

# TUSCAN CUISINE RECIPES



## CROSTINI

Crostini are a very common starter: every nice Tuscan restaurant will offer you a dish of crostini.



**Ingredients:** chicken livers, pickled capers, half a cup of stock, half a glass of Vin Santo, one red onion, 2 or 3 anchovies, olive oil.

Fry the onion finely chopped with some olive oil in a pan. As the onion browns, add the livers and let them blanch; add Vin Santo and let it cook for twenty minutes. Add some water. Mince the livers. Add the oil and their sauce. Add the minced capers and the anchovies. Serve the sauce on toasted Tuscan bread.

## BRUSCHETTA

**Ingredients:** bread, garlic, salt, tomatoes, basil and olive oil

Bruschetta is one of the typical starters in Tuscany. Slice the Tuscan bread, toast it, rub some garlic on the slices, put a little olive oil and salt on them. Chop the tomatoes in small cubes and put them on the bread with olive oil, salt and basil.



## PANZANELLA

Slice the bread and soak it in enough cold water to wet it thoroughly for 15 minutes. Squeeze out the excess moisture and crumble the bread into a bowl. Add some cut tomatoes, thinly sliced onions, and lots of fresh basil leaves. Season with a tiny bit of salt, olive oil and vinegar. Toss and refrigerate. Panzanella is delicious when served chilled, not icy cold. Add a few drops of olive oil and vinegar before serving.

There are countless variations of this dish: some people add cucumbers, olives and cheese (pecorino or feta), or lettuce, radishes, hearts of celery; or even sliced, hardboiled eggs or chunks of tuna fish in olive oil. If you cannot find fresh basil, dry or frozen is fine too, but you will definitely taste the difference. Panzanella is a real summer dish.



## FARRO SOUP WITH BEANS

This is a recipe of a very common soup in **Tuscany**.

### Ingredients:

2 garlic cloves  
1 carrot  
1 sprig of parsley  
1 sprig of basil  
1 sage leaf  
half red onion  
50 g bacon  
200 g dried beans  
2 tablespoons of tomato purée  
salt  
extra virgin olive oil  
250 g "farro"  
(spelt)



The day before preparing the soup, soak the beans in water and cook them the morning after with a garlic clove and a sage leaf. Add salt at the end.

Fry the minced bacon, olive oil and brushed garlic, carrot, parsley, basil, onion. Mix 2/3 of the beans and create a fine cream, which must be added as soon as the bacon fat melts. Then add the remaining whole beans with some tomato sauce. After a few minutes add the beans cooking water, salt and let it boil for 45 minutes over a low flame. Afterwards add the spelt, which has to be previously washed.

The cooking time of the spelt depends on the kind of grain. It usually takes from 30 to 40 minutes. When ready, sprinkle with some olive oil and some pepper to taste.

## TRUFFLED PARMESAN RISOTTO



### Ingredients

500 g rice  
60 g butter  
100 g grated parmesan  
50 g white truffles (sliced or paté)

Cook the rice traditionally and add grated parmesan, butter and a half of the truffle. Mix and serve well warm garnishing the plates with slices of white truffles .

## RIBOLLITA

**Ribollita** is a typical Tuscan "poor dish", once very common.

Now it is a kind of speciality you can find in the menu of restaurants. In the past it was common to prepare a big amount of this soup, in order to last a few days (this is the reason why it was called "ribollita" that means "boiled again"). Indeed once the soup was prepared - in the typical clay pot - was heated the day after in the oven covered with a layer of very thin slices of onion.



**Ingredients:** Tuscan bread (unsalted), fresh "cannellini" beans, chard fresh, a bunch of back cabbage, savoy cabbage, carrots, potatoes, stalks celery, a spoon of tomato sauce, red tomatoes, thymus, onion, garlic, salt and pepper

Cut the vegetables in small pieces; boil the "cannellini" beans and mash them with their cooking water. Leave some of them aside: fry them with the onion and the oil. When the onion is bleached, add the tomatoes and a spoon of tomato sauce. Cook them on medium heat and after a few minutes add the mashed beans and the whole ones. Mix and add all the other vegetables. Salt and pepper to taste, then add the thyme. Simmer for 2 hours after adding 6 ladles of water. The soup is served on a bed of at least 2 slices of toasted bread rubbed previously with garlic.

## FLORENTINE STEAK



A good Florentine steak requires meat which has been well-aged. It should be about 2.5 cm thick, not having been beaten .

First prepare the charcoal fire. When one side of the steak is cooked, turn it over and season the grilled side with salt and pepper. Then turn it again to dissolve the salt so that it is evenly distributed and any excess runs off. Remove the steak from the grill. Arrange it on a hot dish, accompanied by fresh olive oil, if desired .



## TAGLIATA

The secret of an excellent “tagliata” is the breed of cattle: the Chianina beef.

**Ingredients:** Thick steak with the bones, salt, hot coals, freshly cracked pepper.

Chianina beef is the huge white oxen raised in the Val di Chiana, near Arezzo. Their meat is tender. Once you have your steak and your coals, set your grill about 4 inches (10 cm) above them and let it heat for a few minutes. The cooking time should only take a few minutes, and the steak should still be rare inside. How much time? This depends upon your fire and your taste. The dressing is usually lemon and green salad with tomatoes or other vegetables. Other possibilities for side dishes include fried potatoes and freshly boiled white beans (“cannellini”) drained well and seasoned with olive oil, salt, and pepper.



## WILD BOAR CASSEROLE WITH POLENTA OR CREAMY MASHED POTATOES

### Ingredients:

- 2lb generous cubes diced shoulder
- 2-3 tbs oil (or butter)
- 1 tbs flour
- 1/2-pint red wine

### Marinate:

- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 tbs spiced oil
- 1 diced onion
- 2 tbs spiced vinegar/wine vinegar
- 3-4 sage leaves, sprig rosemary leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tbs Masala(optional)
- 2 tbs red wine
- 2-3 cloves
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 2-3 crushed juniper berries
- fresh milled pepper



Mix the meat with all the marinade ingredients and marinate in cool place for 24 hours. Drain from the marinade, pat dry. Heat the butter or oil in a heavy frying pan and brown the meat all over, sprinkling in the flour to brown a little too. Do not overfill the pan or the meat may stew, not brown, and you must keep the heat up. Remove to a casserole, preferably earthenware, Deglaze the pan with the marinade and wine and pour over the meat. Cover closely, cook in a very slow oven (250F/130C/gas 1) for about 2 1/2 - 3 hours until the meat is very tender, and the sauce reduced. Cook with the lid off if not well reduced for the sauce should be little more than a sticky substance that coats the meat. Degrease any excess fat and serve with polenta or creamy mashed potatoes.

## CACCIUCCO ( FISH SOUP )

### Ingredients

1/2 kg cuttlefish  
1/2 kg octopus  
1/2 kg mixed fish (gurnard,  
sea-robin, Scorpio fish)  
1/2 kg mixed shellfish (clams  
and mussels)  
1/2 kg of prawns and shrimp  
sage leaves  
1 chilli  
1 tbs of tomato paste  
2 dl of white wine  
12 slices of Tuscan bread  
2 dl extra virgin olive oil  
salt and pepper



### Preparation

In a saucepan, heat olive oil and fry the garlic, sage and chilli. Add the roughly chopped octopus and cuttlefish. Pour in wine and add tomato paste. Let it simmer for 20 minutes and stir occasionally.

In another saucepan add the mixed fish and the chopped dogfish. The fish heads should be cooked in broth with herbs and then blended. This puree which is quite dense, should be added to the first saucepan giving the soup a greater density and flavour. Simmer over a medium flame.

When the octopus and cuttlefish are tender, add the crustaceans and the mixed seafood with shells. Continue to cook for 7-8 minutes until the mussels and clams open.

Place the bread, which should be toasted, rubbed with a garlic clove and seasoned with pepper in the bottom of the soup tureen. With a ladle, spoon the fish and sauce into the bowl.

## FAGIOLI AL FIASCO

“Fagioli al fiasco” means "**Beans in a flask**". In the past Tuscan farmers used to cook beans in a flask. They would place a glass jar in a corner of the fireplace on hot ashy embers before going to bed and would have freshly cooked beans the next morning.

### Ingredients:

cannellini beans  
extra virgin olive oil  
garlic  
sage leaves  
salt and pepper



Soak the beans the night before. Place the beans, oil, garlic, and sage into a bottle and cover with water until the bottle is 3/4 full. The bottle should be closed with a wadded cotton ball in order to allow some of the steam to filter out. Cook. When the beans are ready, discard the garlic and sage leaves. Add some fresh olive oil, salt and some freshly ground pepper.

## ASPARAGUS FLORENTINE STYLE



Wash and scrape the asparagus. Tie them into a bunch and put them in the pot in a standing- upright position. Add cold water until it covers just the white part of the stems, turn on the heat and cook.

Tie Check after 15 minutes: Let cool to lukewarm in the water and then drain. Cut off the white part of the stems. Melt the butter in a skillet and add the asparagus and cook over a low flame for 5 minutes. Remove. Fry some eggs in the same skillet, salt and pepper to taste. Arrange the asparagus on a platter , put the eggs on top and sprinkle with a generous amount of grated parmesan cheese. First of all, the skillet should not be too big, and the butter should be melted, but not smoking. Crack the egg and drop only the white into the pan; keep the yolk in half of the shell. When the white has set and is almost done, drop the yolk into the middle and sprinkle with salt and pepper. The yolk should remain soft and creamy.

## RICE FRITTERS



Put 3 cups of rice with 3 cups of cold water, 2 cups of cold milk, and some lemon and orange rinds cut into pieces in a pot. Cook over a low flame for 15 minutes, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add 300 g/10 oz sugar and continue cooking and stirring, over the low flame, for 15 minutes more. Before removing the saucepan from the heat, add about ¼ cup of Marsala wine and a cup of raisins (previously soaked in water and squeezed out). Allow to cool, then remove the citrus rinds. Stir in one cup of flour, 5 whole eggs, 5 yolks, and a pinch of baking powder. Stir. Drop spoonfuls of the mixture into deep hot olive oil and fry the fritters until they are golden. Drain on paper towels and roll in sugar to coat. Serve hot.

## CASTAGNACCIO

**Castagnaccio** is an ancient recipe, which has a very delicious and tasty flavour with a few genuine ingredients and even without sugar.



### Ingredients:

- 300 g chestnut flour
- half a litre of water
- a handful of raisins
- a handful of pine nuts
- a handful of walnut kernels
- a sprig of rosemary
- olive oil
- a pinch of salt

Put the raisins in a bowl of hot water. Sift the flour in a mixing bowl, add a pinch of salt and cold water very slowly, mixing with a whisk, in order to create a mixture without lumps. Let it rest for 30 minutes. Fry a sprig of rosemary in 3 spoons of olive oil, and then pour it on the bottom of a baking pan with the rosemary. Add all the ingredients and spread them over the baking pan in a homogeneous way, then pour the flour mix, add 3 more spoons of olive oil, sprinkled on top. Bake it for 30-40 minutes at 220°C.



## RICE CAKE

### Ingredients:

230 grams of rice  
one litre of milk  
140 grams of sugar  
pinch of salt  
60 grams of raisins  
3 eggs  
Fresh fruit  
berry syrup  
one tablespoon of brown sugar

Boil the rice in the milk. Meanwhile beat the eggs with the sugar, the pinch of salt and the raisins. Mix it with the rice. Grease an oven pan with butter and then sprinkle a spoon of flour on the butter. Heat the oven to 180/200 C and after pouring the mixture into the pan ,put it in the oven for about 30 minutes. After the cake has cooled down, you can top it with the syrup, and sliced fresh fruit such as peaches, figs, grapes and strawberries and sprinkle with brown sugar.



## PANFORTE

This is the king of Sienese sweets. Like **ricciarelli**, **cavallucci**, **copate** and **pampepati**, it is made according to a really old recipe. The ingredients include small amounts of the oriental spices that were already being imported during the Middle Ages, from cinnamon to cloves, from nutmeg to pepper. The mixture is based on honey that is slowly heated on the stove with sweet and bitter almonds. Then flour , candied citron and other citrus fruits , spices and confectioners' sugar are blended into the honey, the mixture is then spread over a sheet of wafer that lines a pan and baked in the oven, then the finished cake is sprinkled with sugar.



## TIRAMISU'

### Ingredients:

4 whipped egg whites  
500 g mascarpone  
5 egg yolks  
cocoa powder  
sugar (about 5 tablespoons)  
coffee  
sponge finger biscuits (e.g. lady fingers)  
chocolate chips



Whip the sugar and egg yolks until you get a soft mousse. Add the mascarpone slowly, and then the whipped egg whites, very gently. Lay out the biscuits in a large dish and sprinkle them with coffee. They should be neither soaked nor still dry. Spread the cream over the biscuits, sprinkle with cocoa powder and chocolate chips. Repeat the procedure once again in order to have a two-layer dessert. Keep refrigerated. Serve cool.

## PANNA COTTA

### Ingredients:

800 ml cream  
200 ml milk  
100 g sugar  
15 g gelatine  
Vanilla Bean



Melt sugar with vanilla and cream in a pot on a low flame. Meanwhile, soak gelatine in cold water for a few minutes. Add milk and drained gelatine to the cream. Pour the mix into a wet mould or into some little moulds. Keep refrigerated for at least 12 hours. Serve with fruit, chocolate, caramel sauce.

## BOMBOLONI

### Ingredients:

25 g dried yeast  
200 g milk  
100 g sugar  
Salt  
500 g plain white flour  
One lemon  
2 teaspoons vanilla flavouring  
80 g butter  
Extra virgin olive oil



Put the dried yeast, the hot milk, half of the sugar and a pinch of salt into a bowl and mix together carefully with a wooden spoon. Pour into a baking bowl and add the sifted flour; the grated rind of the lemon, some vanilla and the melted butter. Work the dough well until it is smooth and elastic. Cover and leave to rise in a warm place for two hours.

Roll the dough out to a thickness of about one centimetre; use a glass to cut out rounds about five centimetres in diameter. Gather up the remaining pieces, roll out and cut many rounds until you have used up all the dough. Cover with a cloth and leave to rise for an hour. Fry in hot oil, turning them until they are golden on both sides. Remove the doughnuts one by one, drain on kitchen paper and sprinkle with sugar. If you like, you can fill them with jam, confectioner's custard or chocolate cream.

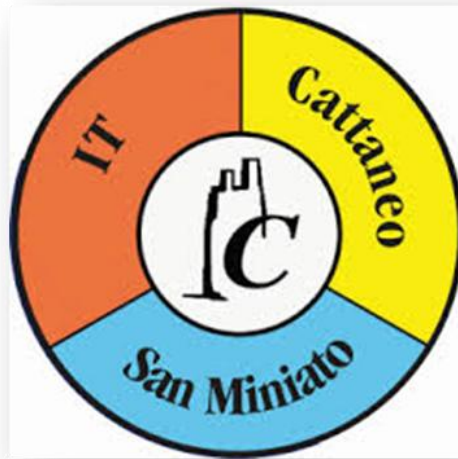
## SCHIACCIATA ALLA FIORENTINA

### Ingredients

4 Eggs  
a pinch salt  
500 g/ 1 lb flour  
150 g/ 6 oz lard  
20 g/ 1 oz Brewer's yeast  
Vanilla flavoured confectioner's sugar  
1 orange



Dissolve the yeast in water. Put the flour into a large mixer until the dough separates from the side of the bowl. Cover and let it rise in a dry place for 1 hour. When the dough has doubled knead and add the yolks, the sugar, 100g/4 oz lard, a pinch of salt and the finely grated orange peel and mix until thoroughly blended. Use the rest of the lard to grease a rectangular baking pan with high edges. Spread the dough evenly so that it is 2-3 cm/1 in thick. Now, here is the secret: let it rise for 2 hours. Bake at 200° C/400 F for 30 minutes. Remove and dust very generously with vanilla flavoured confectioner's sugar.



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