Then take a piece of the inside of a loaf of bread and soak it in meat or fish stock, according to the season; and this garlic sauce can be served at any time, as you please.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
2	slices	bread	-- crusts removed
1	whole	garlic	bulbs
4	tablespoons	chicken	stock
2	tablespoons	almonds,	blanchéd -- ground

Roast bulb of garlic until soft (about one hour). Soak bread in stock. Then, using either a mortar and pestle or a food processor, combine all ingredients into a thick, smooth sauce.

Food and Feasting in Renaissance Italy

Serving Ideas : Boiled or Roast Capons, Poached Fish, Roast Goose

Cocer Zucche (Pumpkin or Winter Squash Soup)

Translated from Libro di cucina del secolo XIII (122)

Mondale como vogliono essere, et poi cocile con brodo di carne, overo con acqua et mettevi un pocha de cippolla secundo la quantità che tu vorrai fare. Et quando parerà cotta cacciala fore, et passa ogni cosa per le cocchiara straforata, overo pistale molto bene, et mettel accocere in una pignatta con brodo grasso, et con un pocho d'agresto. Et siano un pocho gialle di zafrano; et quando sono cotte togli dal focho et lasciale un pocho refredare. Dapoi togl di rossi d'ova secundo la quantità et sbattili con un pocho di caso vecchio et gittagli in le ditte zucche menando continuamente col cocchiario acciaio che non si predano: et fà le menestre et mettevi sopra spetie dolcie.

To cook squashes, peel them as they should be, and cook them with meat broth or water; add a little onion according to the quantity you want to make. And when they seem cooked, take them out and put them through a sieve or pound them very well; and cook them in a pot with rich broth and a little verjuice. And they should be slightly yellow with saffron; and when they are cooked, remove them from the fire and leave them a while to cool. Then take egg yolks according to the quantity and beat them with a little aged cheese, and add them to the squash, stirring constantly with a spoon so that they do not stick; dress your bowls, and top with sweet spices.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
4 1/2	pounds	pumpkin	-- peeled and seeded
1	each	onion	-- sliced
1 3/4	cups	chicken broth	
1	tablespoon	cider vinegar	
1	tablespoon	water	
2	tablespoons	parmesan cheese	-- freshly grated
2	each	egg yolks	
1	pinch	saffron	
1/2	teaspoon	Sweet Spice Mixture	(Specie dolce per assay cosse bone)

Cut the pumpkin or squash into pieces and cook it together with the onion in a quart (liter) of salted water until very tender. Drain and put through a food mill or puree in a food processor.

Return to the pan, add the broth and verjuice (or vinegar and water), and bring to the boil. Crumble the saffron between your fingers and add it to the pan.

Beat the egg yolks together with the parmesan. Remove the soup from the heat, then whisk in the egg yolk mixture. Reheat over very low heat; be sure not to let the soup boil again at this point.

Sprinkle with the spice mixture and serve.

Sweet Spice Mixture (Specie dolce per assay cosse bone)

Translated from Libro di cucina del secolo XIII (40)

Specie dolce per assay cosse bone e fine

Le meior specie dolze fine che tu fay se vuoi per lampreda in crosta e per altri boni pessi d'aque dolze che se faga in crosto e per fare bono brodetto e bon sapore. Toi uno quarto de garofali e una onza de bon zenzevro e toy una onza de cinamo leto e toy arquanto folio e tute queste specie fay pestare

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insiema caxa como te piaxe, e se ne vo' fare piu, toy le cosse a questa medissima raxone et é meravigliosamente bona. (Fr 40)

The best sweet spices you can make are good for lamprey in pastry and for other good freshwater fish cooked in a crust, and to make good brodetto and good sauces. Take a quarter of cloves and an onza of good ginger, and take an onza of fine cinnamon, and take the same quantity of leaf; and pound all these spices together as you like; if you want to make more, use the ingredients in the same proportions; this is wonderfully good.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
2	tbsp	ginger	freshly ground
2	tbsp	cinnamon	ground
2	tbsp	cinnamon	ground
2	tbsp	bay leaves, whole	crushed to a powder
1 1/2	tsp	cloves	ground

Mix well.

Mediterranean Style Fava Beans (Fava Menata)

Translated from Libro de arte Coquinaria

Take broken broad beans, and clean them well and wash them and set them to cook. And when they have come to the boil, drain and put them in fresh water to cover the top of the broad beans by the width of one finger, at the same time adding salt as necessary according to the quantity. And set it to cook on the coals, far from the heat, covered, and when well cooked drain, and grind well in a mortar. Then turn it into a pan to heat. And take a finely chopped onion and fry it in a pan with a little oil, and see that it is well cooked but not burnt. And take a little sage and some figs or apples and slice them finely, and put them to cook in oil with the onion, and make it hot. Then serve the broad beans in bowls, and sprinkle on top the oil, and the things cooked in the oil, and at the same time sprinkle on top appropriate spices.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1	pound	fava beans	small, skins removed
1	pound	apples	tart variety
2	medium	onions	
3	tablespoons	olive oil	
2	teaspoons	sage, fresh	finely chopped
1	teaspoon	salt	
2	whole	sourdough bread	
8	oz	black olives	calamata

A day in advance:

Wash the beans and leave them to soak in cool water; changing the water twice.

The next day:

Drain the beans and put them in a pot or casserole and add cold water to cover. Bring to a boil and drain. Return to the pot and cover with plenty of unsalted boiling water. Cook over low heat until the beans are very tender (about 1 hour, 20 min.). Drain, reserving 1 cup of the pot liquor (juice), then divide batch in half before beginning the puree process. To each half batch, add 1/3 cup pot liquor and 1/8 t. salt. Then put through a food mill or puree in a food processor until smooth. Place pureed mixture in freezer-safe container and freeze until day of serving.

The day of serving:

Set out pureed bean mixture to thaw.

Peel the onions and slice them into rounds. Peel and core the apples and cut them into thin slices. Heat the oil in a skillet and saute the onions over low heat. When they are half done, add the apples and the sage and continue to cook over low heat until the apples have fallen apart (about 15 to 20 minutes).

When ready to serve, reheat the bean puree. Turn it onto a serving bowl, drizzle with the oil, and spoon a little of the onion/apple mixture into the center, then spoon the rest around the bowl.

Serve with sourdough bread and olives.

Green Omelette (Frittata)

Translated from Maestro Martino's Libro de arte coquinaria, (180):

Battirai l'ova molto bene, et in seme un poco de acqua et un poco di lacte per farla un poco piu morbida, item un poco di bon caso grattato, et cocirala in botiro perche sia piu grassa. Et nota che per farla bona non vole esser voltata ne molto cotta. Et volendola fare verde, prendirai similmente le cose sopra ditte giognendovi del suco de queste herbe, cioe vieta, petrosillo in bona quantita, borragine, menta, maiorana, salvia in minor quantita, passando il ditto suco; poi cavarai piste le herbe molto bene per la stamegna. Et fare in un altro modo frittata con herbe, prendirai le sopra ditte herbe et tagliate menute le frigerai un poco in un bon botiro o oglio, mescolandole con l'ova et l'altre cose sopra ditte farai la frittata et cocirala diligentemente che sia bene staionata et non troppo cotta.

Frittata. Beat the eggs very well, and add a little water and a little milk to make them a little softer; add a little good grated cheese and cook in butter so it will be richer. Note that for it to be good it should not be turned over or overcooked. And to make it green, also take the above-mentioned ingredients, adding the juice of these herbs: chard, lots of parsley, borage, mint, marjoram, and a little sage, straining the juice; then strain out the very finely chopped herbs. And to make an omelette with herbs another way, take the above-mentioned herbs, chopped fine, fry them a little in good butter or oil, mix them with the eggs and other above-mentioned ingredients and make the omelette; cook it quickly so that it is properly done and not overcooked.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
6	each	eggs
5	fluid ounces	milk
3	tablespoons	water
2	tablespoons	parmesan cheese -- freshly grated
4	tablespoons	butter
1	cup	Swiss chard leaves
1	cup	spinach leaves
1	cup	parsley
4	each	sage leaves
4	each	mint leaves
5	sprigs	marjoram
1	teaspoon	salt

Beat the eggs together with the milk, water, and cheese. Salt (but lightly, because of the cheese).

Trim, wash, and thoroughly dry the greens and herbs. Chop finely with a knife. Over medium-low heat, melt the butter in a skillet and, when it begins to color, add the greens and the herbs, sprinkle with salt and saute for 7-8 minutes.

Stir in the eggs, and cook as you would any omelette. Let the bottom turn golden, but the top should remain very soft. Fold the omelette and slide it onto a serving plate.

Suppa Dorata (Pain Perdu / Gilded Sippets)

Translated from Libro de arte coquinaria (174)

Gilded Sippets. Take slices of white bread, trimmed so that they have no crusts; make these slices square and slightly grilled so that they are colored all over by the fire. Then take eggs beaten together with plenty of sugar and rose water; and put the slices of bread in this to soak; carefully remove them, and fry them a little in a frying pan with butter and lard, turning them very frequently so that they do not burn. Then arrange them on a plate, and top with a little rose water colored yellow with a little saffron, and with plenty of sugar. (Ma. 174)

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
6		ea white bread slices	-- stale, crust removed
6		ea eggs	
1		tbsp sugar	
3		tbsp rose water	
6		threads saffron	
4		tbsp butter	
1/4		c sugar	

Trim the crusts from the bread to create square slices. Toast or grill the bread very lightly.

Beat the eggs with 1-1/2 tbsp of rose water and 1 tbsp of sugar, and pour this mixture into a dish large enough to hold the bread in one layer. Soak the bread slices in the egg mixture for about 10 minutes, but be sure to remove them earlier if they threaten to become mushy.

Meanwhile, crush the saffron in a mortar or with your fingers, and add the remaining rose water; leave to steep until needed.

Over medium-low heat, melt some butter in a skillet, and gently fry the bread until golden on both sides. How much butter you will need will depend on the size of your pan and whether you need to cook the bread in several batches.

When the toasts are done, arrange them on a serving platter and sprinkle them with the saffron-colored rose water. Just before serving, sprinkle generously with sugar.

Torte Bianca (White Tart)

Piglia una libra et meza di bono cascio fresco, et taglialo menuto, et pistalo molto bene, et piglia dodici o quindici albume o bianchi d'ova, et macinali molto bene con questo cascio, agiongendovi meza libra di zuccharo, et meza oncia di zenzevero del piubiancho che possi havere, similmente meza libra di strutto di porcho bello et bianco, o in loco di strutto altrettanto botiro bono et fresco, item de lo lacte competentemente, quanto basti, che sera assai un terzo di bocchale. Poi farrai la pasta overo crosta in la padella, sottile come vole essere, et mectiraila a cocere dandoli il focho a bell'agio di sotto et di sopra; et farai che sia di sopra un pocho colorita per el caldo del focho; et quando ti pare cotta, cacciala fore de la padella, et di sopra vi metterai del zuccharo fino et di bona acqua rosata.

White Tart. Take a libra and a half of good fresh cheese and cut it up very fine, and pound it very well; take twelve or fifteen egg whites and blend them very well with this cheese, adding half a libra of sugar and half an oncia of the whitest ginger you can find, as well as a half libra of good, white pork lard, or instead of lard, good, fresh butter, and some milk, as much as is needed; this will be a good third of a boccale. Then make the pastry, or crust, [put it] into the pan, as thin as it ought to be, and cook it nicely with fire both below and above; and make sure the top is a little colored from the heat of the fire; and when it seems cooked, remove it from the pan and put fine sugar and good rose water on top. (Ma 158)

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1 3/4	cups	flour	
9	Tablespoons	butter	
1/3	cup	water	
1	teaspoon	salt	
16	ounces	cream cheese	-- softened
8	Tablespoons	butter	-- softened
2/3	cup	sugar	
3/4	teaspoon	ginger	-- ground
1	pinch	salt	
8	each	egg whites	
2	Tablespoons	sugar	
1	teaspoon	rose water	

A few hours in advance, prepare the pate brisee: Cut the butter into small pieces, and rub or cut it into the flour until the mixture has the consistency of sawdust. Dissolve the salt in half the water, and add to the flour mixture. Combine quickly with your fingertips, without overworking, just until the dough comes together. If necessary, add more water as required. Form into a thick disk, wrap in plastic wrap or waxed paper, and leave to rest in the refrigerator at least two hours before using.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees (F).

With a rubber spatula or wooden spoon (or in a food processor or electric mixer) cream the butter and cream cheese. When the mixture is well blended, cream in the sugar, the ginger, and a pinch of salt. Whip the egg whites briefly to break them up, then add to the cream cheese mixture in a thin stream beating briskly all the while. Finally, beat in the milk until the mixture has a consistency of thick cream.

Roll out the dough and line a deep 8-inch tart pan (or, if making small tarts, use a cookie cutter to cut rounds to fit the tart pan wells). Line the pastry with aluminum foil, add dried beans or pie weights to keep it from rising, and bake for 10 minutes (5 minutes if baking small tart shells). Remove the foil and beans, then bake for an additional 5 minutes (1 minute for small tart shells). Remove from oven.

Lower oven temperature to 375 degrees F.

Pour the filling into the partially baked shell(s) and bake for about an hour (20 minutes if baking small tarts). Monitor the baking: while the crust must be thoroughly baked, the top must be only lightly colored. If it seems to be browning too quickly, protect it with a sheet of aluminum foil. When the tart is done, remove from the oven and sprinkle the top with sugar and rosewater.

Torte Zucche (Pumpkin Tart)

Translated from Maestro Martino, Libro de arte coquinaria. (160)

Habi le zucche et mondiale molto bene, et grattale como gratti il cascio, et farale un pocho bollire in un bono brodo, overo in bon latte. Et pigliarai tanta quantita di cascio fresco quanto e ditto in li sopra ditti capitoli, giogendovi con esse et miscolandovi un pocho di cascio vecchio che sia bono. Et pigliarai una libra di bona ventresca di porco, overo una tetta di vitella cotta molto bene allessa et battuta assai col coltello. Et volendo poterai in loco de queste doi cose supra ditte, se piu ti piace, usare il butiro, overo il strutto, giogendovi meza libra di zuccharo, un pocho di zensevero et di cannella, con un bicchieri di lacte, et sei ova. Et como ti pare che le preditte zucche siano cotte, tirale fora dell'acqua, et passale per la stamegnia; et farai gialla questa compositione col sesanime; poi la mitterai in una padella solo con una pasta sottile di sotto et non di sopra, et darali il focho temperatamente di sotto et di sopra, et quando ti pare meza cotta gli gitterai di sopra, in loco de la crosta, de le lasagne ben minute. Et quando sera cotta abastanza vi metterai suso di bono zuccharo et acqua rosata (Ma 160)

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1 3/4		c flour	
9		tbsp butter	
1/3		c water	
1		tsp salt	
1 3/4		lb pumpkin	
1		c milk	
11		oz farmer's cheese	-- drained, room temp
14		tbsp butter	-- softened
1/2		c sugar	
1/3		c parmesan cheese	-- freshly grated
4		ea eggs	-- beaten
1/2		tsp ginger	-- ground
1/2		tsp cinnamon	-- ground
			salt
2		tbsp sugar	
2		tbsp rose water	

A few hours in advance, prepare the pastry. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until needed.

Peel the pumpkin or squash, cut it into chunks, and cook it in the milk for about 15 minutes, or until tender.

Preheat the oven to 475 degrees F.

Beat together the butter and the farmer's cheese until smooth. Add the parmesan, the 1/2 c. of sugar, the eggs, and the spices and salt to taste. Puree the pumpkin in a food mill or food processor and beat into the cheese mixture.

Roll out 3/4 of the pastry dough and line a deep 9-inch tart or pie pan. Fill with the pumpkin mixture and bake for about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, roll out the remaining pastry and cut it into 3/8" strips. Remove the partially baked tart from the oven and lay the strips over it in a lattice pattern; lower the oven temperature to 400 degrees F and return the tart to the oven to finish baking, about 40 minutes. If the tart is browning too quickly, cover it with a piece of aluminum foil.

When the tart is done, remove it from the oven and sprinkle with sugar and rose water. Serve barely warm.

Zanzarelli (Italian Egg Drop Soup - Similar to Stracciatella)

Translated from Maestro Martino's Libro de arte coquinaria, (137-38)

Per farne dece menestre: toglì octo ova et meza libra de caso grattugiato, et un pane grattato, et mescola ogni cosa insieme. Dapoi toglì una pignatta con brodo di carne giallo di zafrano et ponila al focho; et como comincia a bollire getta dentro quella materia, et dagli una volta col cocchiaro. Et como te pare che sia presa toglila dal focho, e fa'le menestre, et mittivi del le spetie di sopra.

To make zanzarelli. To make ten platefuls: take eight eggs, half a libra of grated cheese, and breadcrumbs, and mix these things together. Then, take a pot of meat broth colored yellow with saffron and put it on the fire; and when it begins to boil put in this mixture and stir once with a spoon. And when it seems to have thickened, remove the pot from the fire and serve up, then sprinkle with spices.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
2	quarts	chicken stock	
8	each	eggs	
7	ounces	parmesan cheese	-- freshly grated
3	ounces	dry bread crumbs	
6	each	saffron threads	
1/8	teaspoon	cinnamon	
1/8	teaspoon	ginger	
1/8	teaspoon	nutmeg	
1/8	teaspoon	black pepper	

Mix the parmesan, breadcrumbs, and eggs to form a soft paste. You can vary the proportions depending on your taste and the desired consistency of the final soup.

Bring the stock to the boil and add half a dozen threads of saffron. Turn off the heat and let steep for a few minutes, until the broth takes on a nice golden color from the saffron. Return to the boil and add the egg mixture all at once. Stir vigorously with a wire whisk and bring back to the boil for a moment until the liquid separates: as the eggs cook, they will change the soup's appearance from creamy to slightly granular.

Remove from the heat. Check for salt, ladle into individual soup plates, and sprinkle generously with the spice mixture.

DE HONESTA VOLUPTATE
BARTOLOMEO PLATINA

Platina's Herb Salad

Translated from Platina's De Honesta Voluptate

A preparation made of several greens is made with lettuce, bugloss, mint, catmint, fennel, parsley, sisymbrium, organ, chervil, cicerbita which doctors call teraxicon, plantain, morella, and other fragrant greens, well washed and pressed and put in a large dish. Sprinkle them with a good deal of salt and blend with oil, then pour vinegar over it all when it has sat a little; it should be eaten and well chewed because wild greens are tough. This sort of salad needs a little more oil than vinegar. It is more suitable in winter than in summer because it requires much digestion and this is stronger in winter.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
2 1/2	cups	lettuce, european	-- torn

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1/2	bunch	parsley sprigs -- chopped fine
1	sprig	fennel leaves -- chopped fine
1	sprig	tarragon, fresh -- chopped fine
1	sprig	mint, fresh -- chopped fine
1	sprig	basil, fresh -- chopped fine
1	sprig	oregano, fresh -- chopped fine
1/3	cup	olive oil
3	tablespoons	vinegar
1	teaspoon	salt

There is no real recipe for this salad, which should be as varied as possible. I start with lettuce - cos or the soft-leaved variety - and add whatever I can get from the market or my garden; rocket, radicchio, mizuna, young nasturtium leaves (and sometimes flowers), small sprigs of parsley and tarragon, a little mint, basil leaves, a few sprigs of oregano, fennel, and salad burnet (all washed and dried, naturally). These are dressed liberally with a standard oil and vinegar dressing seasoned with salt (the salt is dissolved in the vinegar before adding the oil).

LIBRO DELLA CUCINA DEL SECOLO XIV
ANONYMOUS TUSCAN MANUSCRIPT – FRANCESCO ZAMBRINI, EDITOR

De' brodi: e primo, de brodo granato.

Togli polli smembrati, e metti a friggere con cipolle, e lardo et acqua abbastanza; e quando siranno quasi cotti, toglie erbe odorifere, tritale bene col zaffarano, pepe, garofani, cennamo e zenzovo, e distempera col brodo predetto, e mesta onni cosa insieme; poi tolli ova dibattute, e mettivi un poco d'acqua fredda, e aggiungivi di quel brodo, e mesta, e poni a fuoco. Et quando cominciarà a bullire, levala dal fuoco, e mangia.

BROTHS: and first, granulated broth.

Take a chicken cut in pieces, and set it to fry with onions, and lard and enough water; and when it is partly cooked, take savory herbs, minced well with saffron, pepper, cloves, cinnamon and ginger, and dilute with the aforementioned broth, and mix everything together well; then take beaten eggs, and add a bit of cold water, and add some of this broth, and mix it, and set it over the fire. And when it has begun to boil, take it off the fire, and eat it.

De' fungi.

Togli fungi di monti, bulliti, e cipolla soffritta con lardo, e poni a bullire con spezie et altre erbe odorifere, e ova dibattute; e da' mangiare.

Mushrooms.

Take mountain mushrooms, boiled, and onions fried in lard, and set them to boil with spices and other savory herbs, and beaten eggs; and serve.

De la peverada.

Togli pane abbrusticato, un poco di zaffarano che non colori, spezie e fegati triti e pesti nel mortaio, e distempera con aceto o vino e brodo predetto, e fallo dolce o acetoso, come tu vuoi. E tale peverata si può fare con carne domestica, salvatica e con pesce.

Pepper sauce [peverada].

Take toasted bread, a bit of saffron that doesn't change the color, spices and chopped liver pounded in a mortar, and dilute it with vinegar or wine and the broth described above, and make it sweet or sour, as you like. And such a pepper sauce can be made with domestic meats, game, and fish.

De li savori.

Togli cenamo, zenzovo e pane arrostito (la crosta), e sale, e pesta bene nel mortaio: poi distempera con buono vino, e un poco cola, e fa' bullire un poco. Tale sapore si chiama cenamata e conviensi a tutte carni di caprioli e lepore a rosto. Nota che la carne del capriolo si può arrostitire con ossa o senza ossa. Simile quella de la lepore e altre carni, cioè daine, cervi e simili, e a le quali si conviene il detto sapore, e succhio di melangole con spezie, se tu vuoi.

(Cinnamon sauce [cenamata])

Take cinnamon, ginger and toasted bread (the crust), and salt, and pound them well in a mortar; then dilute with good wine, and strain it a bit, and boil it a little. Such a sauce is called cinnamon sauce [cenamata] and is appropriate for all roasted goat and hare. Note that goat can be roasted with bones or without bones. Likewise hare and other meats, that is doe, stag and the like, and for which said sauce is appropriate, and citron juice with spices, if you like.

De' porri.

Togli porri bianchi, a uso di Toscana, triti o tagliati minuti, lavati con acqua calda, e poni a cocere con uno pezzo di carne fresca, e poi trita la detta carne coi predetti porri e col pepe et zaffarano e ova dibattute; e sovraggiogni carne di porco, o altra, e da' mangiare; e poni spezie in scudelle.

Leeks.

Take white leeks, according to the Tuscan custom, minced or sliced fine, washed in hot water, and set them to cook with a piece of fresh meat, and then mince said meat with the aforementioned leeks and with pepper and saffron and beaten eggs; and add on pork or another kind of meat, and serve it; and put spices on the plate.

Fungi di Monte (Sauteed Mushrooms with Spices)

Translated from Libro della cucina del secolo XIV (24)

Toglie funghi di monte, e lessali: e gittatene via l'acqua, mettili poi a friggere con cipolla tritata minuto, o con bianco di porro, spezie e sale da a mangiare. (ZA 24)

Take mountain mushrooms and boil them; and discard the water; then fry them with finely sliced onion, or with white of leek, spices, and salt, and serve.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1	lb	mushrooms	
1	ea	onion, small	
		olive oil	
1	pinch	black pepper	-- freshly ground
1	pinch	ginger	-- freshly ground
1	pinch	nutmeg	-- freshly grated
2	pinches	coriander seed	-- ground
		salt	

Trim and clean the mushrooms; if they are large, cut them in half or into quarters. Cook in boiling water for about 10 minutes; drain thoroughly.

Meanwhile, finely chop the onion and sweat it in a little olive oil until very soft. Add the mushrooms, raise the heat to high and saute for a minute. Season with salt and the spices, lower the heat, cover the pan, and simmer for about 15 minutes. From time to time, check on the mushrooms and give them a stir. Serve when golden brown.

Salsa di finocchio.

Togli fiori di finocchio, e pesta nel mortaio; ponli del zaffarano, noce moscada, garofani, cardamone, ventello d'ovo, e distempera con lo zaffarano; et è bona salsa nel mese di settembre, con ovi.

Fennel sauce.

Take fennel flowers, and beat them in a mortar; add saffron, nutmeg, cloves, cardamom, egg yolks, and color it with saffron; and it is a good sauce during the month of September, with eggs.

Asparagus with Shallots (De Li Sparaci)

Translated from Libro della Cucina

Togli li sparaci, e falli bollire; quando sieno bolliti, ponili a cocere con oglio, cipolle, sale e zaffarano, e spezie trite, o senza

Take asparagus, and boil it; and when boiled, set it to cook with oil, onions, salt, and saffron, and with ground spices, or without.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
16	whole	asparagus	
2	whole	shallot	-- finely chopped
1 1/2	tsp	olive oil	
1	pinch	saffron	
1/8	tsp	salt	
1/8	tsp	pepper	-- freshly ground
1/2	whole	lemon	-- cut into wedges

Preliminary Step for Fresh Asparagus:

Use slender green asparagus for this dish. Snap off the end of the stalks, and peel the base of each stalk with a vegetable peeler.

Then, for Fresh or Frozen Asparagus:

Boil (or steam) the asparagus until just cooked, then drain and pat dry with tea-towels or paper towels.

Meanwhile, gently fry finely chopped shallot (the brown, bulbous variety) in olive oil until soft. Add asparagus stalks, a pinch of saffron, salt, and freshly ground pepper. Toss asparagus in the oil, then serve with lemon wedges.

Spiced Honey Nut Crunch (Nucato)

Translated from Libro della Cucina del Secolo XIV

Togli mele bullito e schiumato, con le noci un poco peste e spezie cotte insieme: bagnati la palma de la mano coll'acqua et estendolo: lassa freddare a da mangiare. E puoi ponere mandole e avellane in luogo di noci.

Take honey, boiled and skimmed, with slightly crushed walnuts and spices, boiled together; wet the palm of your hand with water and spread it out; let it cool, and serve. And you can use almonds or filberts in place of walnuts.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
3	cups	honey	
3/4	pound	almonds	-- shelled
3/4	pound	hazelnuts	-- shelled
3/4	pound	walnuts	-- shelled
1	whole	lemon	
1	teaspoon	ginger	-- ground
1	pinch	pepper	-- freshly ground
1	teaspoon	cinnamon	
1/3	teaspoon	cloves	-- ground
1	stick	butter	
1/2	c	cinnamon	-- ground
1/2	c	powdered sugar	

Gradually bring the honey to the boil, skimming off any impurities that may rise to the surface. Very coarsly chop the nuts and add to the honey along with 1 teaspoon of the spice mixture. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for 30 to 45 minutes. The mixture is done when you can hear the almonds beginning to "pop" from the heat of the honey. Take care not to let the nuts burn and turn dark and bitter. When done, stire in the remaining spice mixture.

When the nucato is done, pour it out onto a sheet pan or cookie sheet lined with parchment paper; spread it into an even layer with the cut surface of a halved lemon. Cool completely. While mixture is cooling, mix together the powdered sugar and cinnamon. Set aside. Grease hands well with butter. Scoop up or pinch off enough candy to make a 3/4-inch round ball (bite sized). Roll candy between palms to make a round ball, then roll in the powdered sugar mixture. Store in an airtight tin in a cool place. CAUTION: If the room is too hot/humid the candy will melt.

Togli Cipolle (Roast Onion Salad)

Translated from 'Libro della cucina del seculo' (90)

Take onions; cook them in the embers, then peel them and cut them across into longish, thin slices; add a little vinegar, salt, oil, and spices and serve.

Togli cipolle; cuocile sotto la bragia, e poi le manda, e tagliale per traverso longhette et sottili: mettili alquanto d'aceto, sale, oglio, e spezie, e da mangiare.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
8	ea	red onion	
1/3	c	olive oil	
3	tbsp	wine vinegar	
3/4	tsp	pepper, black	-- freshly ground
1	dash	cinnamon, ground	

1		dash	ginger, ground
1		dash	saffron -- crushed to a powder
1/2		dash	cloves, ground
1/2		tsp	salt
8	sheets		aluminum foil

Wrap each onion individually in aluminum foil. Roast onions in a 500 degree (F) oven for about an hour. Remove from oven and let cool a while. The skins should be blackened and carmelized. When they are cool enough not to burn you, peel the onions and cut them into thin slices with a very sharp knife.

Put the onions into a salad bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the salt, pepper, herbs, olive oil and vinegar to make a dressing. Pour over onions and toss well.

LIBRO DI CUCINA DEL SECOLO XIV
LUDOVICO FRATI, EDITOR.

Venetian Green Sauce for Boiled Meats

Translated from Ludovico Frati, editor; Libro di cucina del secolo XIV (44)

Salza verde a capretto e ad altre carni alesse: Toy petrosemolo e zenzevro e garofali e fiore de canella e un poco de sale e pista ogni cossa insieme e distempera con bono aceto; fay che sia temperato e non vole stare che se guasta.

Green Sauce for Kid and Other Boiled Meats: Take parsley, ginger, cloves, cassia buds, and a little salt and pound everything together, and moisten with good vinegar; make it not too strong; and it should not be left to stand, because it will spoil.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
4	tbsp	red wine vinegar
3	tbsp	parsley -- finely chopped
1/8	tsp	ginger -- ground
1/8	tsp	cinnamon -- ground
1	pinch	cloves -- ground
1	pinch	sea salt -- coarsely ground

In a mortar, pound the parsley with the coarse salt until you have a juicy puree. Add the spices, continuing to mix and pound with the pestle. Stir in the vinegar. The sauce will have a reasonable consistency, but not as though it had been thickened. Serve with any hot or cold boiled meat.

NOTE: Be sure to puree all the ingredients. When pressed out by pounding, the parsley juices infuse all their taste and aroma into the sauce, whereas a mixture of chopped parsley, vinegar, and spices has an overwhelmingly vinegary flavor. As the author of the original recipe observes, the color of this extraordinary sauce quickly darkens, so it should be prepared just before serving.

Garlic Tarts (Torta d'agli)

Translated from Ludovico Frati, editor; Libro di cucina del secolo XIV (55)

Toy li agli e mondali e lessali; quando sono cocti metili a moglio in aqua fredda e poy pistali e metili zafaano e formazo assay che sia fresco e lardo batuto e specie dolze e forte e distempera con ova e mitili ova passa e poy fa la torta. (Fr 55)

Take the garlic cloves, and peel them and boil them; when they are cooked, put them to soak in cold water, and then pound them and add saffron and plenty of cheese, which should be fresh, and chopped pork fat, and sweet and strong spices, and moisten with eggs, and add raisins, and then make the torta.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
3 1/2	c	flour
18	tbsp	butter
2/3	c	water
2	tsp	salt
5	heads	garlic
7	oz	salt pork
6	oz	farmer's cheese
5	oz	cream cheese
3	ea	egg
1/2	c	raisins
12	threads	saffron
1/3	tsp	cloves -- ground
1/3	tsp	nutmeg -- freshly ground
1/3	tsp	ginger -- ground
1	tsp	cinnamon -- ground
1	tsp	pepper -- ground

For the pastry (make a day in advance and leave to rest in the refrigerator). Cut the fat into the flour. Dissolve the salt in half of the water, then add to the flour mixture. Work with your fingers until a smooth dough forms, adding more water as required. Shape in a thick disk, wrap in waxed paper or plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 12 hours or overnight before using.

Bring a pot of water to the boil. Meanwhile, break the garlic into cloves. Peel the garlic and add it to the boiling water; lower the heat to medium, and cook for 15 minutes. Drain and transfer to a bowl of cold water. Grind the pork in a food processor or meat grinder, or chop it finely with a knife. Do not trim away the fat.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Drain the garlic thoroughly and puree it in a food processor or mortar and pestle. In a mixing bowl, add the cheeses, the ground pork, the spice mixture, the saffron (crushed between your fingers), the eggs, and the raisins. Stir the mixture until smooth.

Roll out two-thirds of the pastry, cut into circles large enough to line the wells of a mini-muffin tin. Place the pastry circles in the muffin tin and add the filling. Roll out the remaining pastry, cut into small circles and cover the miniature tarts, pressing the seams tightly shut. Put the muffin pan on a baking sheet to catch any drips, and bake for approximately 15 minutes.

Onion Tart (Torta de cepolle)

Translated from Ludovico Frati, editor; Libro di cucina del secolo XIV (54)

Se tu foy fare torta de queste do cosse, toy quale tu voy e fay ben allesare. Pone prima l'aqua fuora ben con stamegna e po' le bati finalmente e toy lardo fino e batillo bene; toy l'ova e caxo fresco e zafarano e bati insiema e fay la torta. (Fr 54)

Torta of shallots, or of onions, etc. If you want to make a torta of these two things, take whichever you like and boil it well. First thoroughly remove the water with a sieve, and then chop them fine, and take good pork fat and chop it well; take eggs and fresh cheese and saffron and chop them together, and make the torta.

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
3		c flour	
14		tbsp butter	
6		tbsp water	
1		tsp salt	
1		lb onions	
2		oz Canadian bacon	
2		oz bacon	
11		oz farmer's cheese	
1		ea egg -- beaten	
5	threads	saffron	
1		tsp salt	

For the pastry. Cut the butter into small pieces, and rub or cut it into the flour until the mixture has the consistency of sawdust. Dissolve the salt in half of the water, and add to the flour mixture. Combine quickly with your fingertips, without overworking, just until the dough comes together. If necessary, add more water as required. Form into two thick disks, wrap in plastic wrap or waxed paper, and leave to rest in the refrigerator at least 2 hours before using.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Finely chop the Canadian bacon/bacon mix in a meat grinder or food processor. Mince the onions. Combine the bacon, onions, cheese, and egg. Crush the saffron between your fingers and stir into the mixture. Add salt to taste.

Roll out the pastry, and line the wells of a muffin tin. Line the pastry with aluminum foil, add dried beans or pie weights to keep it from rising, and bake, on a sheet pan, for 8 minutes. Remove the foil and beans, then bake for an additional 5 minutes. Remove from the oven, add the filling and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, checking after 15 minutes to be sure the tart is not burning.

Tiered Fruit Pie (Torta in balconata per dodeze persone)

Translated from Ludovico Frati, editor; Libro di cucina del secolo XIV (53)

Toy farina piu bianca che tu poy avere in quantita de tre libre e toy do onze de zucharo e toy una libra de mandole e XXXVI noce bone e meza libra de uva passa e XXV datali e mezo quarto de garofali e toy bona quantita de late de mandole, toy la farina che tu ay destruta con aqua si che sia ben spesso e toy la padella e onzella ben de olio e de questa farina fassi crosta ad una polverizata de zucaro e delle dite specie, e toy la noce possa li datali minuzati e l'uva passa ben lavata e garofali russi e tute queste croste su chaschauna la suva parte e poni crosta sopra tute queste conse e si che sia torta. (Fr 53)

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
6		c flour	
3 1/2		sticks butter	
1 1/3		c water	
2		tsp salt	

1	qt	almond milk
2	tbsp	sugar
1/3	tsp	cloves -- finely ground
1/2	c	raisins
6	oz	walnuts -- halves
8	oz	dates -- chopped

For the pastry, (make a few hours in advance), Cut the butter into small pieces, and rub or cut it into the flour until the mixture has the consistency of sawdust. Dissolve the salt in half of the water, and add to the flour mixture. Combine quickly with your fingertips, without overworking, just until the dough comes together. If necessary, add more water as required. Form into two thick disks, wrap in plastic wrap or waxed paper, and leave to rest in the refrigerator at least two hours.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Divide the dough into thirds. Roll the first third thinly. On your work surface, sprinkle the pastry with some of the sugar and the cloves and press them into the dough with the rolling pin. Cut into a circles large enough to line the wells of a mini-muffin pan. Line the wells of the muffin pan and arrange the walnuts on the sugared pastry. Sprinkle liberally with almond milk.

Divide the second third of the dough in half and roll it very thin. Sprinkle with sugar and cloves, and press them into the dough. Cut the dough into circles just large enough to fit into the wells of the mini-muffin pan. Place this on top of the walnuts.

Coarsely chop the dates and arrange them on top of this layer of dough. Sprinkle liberally with almond milk. Roll out and sugar the other small piece of dough as before, and place it on top of the dates. Arrange the raisins on top of this layer and sprinkle liberally with almond milk. Roll out the remaining dough and cut into circles to cover each tart, sealing the edges well.

Bake for approximately 20 minutes.

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ARTWORK

Giulio Romano - Italian painter, Roman School (b. ca. 1499, roma, d. 1546, Mantova)
"Banquet of Cupid and Psyche" (1527-30). Fresco. Palazzo del Tè, Mantua.
Web Gallery of Art, <http://www.wga.hu>

Nicolo da Urbino (active from ca. 1515 till c. 1535),
Large Majolica Dish (made for Isabella d'Este) Castel Durante, c.1519.
Diameter 51.5 cm. Inv. No. 1906.420.
MKG Hamburg Collections, <http://www.mkg-hamburg.de/mkg.php/en/sammlungen/europaeisch/~P9/>

Botticelli, Sandro
The Story of Nastagio degli Onesti (forth episode) c. 1483
Tempera on panel, 83 x 142 cm. Private collection
Web Gallery of Art, <http://www.wga.hu>

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