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WORLD FLAVORS:**

SICILY

RECIPES FROM

NANCY HARMON JENKINS

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TRAPANI OR FAVIGNANA COUSCOUS WITH A SEAFOOD STEW

Makes 6 to 8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Couscous	1 lb.
Lemons, peel and all, coarsely chopped	2 ea.
Bay leaves	6 ea.
Onion, small, very finely minced	1 ea.
Flat-leaf parsley, very finely minced	1/3 cup
Olive oil, extra virgin	1/3-1/2 cup
Mediterranean Seafood Stew (recipe follows)	
Basil, fresh, slivered	1/4 cup
Sea salt	1 tsp.

Method

1. Put the couscous in a sieve and rinse thoroughly under running water; then spread it in a shallow layer, not more than 1/4-inch thick, on a tray to swell for at least 30 minutes, while you prepare the cooking liquid.
2. Fill the bottom of the couscoussière, whether genuine or improvised, with enough water to come two-thirds of the way up the sides. Set the top part of the couscoussière over the water to be sure the water doesn't touch the top, even when it's boiling vigorously. When the couscoussière is properly set up, add the lemons and bay leaves to the water and bring it to a boil, then turn it down to a controlled, steady simmer.
3. Rake your fingers through the couscous on the tray, stirring and rubbing it so that no lumps form. Sprinkle the minced onion and parsley over the couscous and gradually, using your hands, work the olive oil into the grains. (Use at least 1/3 cup of oil, but you may not need to use all of it.) Transfer to the top of the couscoussière and set over the simmering water. Leave the couscous to steam for 30 minutes, then, using a fork, gently fluff the grains in the top of the couscoussière, turning so that what was on the bottom is now on top and vice versa. Stir it again, gently, after another 30 minutes or so. If the couscous is not tender, let it cook another 15 minutes. It should be completely tender.
4. When the couscous is almost done, bring the seafood stew to a gentle simmer. Extract about a half-cup of flavorful liquid from the stew and set aside.
5. Combine the basil and salt in a mortar and grind them together to make a coarse pesto. (If you don't have a mortar and pestle, mince the basil very fine and crush with the salt in a small bowl, using the back of a spoon.) Once the stew is simmering, stir in the basil pesto and remove from the heat.

6. When the couscous is done, tip it onto its tray and gently dribble the reserved seafood cooking liquid over it, tossing with a fork to make sure the couscous absorbs as much as possible, adding a little more salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.
7. To serve, mound the couscous on a platter and serve the seafood stew apart. Guests help themselves to the stew and the couscous in whatever balance they wish. It's not traditional on Favignana, but you could also spoon the seafood over the couscous and serve the broth apart in little bowls for guests to add to the couscous or to sip as an accompaniment.

CAPONATA SICILIANA

Yield: 6 to 8 portions

Ingredients	Amount
Eggplant	1 ea. (medium or 2 small)
Sea salt	
Sweet red and yellow peppers	½ lb.
Olive oil, extra-virgin	½ cup plus 2 Tbsp.
Yellow onions, chopped	¾ lb.
Garlic cloves, chopped	2 ea.
Red, ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped	1 ½ lb.
Dried hot red chili pepper (optional)	1 ea. (small)
Red wine vinegar	2 Tbsp.
Sugar	1 tsp.
Dark, bitter chocolate, grated (optional)	1 tsp.
Celery stalks, sliced	3 ea.
Pitted black olives, chopped	½ cup
Capers (rinsed well if salted)	½ cup
Fresh basil, slivered	½ cup
Freshly ground black pepper	

Method

1. Cut the eggplant in fingers about 1 ½ inches long and place in a colander. Scatter a handful of salt over the cubes, tossing to make sure they are all salted. Set a plate on top, with a weight on it (a can of tomatoes works well for this), and set the colander in the sink to drain for about 1 hour. At the end of this time rinse the eggplants well and dry them thoroughly with paper towels.
2. While the eggplant is draining, pierce the peppers with a long-handled fork and roast them over a gas flame or charcoal embers (or if necessary set them in the oven under an electric broiler) until the thin outside skins are black and blistered. Rub the blackened skin away, and when the peppers are clean, slice them lengthwise into half-inch strips, discarding the seeds, stems, and inner membranes. Set aside.
3. When the eggplants have been rinsed and dried, heat the half-cup of olive oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat and fry the eggplant sticks until they are golden on all sides. Remove and set aside to drain on paper towels.
4. In another saucepan make a tomato sauce: Over medium-low heat, gently sauté the chopped onions and garlic until they are very soft, but not brown. Add the tomatoes, the optional chili pepper, the vinegar and sugar, and the optional chocolate, and continue cooking, stirring, until the sauce is thick and jammy and the tomatoes have broken down—about 20 minutes. Stir in the celery and cook 5 minutes longer, just to soften the celery slightly, then add the olives and capers. Stir in the eggplant and peppers and cook two more minutes just to amalgamate the flavors. Remove from the heat, stir in the basil and set aside to cool to room temperature before serving.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, to be published by HarperCollins, spring 2003

ELEONORA CONSOLE'S CAPONATA

LA CAPONATA DI ELEONORA CONSOLE

Yield: 6-8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Eggplant, diced in large cubes	2 lb.
Sea salt	
Extra-virgin olive oil (plus 2 Tbsp.)	¼ cup
Yellow onions, chopped	½ lb.
Anchovy fillet, chopped	1 ea.
Green celery stalks, including green tops, sliced ¼" thick	2 ea.
Red, ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped	1 lb.
Tomato concentrate (or 4 sun-dried tomatoes, plumped in hot water, drained)	2 Tbsp.
Red wine vinegar	¼ cup
Sugar	2 Tbsp.
Dark unsweetened chocolate, finely grated	2 Tbsp.
Sweet red peppers, roasted, peeled, and thinly sliced	2 ea.
Salted capers, rinsed	2 Tbsp.
Golden sultana raisins	2 Tbsp.
Pine nuts	2 Tbsp.
Pitted green olives, coarsely chopped	12-14 ea.
Freshly ground black pepper	
Mixed flat-leaf parsley and basil, finely minced (garnish)	¼ cup

Method

1. Set the eggplant cubes in a colander and sprinkle heavily with sea salt. Set a plate on top of the eggplant and weight it. Set the colander in the sink to drain for at least 30 minutes, then rinse the eggplant cubes thoroughly in running water and pat very dry.
2. Heat ¼ cup of olive oil in a large skillet, add the dried eggplant cubes and sauté until they are golden on all sides. You may have to do this in several batches. As the eggplant cubes brown, remove them to a bowl.
3. When you're finished with the eggplant, lower the heat to low and add the onions and anchovy to the oil in the pan, first adding a little more olive oil if necessary. Cook the onions very gently so they melt in the oil rather than sizzle and fry. When the onions are very soft, add the celery and tomatoes and raise the heat to medium. Cook, stirring frequently, until the tomatoes have given off their liquid and started to soften into a sauce.

4. Add either tomato concentrate or chopped reconstituted sun-dried tomatoes and stir into the sauce. Add the vinegar, sugar, and chocolate, stir well, and simmer for about five minutes, during which time the sauce will thicken and darken. Now stir in the remaining ingredients, with plenty of black pepper as well as the reserved eggplant cubes. Mix everything together very well, coating the eggplant cubes with the sauce. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish with the chopped herbs.
5. May be served immediately, or set aside to serve later at room temperature. Caponata is one of those dishes that seems to improve in flavor if kept overnight, but if you must refrigerate it be sure to allow time for it to come back to room temperature before serving. It loses a lot of complexity when served chilled.

Note: In some regions, cooks garnish the caponata with a sprinkling of fresh mint leaves instead of basil, a nice touch.

Note: The most striking caponata I've ever seen was presented at an early autumn lunch by Eleonora Console, a talented cooking teacher who lives north of Catania on the slopes of Mount Etna. She served the caponata on a handsome round majolica platter, the whole thing topped by a dome of chocolate studded with pine nuts. "It's the way our family monzù always did it for special occasions," she said modestly. To make the dome, she had inverted an aluminum bowl, covered it with Saran wrap, then laboriously painted layer after layer of dark melted chocolate over it, waiting for each layer to harden before adding the next. After the final layer was added, but before it had solidified, she studded it with pine nuts. When the whole thing was ready, she slid it off the bowl, removed the plastic wrap, and carefully set it over the caponata. To serve it, she broke through the chocolate dome at table so that each portion came with bits of chocolate and pine nuts on top. An ambitious cook could try this presentation, in which case the grated chocolate could be left out of the preparation.

RISOTTO WITH PANCETTA AND PUMPKIN

Yield: 6 Portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Olive oil	1 oz.
Onions, minced	3 oz.
Arborio rice	8 oz.
Chicken stock	24 oz.
Pancetta, small dice, rendered, golden	6 oz.
Pumpkin puree	4 oz.
Whole butter	4 oz.
Parmesan cheese, grated	½ cup
Salt and pepper	to taste

Method

1. Heat olive oil and sauté onions until translucent, add rice, coat with oil, and sauté until the rice is hot.
2. Add the stock in increments, stirring constantly until all stock has been absorbed and the rice is al dente.
3. Add the Pancetta, and pumpkin puree and heat through until hot.
4. Add grated Parmesan cheese, butter, season with salt and pepper.

SICILIAN SALT COD AND ORANGE SALAD

Yield: 6 to 8 first-course portions

Ingredients	Amount
Blood oranges	2 ea.
Black olives, pitted, roughly chopped	1/3 cup
Red onion, small, very thinly sliced	1 ea.
Red or green chili pepper, small, roasted, seeded and thinly sliced	1 ea.
Extra-virgin olive oil	1/4 cup
Red wine vinegar	1 Tbsp.
Shredded soaked salt cod (see head note)	1 cup
Pinch of dried Sicilian or Greek oregano (rígani), crumbled	

Optional:

Salad greens, such as escarole or frisée chicory

Method

1. Peel the blood oranges and cut away all the pithy membrane that surrounds them. Slice in small chunks—you should have about a cup of orange chunks. Combine the orange chunks in a bowl with all the ingredients except the salad greens, tossing to mix well. Set aside, covered with plastic wrap, for at least one hour to meld the flavors. To serve, arrange greens on a serving platter and mound the salad on top.

Note: This version of a salt-cod salad is reminiscent of the Spanish salad called *remojón*, which also calls for the odd but delicious combination of oranges, black olives, and onion. If you can't find blood oranges, use small navel oranges, but add the flesh of one peeled lemon to give tartness to the mix.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

ANNA TASCA LANZA'S SFINCIONE (SICILIAN PIZZA)

Sfincione is Sicilian style pizza with a thick crust, baked in a large rectangular pan – it's a favorite street food in Palermo. The version made by Anna Tasca Lanza has both a rich dough and an elaborate topping. The use of Swiss cheese (emmenthaler) may come as a surprise but it is a long-standing tradition in the Tasca family.

Yield: 12 to 18 servings

Ingredients	Amount
<i>For the dough:</i>	
Active dry yeast	1 tsp.
Warm water	1 cup
Unbleached all-purpose flour	3 cups
Semolina	1 cup
Sea salt	1 tsp.
Unsalted butter or lard, cut in pieces, at room temperature	2 Tbsp.
Egg	1 ea.
<i>For the topping:</i>	
Onions, medium, thinly sliced	2 ea.
Extra-virgin olive oil	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Salted anchovy fillets, roughly chopped	4 ea.
Emmenthal or Swiss cheese, thinly sliced	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.
Fresh goat's cheese, crumbed	$\frac{1}{4}$ lb.
Tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and roughly chopped; or use three 28-ounce cans whole tomatoes, drained well	4 lb.
Dried Sicilian or Greek oregano (rigani)	2 tsp.
Pecorino sardo or parmigiano reggiano, grated	2 Tbsp.
Breadcrumbs, dry unflavored	2 Tbsp.

Method

1. Add the yeast to a half-cup of the warm water and set aside to dissolve.
2. Combine the flour, semolina, and salt. Make a well in the center and pour in the dissolved yeast. Add the pieces of butter or lard and mix together, adding another quarter-cup of warm water. Add the egg and mix, adding more water as necessary – up to a full cup in all – to make a soft, dense dough. (You may also do this using an electric mixer with a dough hook.) Knead by hand for at least 10 minutes, about 6 minutes using the electric mixer. Set the dough aside, covered, to rest for about 30 minutes.

3. While the dough is resting, gently sauté the onions in a half-cup of the olive oil over medium-low heat until they are golden, about 30 minutes. Remove from the heat when done and set aside.
4. Lightly oil a 12" x 17" baking sheet. Or cut a strip of parchment paper to fit the baking sheet. Roll the dough out on the baking sheet to cover it entirely, patting the dough to push it into all the corners of the sheet.
5. Dot the pieces of anchovy over the dough, then cover them with the sliced cheese. Crumble the goat's cheese over the top. Mix the chopped tomatoes into the browned onions and spread over the cheese. Sprinkle with oregano, grated cheese, breadcrumbs. Lightly press all the topping into the dough, using the palms of your hands, then raise the dough a little all around the edge to create a border. Generously dribble the remaining olive oil over the top and set aside, lightly covered with plastic wrap, to rise for about an hour.
6. Heat the oven to hot—about 400°F. Bake the sfincione for about 30 minutes, or until the dough is thoroughly cooked and the topping is bubbling. Remove from the oven and cut into squares. Serve immediately.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, to be published by HarperCollins, spring 2003

TUNA OR SWORDFISH CARPACCIO

CARPACCIO DI TONNO O DI PESCE SPADA

Yield: 8 portions

Ingredients	Amount
Sushi-grade bluefin tuna or swordfish, very fresh, thin slices	16-24 ea.
Lemon juice, freshly squeezed	3 Tbsp.
Extra-virgin olive oil	1/2 cup
Capers, coarsely chopped	1-2 Tbsp.
Flat-leaf parsley, finely minced	1-2 Tbsp.
Mint, fresh, finely minced	1-2 Tbsp.
Sea salt	
Black pepper, freshly ground	

Method

1. An hour or so before serving, put the plates you'll be using in the refrigerator to chill thoroughly. If the tuna is a little bloody, rinse it quickly under cool running water and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Just before serving, pat the slices of fish dry with paper towels and arrange them on the chilled plates. Combine the lemon juice, olive oil, capers, parsley and mint and beat well with a fork or a wire whisk to amalgamate. Taste and add a little salt and pepper if you wish. Spoon the sauce generously over the fish slices and serve immediately, passing more sauce at the table.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

TUNA FISHBALLS

FRANCO CRIVELLO'S POLPETTINE DI TONNO

Yield: 4 portions as a main course, 8 portions as an antipasto

Ingredients	Amounts
Black currants	2 Tbsp.
Pine nuts	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil, extra virgin	1/4 cup
Tuna, fresh	1 lb.
Egg, large	1 ea.
Breadcrumbs, dry, fine	1/3 cup
Pecorino sardo or pecorino toscano cheese, freshly grated	1/2 cup
Flat-leaf parsley, minced	1/2 cup
Mint, fresh, leaves only, minced	2 Tbsp.
Mint, fresh, whole for garnish	
Sea salt and black pepper freshly ground	to taste
Yellow onion, medium, finely chopped	1 ea.
Garlic clove, finely chopped	1 ea.
Dry white wine	1/2 cup
Tomatoes, canned, crushed	1/2 cup
Sugar	1/2 tsp.

Method

1. Put the currants in a small bowl and cover with very warm water. Set aside to soak for at least 15 minutes.
2. Put the pine nuts in a small skillet with about 1/2 teaspoon of the olive oil and toast over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the pine nuts are golden. Set aside.
3. Using a sharp chef's knife, chop the tuna by hand until it is very fine. (You may also do this in a food processor, first cutting the tuna into small bits, then pulsing with brief spurts, but you must be very careful not to reduce the tender fish to a pulp.) Transfer the tuna to a bowl and add the egg, breadcrumbs, grated cheese, minced parsley, and minced mint. Mix in the toasted pine nuts. Drain the currants well, patting dry with paper towels, and add to the mixture. Add a pinch of salt and black pepper and use your hands to mix everything together very well. If the mixture seems too wet, add more breadcrumbs. If, on the other hand, it seems too dry, break another egg in a bowl, beat it lightly with a fork, and add a few teaspoonsful to the tuna mix. Taste and adjust the seasoning.
4. Wet your hands to keep the tuna from sticking to them and shape the mix into balls, either small ones for an antipasto, or larger ones for a main course. As you make them, set them aside.

5. When all the balls are shaped, warm 2 tablespoons of the oil in a sauté pan and brown the tuna balls in the hot oil, turning to brown all sides. Remove and set aside as they finish cooking.
6. Discard the oil and wipe out the sauté pan. Add 2 tablespoons of fresh oil and the onion and garlic and cook over low heat very gently until the onion has almost melted into the oil. Turn the heat up to medium and add the white wine. Let it cook, bubbling, until it has reduced slightly, then add the tomatoes and the sugar and continue cooking for about 15 minutes, or until the tomatoes are soft and have thickened to a sauce. Stir in the tuna balls and cook another 10 minutes, or until the balls are heated through.
7. Serve immediately.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

SWORDFISH ROLLS

INVOLTINI DI PESCE SPADA

Yield: 6 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Swordfish, fresh thin slices, ¼" or thinner	12 ea.
Olive oil, extra virgin	4 Tbsp.
Chard leaves, preferably white and green	4 ea.
Yellow onion, finely minced	¼ cup
Flat-leaf parsley, minced	¼ cup
Garlic cloves	2 ea.
Capers, well rinsed, preferably salted	2 Tbsp.
Pine nuts	2 Tbsp.
Golden sultanas or black currants, softened in warm water	2 Tbsp.
Anchovy fillets, chopped	4 ea.
Oregano, Sicilian or Greek (optional)	1 Tbsp.
Breadcrumbs, toasted	½ cup
Orange zest	1 Tbsp.
Dry white wine	½ cup

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. Pat the swordfish slices dry with paper towel and set aside. Use a little of the olive oil to grease an oval or rectangular oven dish that is large enough to hold all the swordfish rolls in one layer.
3. Make the stuffing: Strip the chard leaves from the center stalks, which are too firm for this dish. (Reserve the stalks for another use.) Set the leaves in a colander over a pan of boiling water to steam until they are tender – 10 to 15 minutes. Remove and chop the chard coarsely.
4. In 2 tablespoons of olive oil sauté the onions, parsley, and garlic until soft. Add the chopped chard and stir to mix well. Cook for about 5 minutes, or just long enough to heat the chard thoroughly. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the capers, pine nuts, raisins (softened in warm water) and chopped anchovies. Add oregano, if you wish, the toasted breadcrumbs and the orange zest, mixing well. Taste and add salt.
5. Spread 2 tablespoons of the stuffing at one edge of a swordfish slice, leaving a good margin at each end, and roll the slice as tightly as you can, securing it with a toothpick. Set the slices, toothpick side down, in the prepared oven dish.

6. Combine the orange juice and white wine and heat to just below boiling. Pour over the swordfish rolls, then dribble the remaining olive oil over the top. Transfer to the preheated oven and cook for 20 minutes, or until the fish rolls are cooked through and the tops are starting to brown.
7. Remove and serve immediately, spooning the pan juices over each serving.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

CROSTINI DI BOTTARGA AL CACIOCAVALLO

Yield: 4 portions

Ingredients	Amount
Tuna bottarga (bottarga di tonno) imported	2 oz.
Tomatoes, ripe	½ lb.
Sea salt	
Crusty country-style bread, about 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick	8 slices
Extra-virgin olive oil	1/2 cup
Freshly ground black pepper	
Basil, fresh, leaves only	1 small bu.
Caciocavallo or pecorino toscano cheese, thinly sliced	½ lb.
The same cheese, grated	2 Tbsp.

Method

1. Remove the membrane from the outside of the block of bottarga. Using the fine holes of a grater, grate enough bottarga to make about one-third cup. Set aside.
2. Bring a pan of water to a rolling boil and dip the tomatoes in, holding them in the boiling water for 15 seconds. Remove, peel and seed. Dice the tomatoes, sprinkle with a very little salt and set in a sieve over a small bowl to drain for 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Toast the bread slices in a toaster or under the broiler just long enough to turn them a little golden but not long enough to make them crisp and crunchy all the way through. Once the bread has been toasted, set the oven at about 300°F. Put the toasted bread (crostini) on a sheet pan, cover each slice with a very thin slice of cheese and return to the warm oven, leaving it just until the cheese has softened and melted slightly around the edges – about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven.
4. In a small bowl combine the olive oil and 1 ½ tablespoons of the drained tomato juice. Add lots of freshly ground black pepper. Set aside a few small basil leaves to use as a garnish and sliver the remaining leaves– you should have about 1/3 cup. Add the basil to the oil.
5. Set the oven on broil.
6. Pile each slice of cheese-toast with the chopped tomatoes and sprinkle a good teaspoon of grated bottarga on top of each one. Spoon the tomato vinaigrette liberally over the top, then add a little grated cheese. Run the pan of bread under the broiler just long enough to melt the grated cheese and warm the tomatoes. Remove from the oven, garnish with the reserved basil leaves and serve immediately.

Note: Bottarga is simply dried, salted tuna roe. The eggs, removed in their intact membrane, are salted, pressed and dried, then coated with wax to preserve them – think pressed, sun-dried caviar and you’re pretty close. Bottarga is very salty so no additional salt is used in any recipe that calls for it; for that reason, look for a cheese that is not overly salted for the recipe.

Another way to use bottarga is as an antipasto on its own, very thinly sliced off the brick-shaped block. Fan the slices on a plate and dribble over it your finest extra-virgin olive oil and a few drops of lemon juice. Serve with thin slices of dark bread (rye or pumpernickel, although not typical of Sicily, would be fine) spread with unsalted butter, and lots of pepper.

Like a glorious Mediterranean take on the humble grilled cheese sandwich, these crostini could be a first course at a rustic dinner, or they could be the main course for a simple lunch or supper. The bottarga adds a note of luxury. Depending on the size of the bread, you'll need one or two slices for each serving. I like to make this with a long, slender baguette, slicing the bread on the diagonal as thinly as I can manage. Two such slices will make one serving.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

CHICKPEA FLOUR FRITTERS

PANELLE

Ingredients	Amount
Water, cool	4 cups
Chickpea flour	2 1/4 cups (8 ounces)
Sea salt	
Black pepper, freshly ground	
Flat-leaf parsley, finely minced, or chopped rosemary leaves	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil for deep-fat frying	

Method

1. Before you begin cooking, have ready the containers in which to cool the chickpea porridge. A marble countertop, if you have one, is ideal. Dip your hands in running water and lightly skim them over the surface, just to dampen it. Without a marble countertop, you can use a couple of large, shallow serving platters or oven dishes, in which case they should be very lightly oiled, again, dipping your hands in a little olive oil and rubbing it over the surfaces.
2. When ready to cook, add the water to a saucepan and set over medium heat. Gradually, sift in the chickpea flour, a little at a time, stirring with a wire whisk to avoid lumps. By the time all the flour has been added the water should be hot but not yet boiling. Continue stirring while adding salt and pepper to taste. Once the flour has come to a boil, turn the heat down to low so that the porridge is just simmering in the saucepan. Simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring frequently, until the porridge is very dense and starts to pull away from the sides of the pan.
3. When the porridge is very thick, stir in the minced parsley or rosemary and pour the porridge out onto the marble or other recipients. Use a spatula to smooth the porridge out to a consistent 1/8-inch thickness.
4. When the porridge is cool, it will be quite firm. Cut into triangles or irregular lozenges or whatever shapes suit your fancy.
5. Heat 2 cups extra-virgin olive oil to frying temperature--about 360°F. Drop the panelle into the boiling oil, a few at a time, and fry in batches until crisp and lightly golden, turning once. The panelle will be done in 4 to 5 minutes. Drain on a rack covered with paper towels. Serve piping hot, sprinkled with coarse sea salt.

Note: If you wish, let the olive oil cool, then strain it through a fine-mesh sieve to be reused two or three more times.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

SARDE A BECCAFICU

Ingredients	Amounts
Sardines, fresh, slit up the belly and the bones removed	16 ea.
Raisins, golden	70 grams
Sugar	Pinch
Onion, medium, finely chopped	1 ea.
Olive oil, extra virgin	½ cup
Flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped	3 Tbsp.
Breadcrumbs	200 grams
Pine nuts	30 grams
Wine vinegar	1 Tbsp.
Orange juice, freshly squeezed	4 oz.
Salt and black pepper, freshly ground	to taste
Orange, sliced about ¼" thick	1 ea.
Bay leaves	2 ea.

1. The sardines should be butterflied, that is, joined together at the back but boned and opened up like a book, or a butterfly.
2. Cover the raisins with a cup of hot water, add the sugar and set aside to soak until the raisins are softened. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
3. In a sauté pan over medium low heat, gently sauté the chopped onions in 1/4 cup of olive oil until they are soft but not brown. Stir in the chopped parsley and let cook just a few minutes more to soften the parsley. Away from the heat, stir in the breadcrumbs, pine nuts, and the drained raisins. Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, the vinegar and 2 tablespoons of the orange juice and stir to mix well. Taste and add salt and pepper.
4. Use about 1/2 tablespoon of olive oil to grease the bottom of an oven dish. Lay a sardine out, skin side down, and spread thickly with the breadcrumb mixture. Roll it up carefully, starting at the head end and rolling toward the tail end. (Use a toothpick to hold the sardine together if necessary.) Set the rolled sardine in the oven dish with the tail sticking up. Continue with the rest of the sardines. When all of the sardines are done, tuck the bay leaves and orange slices in and around the fish. (If you have any leftover breadcrumb mixture sprinkle it over the tops of the fish.) Sprinkle the remaining olive oil and orange juice over the top and set the dish in the oven. Bake for 15 minutes, or until the sardines are cooked through.
5. Serve immediately, or let cool down to room temperature before serving.

SICILIAN COUSCOUS

One of the most unusual couscous in the Mediterranean is from the west coast of Sicily, where it's made around the towns of Erice, Trapani, and Marsala. Local historians claim it as a relic of the Arab occupation of Sicily a thousand years ago. Whether it's really that old or not, it's made very differently from North African couscous, and almost always served with a seafood sauce. Pino Maggiore, chef-owner of Cantina Siciliana in Trapani, makes cuscussu trapanese in a flat-bottomed terracotta bowl called a mafaradda or mafarda, a word with Arab roots. Sicilian couscous is a festive, not an everyday dish, he explains, as he rolls salt, pepper, finely minced onion and olive oil into the couscous – something that would be anathema in North Africa. Other cooks add finely minced parsley or crushed hot red peperoncini.

Another difference: Sicilian couscous is, like pasta fresca, freshly made and cooked. After just an hour or so of drying, it's steamed for at least an hour over a broth that's little more than water flavored with laurel leaves, an onion, cinnamon, and strips of lemon zest; in one variation, the top of the couscoussière is lined with bay leaves before the couscous is added. Then the cuscussu is turned hot onto a platter and fish broth, prepared separately, is added to it, little by little so that the couscous swells as it absorbs the broth.

FRANCO AND GRAZIELLA CRIVELLO'S PASTA MEDITERRANEA

Yield: 4 portions

Ingredients	Amount
Fish, which might be divided equally between freshly caught tuna, chopped into small chunks, and fresh peeled shrimp	1 lb.
Garlic cloves, coarsely chopped	2 ea.
Olive oil, extra-virgin	1/4 cup
Red or rose wine	1/2 cup
Plum tomatoes (about 6 whole)	1 small can
Peperoncino (chili pepper), small, hot	1 ea.
Salt and pepper	to taste
Casatiedde or other small, chunky pasta	1 lb.
Fresh mint, chopped, leaves only	2 Tbsp.
Almonds, toasted, chopped	3 Tbsp.
Pine nuts	2 Tbsp.

Method

1. In a sauté pan large enough to hold all the sauce and the pasta, sauté the seafood and garlic with the olive oil for about 5 minutes, or until the tuna has blanched in color and the garlic is soft. Add the wine and let cook until it has mostly evaporated, then add the tomatoes, breaking them up with the side of a fork as you put them into the pan. Break up the chili pepper and add with salt and pepper. Let the sauce cook, adding a little hot water if necessary to keep it from burning, while you prepare the pasta.
2. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a rolling boil. Plunge in the pasta and cook until it is almost, but not quite, al dente. Drain and immediately add to the pan with the sauce. Let the pasta finish cooking in the sauce--this is called pasta saltata in padella.
3. While the pasta is finishing, combine the mint, almonds and pine nuts. As soon as the pasta is done, turn it into a preheated bowl, top with the nut mixture and serve immediately.

PASTA ALL'ISOLANA WITH ANCHOVIES AND SALTED CAPERS

Yield: 4 portions

Ingredients	Amount
Olive oil, extra-virgin	as needed
Garlic cloves, chopped	3 ea.
Anchovies, whole, salted, rinsed and stripped to fillets or 4 oil-packed anchovy fillets	2 ea.
Salted capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped	1/4 cup
Canned tomatoes, finely chopped	1/2 cup
Sugar	a pinch
Pitted black olives, coarsely chopped (salt-cured are best)	1/3 cup
Dried Sicilian or Greek oregano (rígani)	a pinch
Short, stubby pasta	3/4 lb.
Fresh basil, minced	1 Tbsp.
Fresh, flat-leaf parsley	1 Tbsp.
Freshly ground black pepper	to taste

Method

1. Combine 2 tablespoons of oil in a pan with the garlic, anchovies and capers. Cook over medium-low heat, crushing the ingredients with a fork as they soften. (It's important not to let the garlic brown, but just to melt in the oil, along with the anchovies and capers.) You should end up with a coarse paste. Stir in the tomatoes, sugar and olives, along with a good pinch of oregano, crumbling the herb in your fingers. Cover and let cook over a very low heat for about 10 minutes.
2. While the sauce is cooking, bring a large pot of unsalted water to a rolling boil. (The sauce will be quite salty on its own.) Add the pasta and cook until it is just tender. Remove the pasta from the cooking water with a strainer and transfer to the sauce along with a little of the pasta water – no more than half a cup. Continue cooking the pasta in the sauce until the added water has been absorbed or boiled away and the pasta is done. Taste the sauce and add salt if necessary. Turn into a heated serving dish and dress with the minced fresh herbs and plenty of black pepper.
3. Serve immediately.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

OVEN-BRAISED BLUEFIN TUNA (TONNO ARROSTO)

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

Ingredients	Amount
Fresh tuna in one piece	1 1/2 lb.
Garlic cloves, sliced	3-4 ea.
Fresh thyme	3-4 branches
Sea salt and black pepper, freshly ground	to taste
Prosciutto di Parma or, if you can find it, Spanish jamon serrano	4 slices (thin)
Olive oil, extra-virgin	1/4 cup

Method

1. Heat the oven to 400°F.
2. Using the sharp point of a knife make little cuts about 1/2 inch deep in a pattern all over the tuna and insert a slice of garlic or a sprig of thyme in each one. Sprinkle salt and pepper all over the roast, then wrap the slices of ham around it so that the roast is covered except for the two ends. If necessary, tie the roast with kitchen twine. Now use your hands to smear the olive oil all over the ham. Set the roast on a rack in a roasting pan.
3. Place in the oven, turn the heat down to 350°F, and roast for about 25 minutes, or until the ham is crispy around the edges. The tuna should still be quite pink in the middle.
4. Remove the tuna from the oven and set aside for about 10 minutes before serving. Or let it cool to room temperature as described in the head note.
5. Remove the string before serving the tuna, and slice the fish with a very sharp knife.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins HarperCollins, 2003

CAPONATA

Serves 6 to 8

2 pounds eggplant, diced in large cubes
Sea salt
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 pound yellow onions, chopped
1 anchovy fillet, chopped
2 green celery stalks, including green tops, sliced 1/4 inch thick
1 pound red, ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons tomato concentrate, or 4 sun-dried tomatoes, plumped in hot water, drained and chopped
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons finely grated dark unsweetened chocolate
2 red sweet peppers, roasted, peeled and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons salted capers, rinsed
2 tablespoons golden sultana raisins
2 tablespoons pine nuts
12 to 14 pitted green olives, coarsely chopped
Freshly ground black pepper
Garnish: 1/4 cup finely minced mixed flat-leaf parsley and basil

Set the eggplant cubes in a colander and sprinkle heavily with sea salt. Set a plate on top of the eggplant and weight it. Set the colander in the sink to drain for at least 30 minutes, then rinse the eggplant cubes thoroughly in running water and pat very dry.

Heat 1/4 cup of olive oil in a large skillet, add the dried eggplant cubes and sauté until they are golden on all sides. You may have to do this in several batches. As the eggplant cubes brown, remove them to a bowl.

When you're finished with the eggplant, lower the heat to low and add the onions and anchovy to the oil in the pan, first adding a little more olive oil if necessary. Cook the onions very gently so they melt in the oil rather than sizzle and fry. When the onions are very soft, add the celery and tomatoes and raise the heat to medium. Cook, stirring frequently, until the tomatoes have given off their liquid and started to soften into a sauce.

Add either tomato concentrate or chopped reconstituted sun-dried tomatoes and stir into the sauce. Add the vinegar, sugar, and chocolate, stir well and let simmer for about 5 minutes, during which time the sauce will thicken and darken. Now stir in the remaining ingredients, with plenty of black pepper as well as the reserved eggplant cubes. Mix everything together very well, coating the eggplant cubes with the sauce. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish with the chopped herbs. May be served immediately, or set aside to serve later at room temperature. Caponata is one of those dishes that seems to improve in flavor if kept overnight, but if you must refrigerate it be sure to allow time for it to come back to room temperature

before serving. It loses a lot of complexity when served chilled. Note: In some regions, cooks garnish the caponata with a sprinkling of fresh minced mint leaves instead of dry.

TRAPANI-STYLE "PIZZA" (FOCACCIA)

PIZZA RIANATA TRAPANESE

Yield: 8 to 12 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Active dry yeast	1 tsp.
Unbleached all-purpose flour	3 cups
Semolina	1 cup
Sea salt	to taste
Extra virgin olive oil	2 Tbsp.
Egg, large	1 ea.
<i>For the topping</i>	
Anchovy fillets, coarsely chopped	12 ea.
Extra virgin olive oil	¼ cup
Plum tomatoes, drained and chopped	28 oz.
Garlic cloves, chopped	4 ea.
Flat-leaf parsley	¾ cup
Black pepper, freshly ground	to taste
Cheese: young pecorino, fontina, or Asiago, thinly sliced	½ lb.
Dry bread crumbs	½ cup
Pecorino or caciocavallo or ricotta salata, grated	½ cup
Oregano	1 Tbsp.

Method

1. *For the dough:* Add the yeast to ½ cup of warm water and set aside to dissolve.
2. Combine and the flour, semolina, and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the dissolved yeast.
3. Add the oil and mix, adding in another ¼ cup warm water.
4. Add the egg and continue mixing, adding more water (a tablespoon at a time) up to ¼ cup in all.
5. Turn the dough out on a lightly floured board and knead for about 10 minutes, or until the dough is silky smooth and has lost any tackiness.
6. Form the dough into a ball, dust with flour, and set in a clean bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside to double in size, about 30 minutes.
7. *For the topping:* Combine the anchovy fillets and 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a sauté pan and cook gently, crushing the anchovies into the oil with a fork.
8. Stir in the garlic, then add the chopped tomatoes and parsley.
9. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring frequently, until the sauce has thickened and reduced to 1½ to 1¾ cups.
10. Remove from the heat, stir in black pepper, and set aside.

11. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
12. Coat a 12- by 18-inch sheet pan with a little olive oil.
13. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, punch it down and roll it out to fit the oiled pan.
14. Place the dough in the pan, then spread on the tomato sauce, leaving a thin ¼-inch boarder around the edges.
15. Layer the sliced cheese, then sprinkle with bread crumbs and grated cheese.
16. Add plenty of dried oregano, crumbling it in your fingers, then drizzle the remaining olive oil over the top.
17. Cover lightly with plastic wrap and set aside to rise for 30 minutes
18. Transfer sheet pan to preheated oven and bake for 20 to 30 minutes, until crust is golden and top is sizzling.
19. Remove from the oven and let rest 4 or 5 minutes. Slice and serve.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

ALMOND-STUFFED LEG OF LAMB WITH CHICKPEA PURÉE

Yield: 8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Whole peppercorns	1 Tbsp.
Coarse sea salt	1 tsp.
Fresh sage, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Leg of lamb, boned	3 lbs. (about)
<i>Stuffing</i>	
Blanched almonds, chopped	¾ cup
Extra-virgin olive oil	1 tsp.
Dry bread crumbs	½ cup
Yellow onion, medium, finely chopped	1 ea.
Sea salt	to taste
Garlic cloves, chopped	5 ea.
Carrot, medium, chopped	1 ea.
Celery stalks, firm, including leafy tops, chopped	2 ea.
Onion, medium, chopped	1 ea.
Extra-virgin olive oil	
Fresh mint, leaves only	4 large branches
Chickpeas, soaked overnight	1 ½ cups
Fine sea salt	1 tsp.
<i>Garnish</i>	
Slivered mint leaves	

Method

1. In a mortar, pound together to coarse crumbs the coarse salt, pepper and sage. Rub the mixture all over the outside of the lamb leg and set aside to macerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 3 hours.
2. *For the stuffing:* Combine the almonds and oil in a skillet over medium heat and toast the almonds, stirring frequently, until they are golden, being careful not to burn them. Transfer the almonds to a food processor. Add the breadcrumbs to the skillet and toast them, stirring constantly, until they are crisp and light brown, then combine with the almonds. Process very briefly, by pulsing, then add the finely chopped onions and process again to make a fine mince. Be careful not to overprocess and grind the nuts to a paste. They should still have a good deal of texture.

3. Set aside about half a cup of the stuffing. Lay the meat out on a board with the inside (where the bone was) facing up. Use the remainder of the stuffing to smear over the surface of the meat. Roll the leg and tie it with kitchen twine to hold it together.
4. Preheat oven to 400°F.
5. In a pan just large enough to hold the lamb and vegetables, combine the garlic, carrot, celery and onion with 2 tablespoons of oil and set over medium-low heat. Cook gently, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are soft, but do not let them brown – this may take as much as 30 minutes. Push the vegetables out to the edges of the pan and add the lamb to the middle. Raise the heat slightly and brown the lamb on all sides.
6. When the lamb is thoroughly browned, stir half of the reserved stuffing ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) into the vegetables, then add water to come about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the meat. Bring to a simmer, add the mint, cover the pan and set in the preheated oven. Reduce the heat to 325°F.
7. Roast until the lamb is done to taste – 1 hour and 25 to 30 minutes. When the lamb has cooked for about 30 minutes, add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of filling to the sauce, stirring it in.
8. While the lamb is cooking, drain the chickpeas and transfer to a saucepan. Cover with water, bring to a simmer and cook until they are very soft-- about 1 hour. Add a little salt in the last few minutes of cooking. Drain the chickpeas, reserving their liquid, and process to a soft purée, adding some of the reserved cooking water if necessary – that is, if the purée is hard and sticky. With the motor running, add two tablespoons of oil to the purée. Set aside but keep warm.
9. When the lamb is done, remove it from the roasting pan and set aside to firm up the texture. Set the roasting pan over medium-low heat and boil the sauce left in the pan to concentrate the flavors.
10. *To serve:* Spread the chickpea purée over a serving platter. Slice the lamb and arrange the slices over the purée. Spoon the lamb sauce over the meat. Sprinkle with a few more slivers of mint, if you wish, and serve immediately.

Note: This is adapted from a dish on Chef Ciccio Sultano’s menu at Ristorante Il Duomo in Ibla, the twin town that sits on a hilltop facing Ragusa in southeastern Sicily. For presentation purposes, Chef Ciccio forms the chickpea purée into quenelles, but a looser puréed cream of chickpeas forms a nice base for the sliced leg of stuffed lamb..

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

CHICKPEA FRITTERS FROM PALERMO

PANELLE

Yield: 70 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Cool water	4 cups
Chickpea flour	2 cups (½ lb.)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper	to taste
Rosemary leaves, chopped or finely minced flat-leaf parsley	2 Tbsp.
Extra-virgin olive oil for deep frying	

Method

1. Before you begin cooking, have ready platters or trays on which to spread the chickpea porridge for cooling. A cookie sheet measuring about 12 x 18 inches is ideal; otherwise, use a couple of large, shallow serving platters.
2. Add the water to a saucepan and set over medium heat. Gradually add the chickpea flour, a little at a time, stirring with a wire whisk to get rid of any lumps. By the time all the flour has been added, the water should be very hot but not yet boiling. Continue stirring while adding salt and pepper to taste. Once the porridge has come to a boil, turn the heat down to low so that it is just simmering in its pan. Simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring frequently, until the porridge is very dense but still pouring consistency.
3. Stir in the parsley or rosemary and pour the porridge out onto the cookie sheet or platters. Use a spatula dipped in water to smooth it out to a consistent 1/8 to ¼ inch thickness.
4. When the porridge is cool, it will be quite firm. Cut into triangles or irregular lozenges or whatever shapes suit your fancy.
5. Heat 2 cups extra-virgin olive oil to frying temperature – about 360°F. Using tongs, drop the panelle into the boiling oil, a few at a time, and fry until crisp and lightly golden, turning once. Drain on a rack covered with absorbent paper. Serve piping hot, sprinkled with coarse sea salt.

Note: Anyone familiar with panisses, the crisp, salty chickpea flour fritters from Nice in the south of France will immediately recognize their cousins in these panelle, a favorite street-food of Palermo. Sicilian food writer Anna Tasca Lanza calls them an example of “port food,” food that traveled from port to port all over the Mediterranean. In any case, they are delicious. Sicilians often eat panelle in a sandwich as a mid-morning merenda but that seems like an excess of carbohydrates to me. I prefer them as they come from the fryer, eaten out of hand and as addictive as potato chips. They’re especially delicious with a glass of chilled white wine before a summer lunch.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

CHICKPEA SOUP

Yield: 6 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Dried chickpeas, soaked overnight and drained	½ lb.
Sea salt	to taste
Onion, medium, sliced	1 ea.
Leeks, trimmed, rinsed and sliced	2 ea.
Extra-virgin olive oil, plus a little more for garnish	3 Tbsp.
Ripe red tomato, large (could use good quality canned)	1 ea.
Orange zest, julienned	1 2-inch strip
Freshly ground fennel seeds or a pinch of wild fennel pollen	
Freshly ground black pepper	

Garnish

Slices of country-style bread, lightly toasted, rubbed with a cut clove of garlic, if desired

Method

1. Place the chickpeas in a heavy soup kettle or stockpot and add cold water to a depth of one inch. Bring to a boil, lower heat, cover and simmer until the chickpeas are tender and their skins are loose.
2. If you wish, remove the chickpeas from their cooking liquid (*don't discard the liquid*) and, when they are cool enough to handle, pull away and discard the skins. (This is a nicety for professional chefs that need not be observed for the family table.)
3. Purée about half the chickpeas with a little of their cooking liquid in a blender or processor. Stir the purée into the reserved cooking liquid and add back the unpuréed chickpeas, stirring to blend well. The purée should be creamy but not too thick and studded with whole chickpeas. Taste, adding salt if necessary. Cover and keep warm.
4. In a skillet over medium heat, gently sauté the onion and leeks in oil until soft but not browned – 10 to 15 minutes. Add the tomato, orange zest, and fennel and cook for 3 or 4 minutes, just long enough to thicken the sauce a little. Turn the sauce into the soup kettle with the chickpeas and their liquid. Taste and adjust seasoning. Bring the soup back to a gentle simmer and serve over toasted bread with a thread of olive oil dribbled on top.

Note: For presentation, you could set the orange-tomato-onion sauce aside, plate up the soup, then garnish with the colorful sauce.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

GRANO PESTATO OR FARRO SALAD

INSALATA DI GRANA PESTATO O DI FARRO

Yield: 6 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Grano pestato or farro (see Note)	1 ½ cups
Sea salt	
Red onion, medium, very thinly sliced	1 ea.
Tomato, slightly underripe, large coarsely chopped	1 ea.
Fennel, coarsely chopped or slivered	½ cup (about)
Flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped	1/3 cup
Celery, thinly sliced	1/3 cup
Lemon, zest (preferably organically raised)	½ ea.
Extra-virgin olive oil	
Fresh lemon juice	

Method

1. If you are using grano pestato, rinse it quickly under running water, then transfer to a bowl and cover with water to a depth of one inch. Set aside to soak for several hours or overnight. If you are using farro, presoaking is not usually necessary, but check the package to be certain.
2. Drain the grain and transfer to a heavy saucepan. Add water to cover to a depth of one inch and a good pinch of salt. Bring to a simmer, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes to one hour, or until the grain is tender but still has a little bite in the center. Drain thoroughly and transfer to a salad bowl.
3. Add the onion, tomato, fennel, parsley, celery, and lemon zest, stirring to mix well. Add 3 to 4 tablespoons of oil and lemon juice to taste. Mix again, then cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the salad sit for 30 minutes or longer at room temperature to develop the flavors.
4. The salad may be made well ahead of serving but if it must be refrigerated, be sure to allow plenty of time to bring it to room temperature before serving.

Note: Grano pestato means “pounded grain” and refers to an old-fashioned strain of durum wheat, called emmer in English, that is still grown in Puglia and other parts of the Italian south. (Spelt is a different kind of wheat and not used to make grano pestato.) Because each wheat berry is covered with an indigestible pellicle, the wheat must be dampened, then pounded in a mortar to get rid of that outer skin. This traditional process is similar to that used for cleaning farro and the strain of wheat used in Puglia may well be a type of farro.

This is a very old method of food processing that doubtless goes back to the Greeks of Magna Graecia, since the words for the mortar (stompu) and the pestle (stompatura) both come from Greek originally. (The pounded grain, in Pugliese dialect is sometimes called *cranu stumpatu*. It was probably one of the earliest methods of preparing grain for human consumption. Nowadays, both grano pestato and farro are prepared by industrial machines, but there are still a few old people in Puglia who know how to pound the wheat, gently, gently, to clean it - they should be considered national treasures.

Peeled wheat, grano pestato, can sometimes be found in Italian delicatessens and groceries, especially around Easter since it is obligatory in the Neapolitan Easter sweet, pastiera di grano. If you can't find grano pestato, however, substitute the more easily available farro, which is similar enough to work fine for this salad.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

FOCACCIA FROM ENNA

FUATTE ANCHOVY-ONION SFINCIONE

Ingredients	Amounts
Rich egg dough (Pizza Rianata)	
Medium yellow onions, very thinly sliced	3 ea.
Extra virgin olive oil	4 Tbsp.
Bay leaves	6-8 ea.
Tomatoes, very ripe, set in sieve to drain, or canned tomatoes, drained and chopped	1 cup
Fresh goat cheese	2 oz.
Garlic, chopped	2 cloves
Anchovy fillets, chopped	8 ea.
Salt and pepper	if desired
Pecorino, grated	3 Tbsp.
Dried oregano	1 tsp.
Fresh basil, slivered	1 handful

Method

1. Make the dough as described in Pizza Rianata recipe
2. While the dough is rising, make the topping: Combine the onions and oil in a skillet over medium-low heat, add the bay leaves and cook gently, stirring frequently, until the onions are meltingly soft and golden, but not brown. This can take up to 30 minutes.
3. Pre-heat the oven to 400 degrees F.
4. Use a small amount of olive oil to oil the bottom and sides of a 12 x 18 inch sheet pan.
5. Turn the risen dough onto a lightly floured board, punch it down, and roll it out to fit the oiled pan, and set in pan.
6. Discard the bay leaves from the onion mixture. Spoon the golden onions over the top of the dough. Distribute all other ingredients over the top, in the order in which they are listed above.
7. Transfer to preheated oven and bake 20 to 30 minutes, or until the cheeses are melted and top is bubbling.
8. Remove and serve immediately.

Source: Nancy Jenkins-Harmon

HOME-MADE SEMOLINA PASTA

PASTA DI GRANO DURO FATTA IN CASA

Yield: 6-8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Semolina	2 ¼ cups
Sea salt	
Warm water	

Method

1. Put 2 cups of the semolina in a mixing bowl and make a well in the center.
2. Dissolve a big pinch of sea salt (1 to 2 teaspoons) in 2/3 cup of warm water. Slowly, using a little at a time, pour the salty water into the flour, gradually mixing until all the water has been added. (You may need a little more water or a little more semolina, depending on the weather and the ambient humidity.)
3. Knead the pasta in the bowl for a few minutes. You will feel the semolina granules start to soften and relax. Once the dough is well mixed, turn it out onto a wooden board. If it feels stiff, brush a little water onto the board with your fingers and knead it into the dough. On the other hand, if it feels too loose and sticky, scatter just a tablespoon or two of semolina on the board and knead it in. Continue kneading for about 10 minutes, or until the dough has reached a soft, silky texture. Cover the dough with plastic wrap or an inverted bowl and set aside to rest for 30 minutes. It's important to cover the dough well to keep it from drying out.
4. When you're ready to roll out the pasta, divide it in half and keep the half you're not working under wraps. Roll the pasta out into the thinnest possible sheet. You may use a pasta rolling machine, if you wish, and roll the pasta up (or down) to the #5 setting, but it's quite impossible to roll this kind of pasta into as thin a sheet as you can with an egg-based dough. Cut the pasta into whatever shape you need and transfer it to spread out kitchen towels, lightly strewn with semolina, to dry slightly before cooking.
5. Variation: To make an egg-based pasta, proceed as above but stir two eggs into the semolina before you start adding water. Because of the liquid in the eggs, you will need much less water. Dissolve the salt into just 1/3 cup of warm water; you can always add more water later if necessary.

Note: This is the way Southern Italian cooks make home-made pasta. Purists add no eggs, but you can also add a few eggs to the dough, as many people do. The eggs will give the dough more elasticity and it can be rolled out to a thinner sheet than dough without eggs.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

PASTA WITH CHICKPEAS AND A GARNISH OF FRIED PASTA *CICERIE TRIA SALENTINO*

Yield: 6-8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Dried chickpeas, soaked several hours or overnight	1 ½ cups
Garlic cloves, crushed with the flat blade of a knife	2 ea.
Yellow onion, medium, quartered	1 ea.
Bay leaves	2 ea.
Celery stalk, coarsely chopped, including the green leaves	1 ea.
Durum wheat home-made semolina pasta dough (see Recipe)	
Extra-virgin olive oil for deep frying	
Dried hot red chili pepper, small	1 ea.

Method

1. Drain the soaked chickpeas and transfer them to a saucepan with enough fresh water to cover them by about 1 inch. Add 1 crushed garlic clove, plus the onion, bay leaves, and celery, and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan and simmer gently over low heat until the chickpeas are very tender, about 40 minutes (cooking time will vary depending on the age of the chickpeas). Add boiling water from time to time if necessary. The legumes should always be covered by about an inch of water.
2. While the chickpeas are simmering, roll out the pasta. Divide the dough in half and keep the part you're not working covered. Roll out the dough on the board into a circle, as thin as you can make it. Or put the dough through a pasta machine, gradually decreasing the thickness of the rollers. Once the dough is as thin as you can get it, slice into long, straight noodles, about a half-inch in width. Drape the pasta over a rack or arrange it on clean dish towels and leave to dry briefly – 26 to 30 minutes.
3. When the chickpeas are done and very tender, start to assemble the dish. First separate out about a third of the pasta to be fried,. In a saucepan or a deep frying pan, add olive oil to a depth of 1 inch. Set over medium heat and toss in the remaining garlic clove and the chili pepper, broken in half. As the oil warms up, the garlic will start to brown. Before it is completely brown, remove it from the oil, along with the chili, and discard. Add the pasta to the hot oil, a few strips at a time. Quickly fry the pasta until it is crisp and brown. Transfer to a rack covered with paper towels to drain.

4. Remove the bay leaves from the chickpeas and discard. Raise the heat under the chickpeas to medium high, adding boiling water to keep them covered to a depth of 1-inch. Gently stir the remaining, unfried pasta into the chickpeas and cook until the pasta is done, about 5 to 7 minutes. When the pasta is al dente, remove the pan from the heat and serve immediately, without draining and with all the thick soupy juices intact. Garnish each bowl with a generous handful of the fried pasta.

Note: From the Salento peninsula, the tip of the heel of the Italian boot, this combination is exemplary. *Ciceri* is a dialect word for chickpeas and *tria* comes from an ancient Greek word for pasta, *itron*, perhaps the original of all the pastas made from durum wheat. The combination of boiled and fried pasta is unusual and intriguing – one vegetarian friend, to whom I served this dish, insisted that I had put fried bacon on top.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

ANCHOVIES WITH ROASTED SWEET PEPPERS

ACCIUGHE CON PEPERONI

Yield: 4 antipasto portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Sweet red or yellow peppers	2 ea.
Salted anchovies	6 whole or 12 fillets
Salted capers, rinsed and well drained	¼ cup
Extra virgin olive oil	¼ cup
Flat leaf parsley, finely minced	¼ cup
Black pepper, freshly ground	to taste

Method

1. Roast and peel the peppers. Cut them in half, capturing any juices in a bowl, and remove white membranes and seed core. Slice the peppers into long, inch-wide strips. Arrange on serving platter and pour any remaining juices on top.
2. If using salted anchovies, rinse under running water to rid them of excess salt and strip fillets away from the back bone. This step is not necessary if using fillets.
3. Arrange anchovies on top of pepper strips and distribute capers over the top. Pour the olive oil over the anchovies and sprinkle with parsley and plenty of black pepper. Cover lightly with plastic wrap and set aside to allow flavors to meld for several hours before serving.

Note: If you expand the recipe to make 6 or 8 servings, instead of putting all peppers in one layer in the dish, stack them with the anchovies and capers layer by layer. The dish will keep for several days if refrigerated and will only improve the flavor. If you wish, serve with a few drops of aged red wine vinegar.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

A LIGHT AND LEMONY SAUCE FOR GRILLED OR POACHED FISH SAMMURIGGIU (SALMORIGLIO)

Yield: 6-8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Extra-virgin olive oil	¾ cup
Freshly squeezed lemon juice	¼ cup
Sea salt	
Dried oregano, crumbled	1 Tbsp.
Freshly ground black pepper	
Garlic cloves, finely minced (optional)	1-2 ea.
Dried red chili pepper, crumbled (optional)	

Method

1. Combine all the ingredients, including the optional ones if desired, and beat vigorously with a wire whisk or fork to amalgamate. Serve immediately, spooning over prepared fish steaks, fish fillets, or whole fish cooked on the grill or roasted in the oven. Pass extra sauce to be added at the table.

Note: Salmoriglio complements almost any kind of grilled, broiled, or poached fish – a whole sea bass is ideal, big tiger shrimps are quite wonderful, but one of the finest uses for salmoriglio, curiously enough, is as a dipping sauce to accompany a whole steamed Maine lobster. The sauce is usually prepared and served apart but sometimes it becomes a cooking medium in itself, imparting a good deal of flavor to the fish it cooks.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

CAULIFLOWER WITH A SPICY SAUCE

CAVOLFIORE IN PADELLA

Yield: 4 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Cauliflower (1 medium head)	1 ½ lb.
Sea salt (to taste)	
Extra-virgin olive oil	3 Tbsp.
Pine nuts (optional)	1 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves, chopped	2 ea.
Anchovy fillets, chopped	6 ea.
White wine vinegar (OR 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice)	1 tsp.
Ground red chili pepper (or to taste)	1 tsp.
Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)	

Method

1. Rinse, core, and trim the cauliflower but leave it whole. Set it in a saucepan that is just large enough to fit, adding water to barely cover. Remove the cauliflower and set the pan, covered, over medium-high heat. When the water has reached a rolling boil, add one or two teaspoons of salt and the entire head of cauliflower, stem end down. Bring to a boil again and cook for five minutes or until the cauliflower is just tender. Use a slotted spoon to remove the cauliflower from the water and set it aside to drain.
2. In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil over low heat. If using pine nuts, add them and brown them in the oil, then remove and set aside. Add the garlic to the oil and cook gently, just until tender. Do not let it brown. Add the anchovy pieces and use a fork to mash the anchovies and the tender garlic into the olive oil. Add a ladleful (about ¼ cup) of the cauliflower cooking water and the vinegar and let come to a rolling boil while you separate the cooked cauliflower into florets.
3. Transfer the cauliflower florets to a serving bowl. Away from the heat, add ground red chili pepper to the liquid in the pan and swirl to combine it well. Return the browned pine nuts to the hot liquid and pour over the cauliflower. Use two forks to toss the florets and coat them well.
4. Serve immediately.

Note: Variations: Substitute two or three tablespoons of diced pancetta for the anchovies; the pancetta should be browned in the oil and removed before the garlic is added. If the pancetta releases a good deal of fat in the pan, remove all but three tablespoons before adding the garlic.

This also makes a good sauce for pasta. Cook the cauliflower in a large quantity of water, then cook pasta in the same cooking water. Chop the cooked cauliflower into smaller pieces before pouring the cooking liquid over, then mix the whole with the pasta

just before serving. If you wish, pass grated pecorino toscano or parmigiano reggiano cheese.

For a more colorful dish, substitute broccoli florets for half the cauliflower.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

Note: If using tuna steaks, they should be cut slightly thicker – $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" thick – because tuna, to my palate, is always better when somewhat under-done. Other fish steaks – halibut and salmon come quickly to mind – are excellent given this treatment, as are thick fillets of haddock, cod or monkfish.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

LEMON LIQUEUR

LIMONCELLO

Yield: 1 ½ quarts

Ingredients	Amounts
Organically cultivated lemons, large	3 ea.
100-proof vodka	4/5 qt.
Spring water	3 cups
Sugar	1 ½ cups

Method

1. Rinse and dry the lemons, then carefully peel the yellow zest in very thin strips, leaving behind the white pith. (You won't need the lemon juice for this recipe. If you have no other use for it, squeeze the peeled lemons and freeze the juice - in ice cube trays for convenience.)
2. Put the lemon zest and the vodka in large glass jars, screw down the lids, and set aside in a cool dark place (but not refrigerated) for 7 to 10 days.
3. At the end of this time, strain the vodka through a sieve, discarding the lemon zest. Bring the spring water to a boil and dissolve the sugar completely in the water. Cool to room temperature, then mix with the strained vodka. Bottle in 2-pint bottles or jars and seal for 24 hours. Then refrigerate.
4. Serve the limoncello, well-chilled, in tiny glasses after dinner.

Note: This should be prepared at least 10 days in advance, to be served with dessert. It's not easy to find grain alcohol in America, although there are several web sites that offer a 190-proof brand called Everclear for sale. But it's a potentially dangerous product, so I use 100-proof vodka instead.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

**MINT-MARINATED HARD WINTER
SQUASH OR PUMPKIN**
*FRANCO CRIVELLO'S ZUCCA MARINATA
OR SCAPICI DI ZUCCA*

Yield: 6-8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Hard winter squash or pumpkin	2 ½ lb.
Extra virgin olive oil	¾ cup
Yellow onions, medium, sliced very thin	2 ea.
Sea salt	1 tsp.
Fresh mint, slivered or coarsely chopped	½ cup
Wine vinegar, preferably white	¼ cup

Method

1. Cut the squash in slices ½ to ¾ inch thick. Trim away the rind and set the slices on a rack in a cool place to dry for several hours or overnight. If the slices are not sufficiently dry to brown well when it comes time to fry them, dry them with paper towels just before frying.
2. Add a half-cup of the olive oil to a large skillet and when the oil is hot, add the squash slices, frying them until they are brown and blistered on one side, then turning to brown on the other. As the slices finish, remove them to a serving platter.
3. When all the squash slices are done, discard the oil in the pan and wipe it out with paper towels. Add ¼ cup of fresh oil to the pan and stir in the onion slices. Set the pan over low heat and cook the onion slices very gently, stirring frequently, until they are very soft and melting in the pan. This may take 20 to 30 minutes.
4. While the onions are cooking, combine the vinegar with an equal quantity of water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Boil until reduced by half, i.e., until you have ¼ cup once more.
5. When the onion slices are done, raise the heat to medium and immediately stir in the mint and add the reduced vinegar to the pan. Cook, stirring vigorously, just until the liquid comes to a simmer, then remove from the heat and pour over the squash slices, covering them completely with onions and mint.
6. Set the squash aside to cool to room temperature. You may serve it at this point but it will be even better if you wait at least 24 hours before serving. Cover the squash with plastic wrap and keep in a cool place but do not refrigerate. If for some reason you must refrigerate the squash, allow plenty of time for it to come back to room temperature before serving.

Note: Franco Crivello is chef and owner of a lively seafood restaurant in the little fishing port of Porticello, tucked in behind the peninsula east of Palermo. Franco is as much a

connoisseur of vegetables as he is of fish. For this dish, he uses a hard winter squash similar to our Hubbard blue squash. You could also use pumpkin if it's one like cheese pumpkin or the deep red variety called rouge vif d'Etamps, meant for eating rather than carving into jack o'lanterns.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

PASTA WITH TOMATO AND TOASTED ALMOND PESTO

PASTA COL PESTO TRAPANESE

Yield: 4-6 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Ripe red tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped	4-5 ea.
Sea salt	
Whole blanched almonds	1/2-3/4 cup
Garlic cloves, coarsely chopped	2 ea.
Fresh basil leaves, large, torn into small pieces	6-8 ea.
Freshly ground black pepper	
Crumbled dried red chili pepper (optional)	
Extra-virgin olive oil	5 Tbsp.
Curly pasta, such as fusilli	1 lb.
Dry breadcrumbs	3 Tbsp.

Method

1. Sprinkle the chopped tomatoes with about a teaspoon of salt and set in a colander in the sink to drain off excess liquid while you prepare the other ingredients.
2. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
3. Spread the blanched almonds on a sheet tray and set in the preheated oven for about 10 minutes, checking frequently and stirring the almonds to make sure they toast evenly to a light golden brown. Be careful not to over-toast the almonds – dark-brown almonds will make a bitter sauce. (You can also roast the almonds in olive oil in a sauté pan, draining them thoroughly on paper towels.)
4. Once the almonds are toasted, remove and set aside to cool slightly, then chop with a chef's knife to a very fine texture.
5. In a large heavy mortar, crush about 1/2 teaspoon of salt and the garlic together to make a paste. Add the basil leaves and crush, turning the pestle against the walls of the mortar. When the basil has been fully incorporated, gradually add the chopped, drained tomatoes, a few pieces at a time, crushing them into the sauce and adding black pepper, red pepper if you wish, and more salt if needed as you crush. The sauce should be thick and rather chunky. Now stir in, without crushing them, the very finely chopped almonds. Gradually, as if you were making a mayonnaise, mix in 3 or 4 tablespoons of olive oil in a thin thread, stirring constantly. By the time you finish, the sauce should be as thick as a home-made mayonnaise.
6. Bring a large kettle with at least six quarts of lightly salted water to a rolling boil. Drop in the pasta and let cook until done – 8 to 10 minutes.
7. While the pasta is cooking, heat a tablespoon of oil over medium heat and add the breadcrumbs. Cook, stirring, until the crumbs turn brown and crisp. Remove and set aside.

8. When the pasta is done, drain thoroughly and turn into a preheated bowl. Mix in about half the pesto and top with the rest. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the top and serve immediately.

Note: You can make this sauce in a food processor, although the texture will be much better and more typical if you take the time to make it with a mortar and pestle as described above.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

SICILIAN BLOOD ORANGE, RED ONION AND FENNEL SALAD

INSALATA DI ARANCE, CIPOLLE ROSSO E FINOCCHIO

Yield: 4 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Small oranges, preferably Sicilian tarocco or other blood oranges	4 ea.
Fennel bulbs, fat, trimmed and very thinly sliced	1-2 ea.
Red onion slices, very thin	4 ea.
Black olives, preferably salt-cured, pitted and halved	12-16 ea.
Anchovy fillets	6 ea.
Fresh lemon juice (if necessary)	1 Tbsp.
Extra-virgin olive oil	3 Tbsp.
Freshly ground black pepper	

Method

1. Peel the oranges thoroughly, cutting away the white pith as well as the outside membrane that covers the orange. Slice the oranges as thin as you can manage on a plate that will catch the juices.
2. Arrange the orange slices in a circle on a serving dish or on individual salad plates. *Do not discard the juice left behind on the slicing plate.*
3. Distribute the fennel slices over the top of the oranges, then the red onion slices, and finally arrange the black olives and anchovy fillets on top.
4. If the oranges you are using are very sweet, add lemon juice to taste to the orange juice on the slicing plate. Pour the juice over the top of the salad, holding back any seeds. Dribble the olive oil over the salad and then sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper.
5. Cover lightly with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature to let the flavors develop for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

SICILIAN INVOLTINI (SKEWERED PORK ROLLS)

This recipe is adapted from a favorite dish of Anna Tasca Lanza's. At Regaleali, the involtini rolls are skewered on a kind of double skewer, like a very long, two-tined fork. If you don't have double skewers, you'll need four normal flat skewers to make these. Do not, under any circumstances, remove the fat from the prosciutto as it is the most flavorful part and also lends moisture to the involtini.

Yield: 4 servings.

Ingredients	Amount
Pork loin, very thinly sliced (at least 8 slices)	½ lb.
Prosciutto (1 slice for each slice of meat)	8 ea.
Olive oil, extra-virgin	
Fine, dry breadcrumbs	¾ cup
Salami, preferably Genovese or Neapolitano, finely minced	2 Tbsp.
Currants, soaked 15 minutes in warm water to plump	2 Tbsp.
Pine nuts	1 Tbsp.
Caciocavalla or parmigiano reggiano cheese, grated	2 Tbsp.
Yellow onion, minced	1 ea. (medium)
Sea salt	
Freshly ground black pepper	
Yellow onion, cut in chunks (to go on the skewers)	1 ea. (medium)
Bay leaves, preferably fresh but otherwise use whole dried ones	8 ea.

Method

1. The meat slices must be pounded to make them thinner. Place each slice between two sheets of wax paper or plastic wrap and use a meat hammer, a rolling pin, or an unopened wine bottle to tap gently all over the slice of meat. Don't pound too hard or the meat may shred. The idea is to extend each meat slice by gently pounding and to make it as thin as possible without tearing holes in it. Once all the meat slices are done, lay them out on a board or counter top and set a slice of prosciutto over each one.
2. In a tablespoon of the olive oil, gently toast the breadcrumbs over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally and taking care not to burn the crumbs. When the crumbs are golden, remove from the heat and stir in the chopped salami. Drain the currants and add to the breadcrumb mixture, along with the pinenuts, grated cheese, minced onion, and salt and pepper to taste.
3. Preheat the oven broiler or light the charcoal grill.
4. Put a tablespoon or so of filling on one end of a meat slice and roll it over once, then tuck in the sides and continue to roll, so that the filling is concealed inside the rolls

and won't spill out while cooking. Using two skewers spaced about two inches apart, double-skewer all the rolls--that is, run a skewer through each end of an involtino, then push down a bay leaf and/or a piece of onion onto each skewer and continue with the next involtino. If your skewers are long enough, you should be able to fit all the involtini on one double set, alternating each involtino with bay leaves and/or a piece of onion, but it may be easier to handle this with two sets of skewers.

5. Brush the skewered rolls with olive oil on both sides and either broil under the preheated oven broiler or grill over charcoal, turning once and brushing again with olive oil. The rolls should be spaced a good six inches from the heat source so that they cook and brown gently without burning.

Note: The involtini could also be sautéed in a couple of tablespoons of olive oil in a pan set over medium heat.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, to be published by HarperCollins, spring 2003

SLICED ORANGES WITH SUGAR AND MARSALA

ARANCE AL MARSALA

Yield: 6 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Oranges, preferably blood oranges	6-8 ea.
Fine sugar, to taste	
Dry Marsala	

Method

1. Peel each orange, cutting away the pith and the membrane that covers it. Using a sharp knife, segment the orange directly into a bowl by cutting between the membranes that separate each segment. Squeeze what's left in your fist, letting the juice fall into the bowl. (You could also slice the orange horizontally and arrange the slices on individual serving dishes.)
2. Sift a little sugar over the oranges – how much sugar depends on how tart the oranges are and is a matter of personal taste. Spoon a little dry Marsala on top – not too much because the Marsala is there to complement the oranges, not vice versa.

Note: Use oranges with a good tart-sweet balance – blood oranges, when you find them, are best, but other oranges can be good, too, as long as they aren't overly sweet. You'll need an orange for each serving; more if they are very small. If you can't find a dry Marsala, other dessert wines could be substituted, but do stay away from excessively sweet wines. A good Tuscan vin santo should be very good.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

SWEET AND SOUR BABY ONIONS

CIPOLLINE IN AGRODOLCE

Yield: 6-8 portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Whole baby onions (cipolline) or white pickling onions	2 lb.
Prosciutto (including the fat)	1-2 slices
Garlic clove, crushed	1 ea.
Onion, medium, chopped	½ ea.
Unsalted butter	2 Tbsp.
Extra-virgin olive oil	2 Tbsp.
Sea salt	
Aged wine vinegar	

Method

1. Prepare the baby onions by peeling them but leave them whole and – very important – do not cut away the roots which will hold the onions together as they cook.
2. Chop together the prosciutto, garlic, and the half onion to make a fine mince.
3. In a medium skillet over medium-low heat, melt the butter in the olive oil, then add the minced mixture and cook, stirring, until the mixture starts to give off a nice aroma. Add all the baby onions and raise the heat slightly. Cook the baby onions, turning them to color them on all sides. Add a good pinch of salt and water to come halfway up the baby onions – measure the water as you add it because you will need to add a similar quantity of vinegar later.
4. Now lower the heat and cook the onions, gently, gently, uncovered, until the liquid has almost completely cooked down and evaporated. Turn the onions over to cook the other sides and add vinegar in the same amount as the water. Cook, again gently, gently, until the onions are completely tender and the liquid is reduced to a syrupy glaze. If the liquid starts to cook down too much before the onions are tender, add more water.
5. May be served immediately but this is also a dish that is even better at room temperature.

Source: Nancy Harmon Jenkins

6. Serve immediately, or let cool down to room temperature before serving.

FRANCO CRIVELLO'S POLPETTINE DI TONNO (TUNA FISHBALLS)

At his restaurant in the little Sicilian fishing port of Porticello, Franco Crivello serves these tuna “meat” balls, no bigger than marbles, as an appetizer or antipasto. At that size, I could easily imagine them also making a tuna sauce or ragù to dress spaghetti or linguine. Slightly larger, the size of ping pong balls, with their sweet-and-sour sauce, they make an excellent main course.

Yield: 4 servings as a main course, 8 servings as an antipasto.

Ingredients	Amounts
Black currants	2 Tbsp.
Pine nuts	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil, extra virgin	¼ cup
Tuna, fresh	1 lb.
Egg, large	1 ea.
Breadcrumbs, dry, fine	1/3 cup
Pecorino sardo or pecorino toscano cheese, freshly grated	¼ cup
Flat-leaf parsley, minced	¼ cup
Mint, fresh, leaves only, minced	2 Tbsp.
Mint, fresh, whole for garnish	
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper	TT
Yellow onion, medium, finely chopped	1 ea.
Garlic clove, finely chopped	1 ea.
Dry white wine	¼ cup
Tomatoes, canned, crushed	½ cup
Sugar	½ tsp.

Method

- Put the currants in a small bowl and cover with very warm water. Set aside to soak for at least 15 minutes.
- Put the pine nuts in a small skillet with about ½ teaspoon of the olive oil and toast over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the pine nuts are golden. Set aside.
- Using a sharp chef’s knife, chop the tuna by hand until it is very fine. (You may also do this in a food processor, first cutting the tuna into small bits, then pulsing with brief spurts, but you must be very careful not to reduce the tender fish to a pulp.) Transfer the tuna to a bowl and add the egg, breadcrumbs, grated cheese, minced parsley, and minced mint. Mix in the toasted pine nuts. Drain the currants well, patting dry with paper towels, and add to the mixture. Add a pinch of salt and black pepper and use your hands to mix everything together very well. If the mixture seems too wet, add more breadcrumbs. If, on the other hand, it seems too dry, break another egg in a bowl, beat it lightly with a fork, and add a few teaspoonsful to the tuna mix. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

11. Wet your hands to keep the tuna from sticking to them and shape the mix into balls, either small ones for an antipasto, or larger ones for a main course. As you make them, set them aside.
12. When all the balls are shaped, warm 2 tablespoons of the oil in a sauté pan and brown the tuna balls in the hot oil, turning to brown all sides. Remove and set aside as they finish cooking.
13. Discard the oil and wipe out the sauté pan. Add 2 tablespoons of fresh oil and the onion and garlic and cook over low heat very gently until the onion has almost melted into the oil. Turn the heat up to medium and add the white wine. Let it cook, bubbling, until it has reduced slightly, then add the tomatoes and the sugar and continue cooking for about 15 minutes, or until the tomatoes are soft and have thickened to a sauce. Stir in the tuna balls and cook another 10 minutes, or until the balls are heated through.
14. Serve immediately.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, to be published by HarperCollins, spring 2003

SICILIAN COUSCOUS

One of the most unusual couscous in the Mediterranean is from the west coast of Sicily, where it's made around the towns of Erice, Trapani, and Marsala. Local historians claim it as a relic of the Arab occupation of Sicily a thousand years ago. Whether it's really that old or not, it's made very differently from North African couscous, and almost always served with a seafood sauce. Matteo Giurlanda, chef at the Ristorante Monte San Giuliano in Erice, makes cuscussu ericana in a flat-bottomed terracotta bowl called a mafaradda or mafarda, a word with Arab roots. Sicilian couscous is a festive, not an everyday dish, he explains, as he rolls salt, pepper, finely minced onion and olive oil into the couscous – something that would be anathema in North Africa. Other cooks add finely minced parsley or crushed hot red peperoncini.

Another difference: Sicilian couscous is, like pasta fresca, freshly made and cooked. After just an hour or so of drying, it's steamed for at least an hour over a broth that's little more than water flavored with laurel leaves, an onion, cinnamon, and strips of lemon zest; in one variation, the top of the couscoussière is lined with bay leaves before the couscous is added. Then the cuscussu is turned hot onto a platter and fish broth, prepared separately, is added to it, little by little so that the couscous swells as it absorbs the broth.

About the Couscoussière:

You don't have to have a special couscoussière to make couscous, although if you're planning on making it often it's worth investing in one. But you can improvise the two-layer vessel with a colander and a deep stock pot, into which the colander should just fit so that the bottom of the colander will sit well above the liquid in the stock pot. For proper steaming, it must be above the liquid by a good three inches, otherwise the couscous will boil, which is not desirable. You bring liquid or stew to a simmer in the bottom layer, set the colander on top, pressing aluminum foil around the edge to seal it tightly, and there you are!

But it's easier with a proper couscoussière, which is not an expensive piece of equipment and not difficult to find from mail order kitchenware suppliers like Williams-Sonoma or Sur la Table.

You can also avoid the couscoussière altogether and simply make your couscous the way various recipes suggest, by pouring boiling water over couscous grains and setting them aside to swell. But you will never get the extraordinary lightness and delicacy of a hand-made couscous by preparing it that way. The proper way to do it takes a little time, but the technique is not complicated and most of the time is spent waiting for the couscous to swell and/or steam.

Trapani or Favignana Couscous with a Seafood Stew

The couscous on Favignana, famous for its tuna fishing fleet, is made with a rich seafood stew that in fact could be served on its own, if you don't care for the couscous part. Rosa Ponzio, the cook in a little restaurant in the main square of Favignana, showed me how to make this, but I have adapted her recipe to ingredients available in North America.

Make the seafood stew ahead of time, even a day ahead, and reheat it, stirring in the basil pesto, when ready to serve.

Sicilian cooks proudly make their couscous from scratch but it's perfectly acceptable to use a good-quality, packaged commercial couscous. Note, however, that the couscous does not cook over the seafood stew, but rather over its own lemon and bay leaf broth.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Ingredients	Amounts
Couscous	1 lb.
Lemons, peel and all, coarsely chopped	2 ea.
Bay leaves	6 ea.
Onion, small, very finely minced	1 ea.
Flat-leaf parsley, very finely minced	1/3 cup
Olive oil, extra virgin	1/3-1/2 cup
Seafood stew (recipe follows)	
Basil, fresh, slivered	1/2 cup
Sea salt	1 tsp.

Method

- Put the couscous in a sieve and rinse thoroughly under running water; then spread it in a shallow layer, not more than 1/4-inch thick, on a tray to swell for at least 30 minutes, while you prepare the cooking liquid.
- Fill the bottom of the couscoussière, whether genuine or improvised, with enough water to come two-thirds of the way up the sides. Set the top part of the couscoussière over the water to be sure the water doesn't touch the top, even when it's boiling vigorously. When the couscoussière is properly set up, add the lemons and bayleaves to the water and bring it to a boil, then turn it down to a controlled, steady simmer.
- Rake your fingers through the couscous on the tray, stirring and rubbing it so that no lumps form. Sprinkle the minced onion and parsley over the couscous and gradually, using your hands, work the olive oil into the grains. (Use at least 1/3 cup of oil, but you may not need to use all of it.) Transfer to the top of the couscoussière and set over the simmering water. Leave the couscous to steam for 30 minutes, then, using a fork, gently fluff the grains in the top of the couscoussière, turning so that what was on the bottom is now on top and vice versa. Stir it again, gently, after another 30 minutes or so. If the couscous is not tender, let it cook another 15 minutes. It should be completely tender.
- When the couscous is almost done, bring the seafood stew to a gentle simmer. Extract about a half-cup of flavorful liquid from the stew and set aside.
- Combine the basil and salt in a mortar and grind them together to make a coarse pesto. (If you don't have a mortar and pestle, mince the basil very fine and crush with the salt in a small bowl, using the back of a spoon.) Once the stew is simmering, stir in the basil pesto and remove from the heat.

13. When the couscous is done, tip it onto its tray and gently dribble the reserved seafood cooking liquid over it, tossing with a fork to make sure the couscous absorbs as much as possible, adding a little more salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.
14. To serve, mound the couscous on a platter and serve the seafood stew apart. Guests help themselves to the stew and the couscous in whatever balance they wish. It's not traditional on Favignana, but you could also spoon the seafood over the couscous and serve the broth apart in little bowls for guests to add to the couscous or to sip as an accompaniment.

SICILIAN SALT COD AND ORANGE SALAD

This version of a salt-cod salad is reminiscent of the Spanish salad called *remoión*, which also calls for the odd but delicious combination of oranges, black olives, and onion. If you can't find blood oranges, use small navel oranges, but add the flesh of one peeled lemon to give tartness to the mix.

Yield: 6 to 8 first-course servings.

Ingredients	Amount
Blood oranges	2 ea.
Black olives, pitted, roughly chopped	1/3 cup
Red onion, small, very thinly sliced	1 ea.
Red or green chili pepper, small, roasted, seeded and thinly sliced	1 ea.
Extra-virgin olive oil	1/4 cup
Red wine vinegar	1 Tbsp.
Shredded soaked salt cod (see head note)	1 cup
Pinch of dried Sicilian or Greek oregano (<i>rígani</i>), crumbled	

Optional:

Salad greens, such as escarole or frisée chicory

Method

2. Peel the blood oranges and cut away all the pithy membrane that surrounds them. Slice in small chunks – you should have about a cup of orange chunks. Combine the orange chunks in a bowl with all the ingredients except the salad greens, tossing to mix well. Set aside, covered with plastic wrap, for at least one hour to meld the flavors. To serve, arrange greens on a serving platter and mound the salad on top.

Source: *The Essential Mediterranean*, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, to be published by HarperCollins, spring 2003

ARANCINE

STUFFED RISOTTO BALLS WITH TOMATO SAUCE

Yield: 24 Pieces

Ingredients	Amounts
Butter	2 oz.
Rice, arborio	2 lb.
Stock, chicken	4 cup
Saffron	¼ tsp.
Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated	½ cup
Eggs, beaten	2 ea.
 <i>Filling</i>	
Mirepoix, minced	¾ cup
Oil, olive	1/3 cup
Veal, ground	1 lb.
Peas, frozen	½ cup
Pepper, hot flakes	to taste
Bread crumbs, fresh	1 ½ cup
Oil for frying	as needed

Method

1. Sauté the rice in the butter. Add the saffron and stock until risotto is al dente. Add the cheese and egg. Let cool.
2. To make the filling, sauté the mirepoix for the filling. Remove and cook the veal. Add the peas and season.
3. Form a ball of rice about 2 inches in diameter. Make a hole in the ball and fill with the meat mixture. Fill the hole with more rice.
4. Coat balls in bread crumbs. Pan fry until golden brown.

FRIED OLIVES

Yield: 4-6 Portions

Ingredients	Amounts
Olive oil, for frying	
Bacon strips, diced	3 ea.
Smoked or cured ham, minced	½ cup
White wine, dry	¼ cup
Salt and pepper	
Fresh breadcrumbs, soaked in water and squeezed out	½ cup
Egg	1 ea.
Egg yolk	1 ea.
Parmesan cheese, grated	2 Tbsp.
Nutmeg, grated	pinch
Green olives, very large, pitted and left whole	24 ea.
Flour, for coating	
Dried breadcrumbs, for coating	

Method

1. Heat about 2 tablespoons oil in a skillet and brown the bacon. Add the ham and brown over high heat. Pour the wine over the meat, season with a little salt and pepper. Cook until the wine evaporates.
2. Drain the meat and add the bacon to remove excess fat; mince very finely. Add the soaked bread crumbs, egg yolk, Parmesan cheese and nutmeg. Mix well.
3. Stuff the olive with the mixture.
4. Beat the egg and yolk with a pinch of salt. Place the flour on a dish and the dry bread crumbs in another. Dip each olive in the flour, then in the egg and finally in the breadcrumbs. Heat plenty of oil in a deep-fryer or saucepan. Fry the olives, 4 to 6 at a time, until golden. Drain on paper towels and serve hot.

Source: *Cooking with Olives* © International Olive Oil Council

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