

Che Cosa Cucinare

History of cannabis in Italy

44: 169–196. *de Roselli G. (1660). Epulario, il quale tratta del modo di cucinare ogni carne, uccelli, e pesci d'ogni sorte. Venice, and Bassano: G.A. Remondini*

The cultivation of cannabis in Italy has a long history dating back to Roman times, when it was primarily used to produce hemp ropes, although pollen records from core samples show that Cannabaceae plants were present in the Italian peninsula since at least the Late Pleistocene, while the earliest evidence of their use dates back to the Bronze Age. For a long time after the fall of Rome in the 5th century A.D., the cultivation of hemp, although present in several Italian regions, mostly consisted in small-scale productions aimed at satisfying the local needs for fabrics and ropes. Known as canapa in Italian, the historical ubiquity of hemp is reflected in the different variations of the name given to the plant in the various regions, including canape, càneva, canava, and canva (or canavòn for female plants) in northern Italy; canapuccia and canapone in the Po Valley; cànnavo in Naples; cànnavu in Calabria; cannavusa and cànnavu in Sicily; cànnau and cagnu in Sardinia.

The mass cultivation of industrial cannabis for the production of hemp fiber in Italy really took off during the period of the Maritime Republics and the Age of Sail, due to its strategic importance for the naval industry. In particular, two main economic models were implemented between the 15th and 19th centuries for the cultivation of hemp, and their primary differences essentially derived from the diverse relationships between landowners and hemp producers. The Venetian model was based on a state monopoly system, by which the farmers had to sell the harvested hemp to the Arsenal at an imposed price, in order to ensure preferential, regular, and advantageous supplies of the raw material for the navy, as a matter of national security. Such system was particularly developed in the southern part of the province of Padua, which was under the direct control of the administrators of the Arsenal. Conversely, the Emilian model, which was typical of the provinces of Bologna and Ferrara, was strongly export-oriented and it was based on the mezzadria farming system by which, for instance, Bolognese landowners could relegate most of the production costs and risks to the farmers, while also keeping for themselves the largest share of the profits.

From the 18th century onwards, hemp production in Italy established itself as one of the most important industries at an international level, with the most productive areas being located in Emilia-Romagna, Campania, and Piedmont. The well renowned and flourishing Italian hemp sector continued well after the unification of the country in 1861, only to experience a sudden decline during the second half of the 20th century, with the introduction of synthetic fibers and the start of the war on drugs, and only recently it is slowly experiencing a resurgence.

Italian cuisine

Bartolomeo Stefani, chef to the Duchy of Mantua, published L'Arte di ben cucinare (The Art of Well Cooking). He was the first to offer a section on vitto

Italian cuisine is a Mediterranean cuisine consisting of the ingredients, recipes, and cooking techniques developed in Italy since Roman times, and later spread around the world together with waves of Italian diaspora. Significant changes occurred with the colonization of the Americas and the consequent introduction of potatoes, tomatoes, capsicums, and maize, as well as sugar beet—the latter introduced in quantity in the 18th century. Italian cuisine is one of the best-known and most widely appreciated gastronomies worldwide.

It includes deeply rooted traditions common throughout the country, as well as all the diverse regional gastronomies, different from each other, especially between the north, the centre, and the south of Italy,

which are in continuous exchange. Many dishes that were once regional have proliferated with variations throughout the country. Italian cuisine offers an abundance of taste, and is one of the most popular and copied around the world. Italian cuisine has left a significant influence on several other cuisines around the world, particularly in East Africa, such as Italian Eritrean cuisine, and in the United States in the form of Italian-American cuisine.

A key characteristic of Italian cuisine is its simplicity, with many dishes made up of few ingredients, and therefore Italian cooks often rely on the quality of the ingredients, rather than the complexity of preparation. Italian cuisine is at the origin of a turnover of more than €200 billion worldwide. Over the centuries, many popular dishes and recipes have often been created by ordinary people more so than by chefs, which is why many Italian recipes are suitable for home and daily cooking, respecting regional specificities, privileging only raw materials and ingredients from the region of origin of the dish and preserving its seasonality.

The Mediterranean diet forms the basis of Italian cuisine, rich in pasta, fish, fruits, and vegetables. Cheese, cold cuts, and wine are central to Italian cuisine, and along with pizza and coffee (especially espresso) form part of Italian gastronomic culture. Desserts have a long tradition of merging local flavours such as citrus fruits, pistachio, and almonds with sweet cheeses such as mascarpone and ricotta or exotic tastes as cocoa, vanilla, and cinnamon. Gelato, tiramisu, and cassata are among the most famous examples of Italian desserts, cakes, and patisserie. Italian cuisine relies heavily on traditional products; the country has a large number of traditional specialities protected under EU law. Italy is the world's largest producer of wine, as well as the country with the widest variety of indigenous grapevine varieties in the world.

Christmas in Italy

soup or broth. Agnolini's recipe was first published in L'arte di ben cucinare [it] (1662) by Bartolomeo Stefani [it], a cook at the court of the Gonzaga

Christmas in Italy (Italian: Natale, pronounced [naˈtaːle]) begins on 8 December, with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the day on which traditionally the Christmas tree is mounted and ends on 6 January, of the following year with the Epiphany (Italian: Epifania [epifaˈniːa]), and in some areas female puppets are burned on a pyre (called falò), to symbolize, along with the end of the Christmas period, the death of the old year and the beginning of a new one. 26 December (Saint Stephen's Day, in Italian *Giorno di Santo Stefano*), is also a public holiday in Italy. The Italian term Natale derives from the Latin *natalis*, which literally means 'birth', and the greetings in Italian are *buon Natale* (Merry Christmas) and *felice Natale* (lit. 'happy Christmas').

The tradition of the nativity scene comes from Italy. One of the earliest representation in art of the nativity was found in the early Christian Roman catacomb of Saint Valentine. The first seasonal nativity scene, which seems to have been a dramatic rather than sculptural rendition, is attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi (died 1226). Francis' 1223 nativity scene in Greccio is commemorated on the calendars of the Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican liturgical calendars, and its creation is described by Saint Bonaventure in his *Life of Saint Francis of Assisi* c. 1260. Nativity scenes were popularised by Saint Francis of Assisi from 1223, quickly spreading across Europe. It seems that the first Christmas tree in Italy was erected at the Quirinal Palace at the behest of Queen Margherita, towards the end of the 19th century. Mount Ingino Christmas Tree in Gubbio is the tallest Christmas tree in the world. In Italy, the oldest Christmas market is considered to be that of Bologna, held for the first time in the 18th century and linked to the feast of Saint Lucy. Typical bearers of gifts from the Christmas period in Italy are Saint Lucy (December 13), Christ Child, Babbo Natale (the name given to Santa Claus), and, on Epiphany, the Befana.

According to tradition, the Christmas Eve dinner must not contain meat. A popular Christmas Day dish in Naples and in southern Italy is eel or capitone, which is a female eel. A traditional Christmas Day dish from northern Italy is capon (gelded chicken). Abbacchio is more common in central Italy. The Christmas Day dinner traditionally consists by typical Italian Christmas dishes, such as agnolini, cappelletti, agnolotti pavesi,

panettone, pandoro, torrone, panforte, struffoli, mustaccioli, bisciola, cavallucci, veneziana, pizzelle, zelten, or others, depending on the regional cuisine. Christmas on 25 December is celebrated with a family lunch, also consisting of different types of pasta and meat dishes, cheese and local sweets.

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