

FOUR FABULOUS MAPLE SYRUP DESSERTS page 68

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Oh, Sicily!

Celebrate spring with 14 recipes from the heart of the Mediterranean. Plus the island's best wine, most tempting sweets, and much more page 43

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salt and pepper; set aside. Cut 1" off top of each artichoke and gently pull leaves apart to open artichokes. Place them, standing up on their bases, in a small roasting pan or dish large enough to hold them in one layer. Pour oil mixture over each artichoke, making sure it reaches in between all leaves. Cover with aluminum foil, and bake for 45 minutes. Uncover, and bake, basting often with juices, until browned and tender, about 30 minutes more. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving warm with pan juices.

Cipollate con Pancetta

(Bacon-Wrapped Scallions)

Serves 4

Butcher shops all across Sicily sell these bacon-wrapped scallions (pictured on page 52).

- 24 large scallions, trimmed
- 8 strips bacon or pancetta
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

Wrap 3 scallions together with 1 strip of bacon. Repeat with remaining scallions and bacon and season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add bacon-wrapped scallion bunches, and cook, turning as needed, until browned and crisp on all sides, 6–8 minutes. Serve hot.

Oliva con Rosemarino e Aranci

(Dry-Cured Olives with Rosemary and Orange)

Serves 6–8

Fabrizia Lanza shared her recipe for dry-cured black olives, flavored with orange and rosemary (pictured on page 47).

- 1 orange
- 1 lb. dry-cured black olives
- 1 large sprig rosemary, stemmed and roughly chopped
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Wash orange thoroughly; dry. Using a vegetable peeler, remove zest from orange, taking care to peel as little of the white pith as possible; roughly chop zest and transfer to a medium bowl. Juice orange and add juice to zest along with olives, rosemary, and pepper; toss to coat. Let sit at room temperature for 1 hour to marinate before serving.

MAIN COURSES

Pesce Grigliata

(Mixed Grilled Seafood)

Serves 4–6

This is the quintessential Sicilian supper (pictured on page 49): fresh seafood grilled to perfection with a squeeze of lemon juice.

- 6 medium head-on shrimp
- 4 medium whole squid,

separated into bodies and tentacles

- 3 medium red mullet, cleaned
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- Dried oregano, to taste
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 lemons, quartered

Build a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill or heat a gas grill to medium-high. (Alternatively, heat a large cast-iron grill pan over medium-high heat.) Toss shrimp, squid, and mullet in a large bowl with oil to coat evenly; season with oregano, salt, and pepper. Grill seafood, turning as needed, until charred and cooked through, 3 minutes for squid, 6 minutes for shrimp, and 7–8 minutes for mullet. Transfer all seafood as it finishes cooking to a large platter and squeeze with lemon.

Cosciotto di Agnello con Patate

(Roast Leg of Lamb with Potatoes)

Serves 8

For this simple Sicilian Easter dish (pictured on page 56), a leg of lamb is roasted over a bed of potatoes.

- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 2 tbsp. dried oregano
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bunch parsley, minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 6–7-lb. leg of lamb, trimmed

- 8 large russet potatoes, peeled and quartered

Heat oven to 500°. In a medium bowl, combine oil, chile flakes, oregano, garlic, parsley, and salt and pepper to make a paste; rub paste over surface of lamb. Set lamb in a large roasting pan and place pan in oven; roast until lamb is browned, about 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 400°, cover lamb with aluminum foil, and continue cooking for 40 minutes. Remove foil, add potatoes to pan, and toss with rendered fat; continue cooking until potatoes are tender and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of lamb reads 140°, 45–50 minutes more. Let rest for 20 minutes before serving.

Pasta con le Sarde

(Pasta with Sardines)

Serves 8

The recipe for this classic dish flavored with saffron and sardines (pictured on page 45) is based on one in *The Heart of Sicily* by Anna Tasca Lanza (Clarkson Potter, 1993).

- 1½ lbs. cleaned fresh sardine filets (about 50)
- Semolina flour, for dredging
- 1 cup olive oil
- 2 medium fennel bulbs, finely chopped, fronds reserved
- 2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. tomato paste
- 6 oil-packed anchovy filets,

10 Fantastic Sicilian Wines

Sicily has more vineyards than any other region in Italy; it also grows more grapes. Granted, the vast majority of those vineyards raise grapes for marsala, the sweet and dry fortified wine (originally created by a British trader in the 18th century) that's produced in the seaside town of the same name. But in recent years, there's been a lot of excitement around Sicily's regular red and white wines, as producers of bulk wines have started focusing on the quality of their own bottles. "The rediscovery of

Sicilian *terroirs* is accompanied by a boom of smaller-scale quality wine production," writes Robert V. Camuto in his excellent new book *Palmento: A Sicilian Wine Odyssey* (University of Nebraska Press, 2010). "In 1990 the number of commercial Sicilian wine producers was little more than three dozen; today the number is approaching three hundred." While the island's more established producers (like Tasca d'Almerita of Regaleali in central Sicily) have long bottled varietals like cabernet



Tasca d'Almerita Regaleali Bianco (\$14) A full-bodied, beautiful blend of grecanico, inzolia, and cataratto grapes, this aromatic white is a natural for seafood.



COS Pithos 2008 (\$50) From one of Sicily's most renowned wine-makers, this nero d'avola and frappato blend (aged in terra-cotta amphorae) has an earthy, cedary edge.



Cottanera Etna Rosso 2007 (\$57) Made mainly with nerello mascalese, this rich, mineral red is our favorite bottle from Etna; great with swordfish.



Manenti Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2008 (\$22) A blend of nero d'avola and frappato, this wonderfully cherry-scented wine pairs well with lamb and pastas.



Occhipinti Il Frappato 2008 (\$35) This fruit-forward wine made by 28-year-old Arianna Occhipinti has soft raspberry notes and nice acidity. We love her whites, too.

drained and finely chopped

- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 3 tbsp. dried currants
- 3 tbsp. pine nuts
- 1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. saffron
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 lb. spaghetti

1. Heat ¼ cup olive oil in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Toss 6 sardine filets in semolina to coat, shaking off excess, and then fry in oil until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain, and then roughly chop and set aside. Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add fennel and onions, and cook, stirring occasionally, until caramelized, about 20 minutes. Roughly chop and add remaining sardines along with the tomato paste and anchovies, and cook, stirring often, until broken down and melted into the sauce, about 5 minutes. Add tomato sauce, currants, pine nuts, nutmeg, saffron, and salt and pepper; reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 20 minutes.

2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add pasta; cook until al dente, 7–8 minutes. Drain and transfer pasta to sauce along with fennel fronds and toss until evenly coated; top with reserved fried sardines and serve immediately.

Scaccia Ragusana

(Tomato and Cheese Pie)

Serves 10–12

Don't sweat the folding technique for this chewy, tomato and cheese pie (pictured on page 52). "The uglier your scaccia looks, the better it tastes," says Roberta Corradin, who gave us the recipe.

- 3 ½ cups durum wheat flour
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 1 bunch fresh basil
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 12 oz. caciocavallo or Pecorino Romano cheese, grated

1. Place flour in a large bowl and make a well in center; add 2 tbsp. oil, salt, and 1 ¼ cups water, and stir until a dough forms. Transfer dough to a floured work surface and knead until smooth and elastic, 6–8 minutes. Transfer dough to a lightly oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rest for 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, heat remaining oil in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes and basil, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, to meld flavors, about 10 minutes. Discard basil,

remove pan from heat, and set aside to let cool.

3. Heat oven to 500°. Transfer dough to a floured work surface, and using a rolling pin, roll dough into a ½"-thick rectangle. Arrange the dough so that the long sides are parallel to you. Spread 1 cup tomato sauce over dough in a thin layer and sprinkle with 1 ½ cups cheese; season with salt and pepper. Fold left third of dough toward center, spread top with ¼ cup sauce, and sprinkle with 5 tbsp. cheese; season with salt and pepper. Fold right third over center to meet left edge, and repeat with sauce, cheese, and salt and pepper. Fold in top and bottom so they meet in center; spread top with remaining sauce and cheese; season with salt and pepper. Fold top half over bottom half, like closing a book, and transfer to a baking sheet lined with parchment paper; bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 400° and continue baking until dough is set and slightly charred, about 60–65 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before slicing into squares and serving.

Impanata di Agnello

(Easter Lamb Pie)

Serves 4

Home cook Giovanna Giglio Cascone name taught us how to make these juicy lamb pies (pictured on page 63).

- 2 ¼ tsp. active dry yeast

- 2 ¼ cups durum wheat flour
- 1 tbsp. vegetable shortening
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt, to taste
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 12 oz. lamb shoulder, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped basil
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped oregano
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 egg, beaten

1. Combine yeast and ¾ cup water heated to 115° in a small bowl and let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Place flour in a large bowl and form a well in center; add yeast mixture, shortening, and ¼ tsp. salt and mix until dough forms. Transfer to a floured work surface and knead until smooth, 6–8 minutes. Transfer dough to a lightly oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let sit until doubled in size, about 1 hour. Meanwhile, mash remaining salt and garlic into a smooth paste and combine with lamb, basil, oregano, parsley, and a generous amount of pepper in a medium bowl; set aside.

2. Heat oven to 475°. Using a knife, cut away one third of dough; cover with plastic wrap and set aside. Using a rolling pin, roll remaining dough until ¼" thick and trim to make a 9" circle; transfer circle to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and mound lamb mixture in center, leaving a 1" border around edge. Using a pastry brush, brush border

sauvignon and chardonnay, now winemakers are calling attention to Sicily's indigenous grapes. Probably the best-known red grape is nero d'avola, which can range in flavor from jammy and full-bodied to earthy and spicy. In the region Cerasuolo di Vittoria, nero d'avola is often blended with frappato, a fruity grape with a sweet raspberry flavor, which can also be delicious when bottled on its own. Though grapes have grown on the volcanic slopes of Mount Etna since the fifth century

B.C., there's a lot of new interest in the area. The main white variety is carricante, which is light in color but had a big, almost yeasty aroma in the bottles we tried. Etna's best-known red is nerello mascalese, which evokes the gentle fruit flavors of pinot noir (it's often blended with another indigenous grape, nerello capuccio). Below are some of our favorite food-friendly Sicilian bottles (see THE PANTRY, page 100, for ordering information). —Dana Bowen



Benanti Serra Della Contessa 2004 (\$40) Leather, spice, dried fruit, made from century-old nerello mascalese and nerello capuccio vines from Etna. Perfect with pork.



Planeta Cerasuolo di Vittoria 2008 (\$22) This medium-bodied wine from one of Sicily's largest producers has hints of dried figs and pepper, with macerated cherries and tannins.



Passopisciaro 2007 (\$30) From the Etna region, this light-bodied red (mostly nerello mascalese) has hints of candied cherries, smoke, and orange peel. Great with lamb as well as fish.



Bonavita Faro (\$38) A medium-bodied nerello mascalese from Messina, with rich cherry flavors and subtle hints of spice and cloves. Pairs fabulously with meats and pastas.



Benanti Pietramarina Etna 2007 (\$38) Made with 100 percent carricante grapes, this crisp, yeasty white has hints of peaches and herbs and pairs well with all seafood.