

Libro de arte coquinaria

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Introduction

Hello everybody. My name is Lisa. Those who know me know that I love to cook (and to eat the results of my efforts). I often talk about unconventional ingredients and preparations, and less-known traditional food from my country, Italy. Thanks to posts by Aodh Ó Siadhail I realized that understanding the relationship between a country's history and the geography, and the food the natives consider traditional is quite fascinating. I know so much about Italian food of today, and yet almost nothing on the food Italians used to eat even one or two centuries ago.

After a tip found on an (unrelated) video, I stumbled upon Mastro Martino's *Libro de arte coquinaria*, published in the 15th century. This is not the best source if you want to know what food would be found in a common kitchen: Mastro Martino was a famous chef, working for the most accomplished nobility of the time. Even if the book tries to be useful for everybody, it is certainly aimed at chefs working for the upper class of the time. Many preparations are based on rich ingredients, which would be considered rare luxuries by the common folk. He also teaches how to make fancy decorations for portions, and even a couple of rather spectacular shows that would make a great impression on your well-off guests during an important feast or banquet.

Even so, there's still a lot to learn, and I tried to highlight similarities or differences with the type of cooking I am used to. Here are the main things that surprised or amused me:

- There are very few recipes for what we would call a dessert. It looks like there is less of a distinction between a dessert and any other dish: most dishes call for sugar and/or cinnamon, two spices we rarely use for savoury food. Raisins, cherries or other berries often make their appearance, either as the main part of the dish or as

additional flavouring; interestingly enough they are often paired with strong spices such as ginger or pepper, perhaps to balance the sweetness.

- Ginger is very common; nowadays Italians regard it as a weird and exotic spice, used mostly in Chinese restaurants.
- Saffron is also very common, and Mastro Martino often uses the phrase “making [some food] yellow with saffron”. I don’t know if they attributed specific properties to yellow food, the same way they famously did with white food, or if they simply found it visually appealing.
- I was surprised to see that many traditional styles of pasta were already known: we will see mentions of lasagna sheets and ravioli. I didn’t think they were *that* old.
- Given the means, everything is boiled in some sort of broth, from the omnipresent “fatty broth” which I believe means broth of a fatty cut of meat, to leaner versions made with a few herbs and vinegar.
- “Frying” is used interchangeably to mean either pan-frying or deep-frying. I don’t think they really made a difference between the two. Only a few times he advises to use enough oil to cover the food you are about to cook, which would mean deep-frying.

Notes on translation

My personal notes will always be in *Italic* through the text.

I looked around for an English translation of this book, and discovered that they are few and quite old. Having some free time to myself, I decided to make my own and to distribute it freely under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Being an amateur translator, this is imperfect. The Italian language has changed a lot during the centuries, and Mastro Martino often talks about very specific foodstuffs that are not used nowadays. This means that for some words my interpretation might be incorrect, while in a few unfortunate cases I was completely unable to understand their meaning (and to find it on Google). I highlighted both cases in the text to warn the reader. My sincere apologies.

Moreover, Mastro Martino’s writing style is somewhat hard to read. Commas are vastly preferred over periods, making longer recipes hard to parse. I mostly preferred to maintain the authenticity, but in a few cases where the sentences go too long I decided to cut them short and replace a few commas with periods.

LIBRO DE ARTE COQUINARIA (Book on the art of cooking)

Chapter I - Explaining which meat is better for roasts and which is better for boiling

Big meat from cows and oxes should be boiled; for veal, the breast is good boiled, the loin roasted, and the leg for meatballs. Horse meat is always good boiled, except for the shoulder, which is good roasted, and same for the leg. Pork is not healthy in any way; even the back should be roasted, if fresh, with onions, and the rest salted or whatever else. Kid meat is always good both boiled and roasted; but for the back roasted is better. Same for lamb. Goat meat is good in January with curds. From venison the front part is good in fatty broth[1], the loins can be roasted, and the legs are good dried or for meatballs. Same goes for roe deer meat. Wild boar meat wants to be peppered, or in "civero"[2], or in fatty broth. Hare meat is all good for roasts, but the back is better, and the front has a nice flavour. Rabbit meat is better roasted than in any other way, and the loins are the best piece. Bear meat is good in quiches[3].

[1] "Brodo lardieri", which I translated here as a generic fatty broth, is actually a specific recipe described in this and other books: it refers to a meat broth prepared with some strips of pig fats, normally bacon or rashers, and lightly seasoned.

[2] No idea what this is.

[3] He actually says "in pastelli", which was obscure for me the first time I read it. By reading later recipes, I understood he means "inside a dough", i.e. in a sort of quiche.

Making capons, pheasant and other birds [1]

"Cicerone", or swan, goose, duck, crane, wild duck, heron and stork want to be roasted stuffed with garlic or onions and other good food. Peacocks, pheasants, rock partridge, partridge, wild hens, "pedarelli", quails, thrush, blackbird and all the other good birds should be roasted. Chicken should be roasted. Pigeons are good boiled, but they are better when roasted. Wild merlins are good roasted, but they are better when boiled with pepper and sage. A good capon should be boiled, and when it's very fatty it should be roasted; same goes for the hen.

[1] Some bird names are unrecognizable for me and I couldn't find equivalents in modern Italian dialects, so I kept the original terms. "Cicerone" however seems to be simply an alternative name for the swan.

It's interesting to see how all birds are considered good to eat!

Making any good boiled meat

If you want to make good boiled meat you should cut it in pieces as you can, then leave it in cold water for about one hour, then wash it well with warm water, then again with cold water, and then place it on the stove in a pot where there's plenty of space. Then you should add

salt as necessary, and remove the foam; if the salt is not really clean, put it in a bit of warm water, which will dissolve it very soon. On the other hand the brine as soon as ready can go into the pot, but careful with the dirt, which will be on the bottom; and if the meat is old and tough, especially capon or hen, take it out several times from the hot water and rinse it under cold water, so that it will be nicer and cook earlier.

Making any good roasted meat

For a tasty roast of chicken, capons, kid goats, or any other meat that should be roasted: first, if it's a large cut, "fagli trare un boglio"[1], except when it's a young calf, and then rub it with fat, as with any roast; for a capon, pheasant, chicken, kid goat, or any other meat that is good when roasted, make sure it is well cleaned and skinned, and then place it in boiling water, remove it soon after, and place it in cold water, and we do this because it makes it prettier, and easier to dress; then "lard it", that is take some lard, and other spices or scents according to your and your master's taste; and if you like it add some nice herbs with dried plums and dried cherries or, when in season, agresto[2], and other stuff; then skewer it, and put it over fire, very low at the beginning, because a good and tasty roast should cook slowly; and when it looks almost ready, take some white bread, grate it finely, and mix enough salt as you think you need for the roast; then sprinkle this bread and salt mixture over the roast as to cover all of it; now raise the heat, turning it quickly; and this way you will get tasty roast meat with bright colours. Then serve it as soon as possible.

[1] I suspect this means "boil it for a short time", since "boglio" is similar to "bollire" (to boil). This expression is not used very often in the book, so I don't have enough data to be fully confident of this interpretation.

[2] Here we come to one of the most used ingredients of this book, which I knew nothing about prior to reading this book. Agresto is a condiment obtained by cooking wine must with a bit of vinegar and other spices; it is apparently still used in some traditional recipes from Tuscany. "Agre" means "sour", possibly a reference to its taste.

Making peperata[1] of wild game

For a good peperata of deer, hare, wild boar, or any other game, take water and the same amount of red wine, and wash the meat inside; then sieve this liquid, adding salt as necessary; cook the meat in the aforementioned water and wine. When ready, take it out, and for a couple of portions take one pound and a half of raisins, well mashed; the same quantity of bread, sliced and toasted over a grill, then soaked in vinegar; stir it together with the raisins, and if you have some blood or entrails from the wild game, it would be optimal to mash it together with the rest. Now when well mixed you should add the meat broth, some *sapa*, i.e. wine cooked inside the must, and the vinegar you used for the bread; finally this mixture should go through a sieve[2] and into a pot, adding spices, pepper, cloves and cinnamon, as much as you like; this peperata can be spicy or sweet with vinegar and spices, according to your or your master's taste. Then it should boil for about half a hour over embers, so that it will receive the same amount of heat all over, stirring often with the spoon; finally fry the meat with some good lard, divide it into portions, and cover it with the peperata you prepared earlier. The darker the better.

[1] "peperata" refers to a spicy sauce, traditional of the city of Verona, in the North.

[2] This step (“passing through the sieve”) happens very often, especially when preparing sauces or other dressing. From the text I gather that the idea is to press down a mixture that is not fully liquid on a sieve with large holes, breaking down and reducing to a pulp any larger food pieces, and obtaining a thick, homogeneous sauce. Thankfully we have blenders to do that these days...

Making “brodo lardiero” of wild game

For “brodo lardiero” of any wild game: first wash the meat in a good white wine mixed with the same amount of water, pass the mixture through a sieve and then cook the meat inside it, adding a good amount of pig fat, chopped in pieces as small as a dice. Add also a good amount of sage, broken by hand in 3-4 pieces; and when almost cooked, sprinkle some good spices, as we already said. And to make the broth slightly thick, take two or three egg yolks, depending on the total amount, and the same number of bread slices toasted over fire, not too much nor too little, just dried out, and crumble them; then take a bit of broth, and dissolve these things inside; and if you have blood or entrails of the wild game, mash them, and cook it in the same broth, so it will be much tastier. But if you want to serve this as a dish, the meat should be chopped in large pieces, about 1 or half a ounce^[1]; if you want to serve this as a soup instead, the meat pieces should be small. Note also that the meat used for a peperata, or for a brodo lardiero, is cooked in its wash so that you don't lose the blood that comes out.

[1] The few times he refers to weight, Mastro Martino uses ounces and pounds. I have not tried to study the weight units of the time to translate them into modern ones.

Making “civero” of wild game

For “civero” of wild game: first boil the meat in water mixed with the same amount of vinegar. When cooked take it out to dry. When completely dry pan-fry it in some good lard; to make two portions, take one pound of raisins, half a pound of whole almonds, and mash both. Then take one pound of bread, sliced and dried over fire, but not really toasted, soak it in red wine, and mash it with the rest, then add the meat broth. Pass everything through a sieve and into a casserole, which you will put over embers far from the fire, letting this cook for about half a hour; now add ginger, lots of cinnamon, making it sweet or spicy according to your or your Master's taste. Then take one onion, sautee' it in a pan with some good pig fat, chopped thin; when the onion is cooked mash it well together with the lard you used to cook it. Now add all this in the casserole, letting it boil for a while longer; now prepare dishes with the meat, pour this civero on top, and serve.

Making dried “pastello” of deer or roe deer

For a pastello of deer or roe deer meat: first chop the meat in pieces as big as two fists, and soak them briefly in water mixed with the same amount of vinegar, and enough salt. Now take it out and leave it until the moisture of the broth has evaporated and the meat is dry. Now take pepper and cinnamon ground together, salt, good pig fat; cut in long slices, rub the spices in and roll the slices around the meat. Now take some whole cloves, and stick them all around the meat, which should also be well covered by the same spices. Now take some good flour and make a dough, slightly thicker than lasagna. For each piece of meat, roll one

sheet of dough around it[*] and bake it in the oven at low heat until ready; and such pastelli can be stored for 15 days or up to a month.

[] Terminology unclear: this could mean to use the pasta sheet as a roll or simply to place it on top of the meat like the crust on a cottage pie. Up to preference I guess.*

Making pastelli with veal, capon, any other meat, or birds

First take enough lean meat and chop it well with a knife; take some good veal fat and mix it with the meat, adding some nice spices according to your or your master's taste. Now prepare the usual pasta sheets as with any other "pastello" and bake this in the oven. When cooked, take two egg yolks, some agresto, fatty broth, and saffron, stir this all together and add it to the "pastello". And if you are not good at making crusts you can cook this in a pan as you would do with meat cakes. In the same pastello you can place one or two chickens or pigeons, or capons, or any other bird, both whole and cut.

Making a pie with pigeons or chicken etc.

To start boil the meat a bit, until it is almost cooked; and then chop it in small pieces and pan-fry it with a good fat. Then in the pan make a thick dough, like for "pastelli" and add the meat, sprinkling some dried plums, or cherries, and then take some good agresto, a bit of fatty broth, and 8 eggs and stir all these things together; and take some parsley, marjoram and mint and chop them with a knife; and then put all these things in a casserole and move it onto the stove, or over embers until the spoon you are using to stir starts to get dirty. Then put this sort of broth over the pie; and then put it on fire as if it were a cake, and when it looks ready serve it; and make such pie sweet, or sour[2] to taste, or as the master wants it.

[1] It's interesting to see that Mastro never describes how to make the dough for the base of these pies and cakes. I think he gives it for granted, as you can make very simple doughs with flour, water and perhaps some butter. Note that preparations such as puff pastry were invented a few centuries later.

[2] The word used here is "bruscha"; "brusco" in modern Italian means "brisque", but I discovered can also be used to describe a sour wine.

Making pan-fried meat, pigeons, chickens or kid goat

First of all clean them well and chop them in "quarters", or in small pieces, and pan-fry them with good lard, tossing them over often with the spoon. When the meat is almost cooked, throw away most of the fat in the pan. Then take some good agresto, 2 egg yolks, a bit of good broth and good spices, and mix these things with lots of saffron until yellow, then add them in the pan with the meat and let it cook for a while until everything looks ready. Now take a small piece of parsley, chopped thin, add it to the pan-fried meat in a dish and serve. And this pan-fried dish can be sweet or sour according to your or your master's taste.

Making a "pastello" in the frying pan

Take the meat and some veal fat, chop it thin and place it in the pan. And if with this meat and fat you want to add chicken, or pigeons, feel free to. Then place the pan far away from the fire, over embers. When it starts to boil "foam" it; now add some raisins, and some onion,

chopped thin and sauteed in fat, in the frying pan. When it is almost cooked season with spices and agresto. Optionally you can add 1 or 2 stirred egg yolks. When the pastello is ready serve.

Making Catalan mirrause[1]

First take pigeons, or chicken, or capons and prepare as if to roast them, and roast them with skewers; when half-cooked take them and chop them in quarters; and then divide each quarter in quarters and place them in a casserole. Then take some almonds, roasted under hot embers, and clean them only with a towel, and grind them, and then take 2-3 slices of slightly toasted bread, and 3-4 egg yolks, and grind them with the almonds, and add a bit of good vinegar and broth, and pass them through a stamegna. Then you will place them in the casserole with the meat adding some nice spices, and lots of cinnamon, ginger, and lots of sugar. Then place the casserole over embers and boil it for about one hour, stirring constantly with the spoon. And when cooked serve in small plates or soup bowls as you prefer.

[1] This is a variation on blanc-mange, a very popular Middle Ages dish. Blanc-mange owes its name to the fact that it uses exclusively white ingredients, which were supposed to help cure diseases; the white colour symbolized purity and the harmony of the body sick people had lost. Nowadays, blanc-mange is a sweet pudding which still recalls the original recipe, but has of course lost all the savoury ingredients.

I call this a variation because unlike tradition, there are non-white ingredients such as egg yolks.

Making peacocks dressed with all the feathers that after cook will look alive and will emit fire from its beak[1]

To make dressed peacocks that look alive: first you want to kill the peacock with one feather, piercing its skull with it, or even bleed it from under the throat like a kid goat. And then slash it under the body, that is from the neck until the tail, cutting only the skin, and skin it gently to avoid ruining the feathers or the skin. And when it will be skinned turn the neck skin upside down over the head. Then cut the head so that it stays with the neck skin; and in the same way make sure the legs stay with the thigh's skin. Then prepare a good roast, and stuff it with good food and good spices; take some whole cloves and stick them in the chest, then put it on a skewer and cook it over high fire; and around the neck wrap a wet towel so that the fire won't make it too dry; and keep wetting the towel. When it is cooked take it and "dress" it again with its skin. Take a set of thin iron skewers and spear them through the peacock's feet and legs so that the iron does not show; so the peacock will stay upright with its head as if it were alive; and prepare the tail so that it creates the wheel.

If you want it to spew fire from the beak, pick up ¼ of ounce of camphor with a piece of cotton wool, and put it inside the peacock's beak, then add a bit of whisky or some "large"[2] wine. And when it is time to serve it start a fire in the cotton wool, and it will emit fire for quite some time. And for more grandeur, when the peacock is cooked, you can cover it with sheets of pressed gold and place the skin over this gold, which wants to be rubbed with good spices. And the same you can do with pheasants, cranes, geese and other birds, or capons or chicken.

[1] Well this looks like a precursor to flambe' roasted meat. Must have been quite spectacular to see at the nobleman's house. This clearly looks like a show one would prepare for an important occasion or feast.

[2] No idea what "large wine" is. Does not matter, anything with alcohol works for the purpose.

Preparing a suckling pig

To start, make sure it is well skinned so it will be white and clean. Then slice it vertically across the back and take the entrails out and clean it well. And then remove the liver or the suckling pig and chop them with some good spices. Take garlic chopped in small pieces, a bit of good fat, and a bit of grated cheese, and some egg, and ground pepper, and a bit of saffron, and mix all together and put inside the pig, reversing it, i.e. by putting the inside out. And then sew it shut and tie it well and cook it over a skewer, or also on the grill. But cook it slowly so that both the meat and the filling will be cooked. Prepare a bit of brine with vinegar, pepper and saffron, 2-3 bay leaves, or sage, or rosemary; and throw this brine several times over the pig [1]. And the same you can do with geese, duck, crane, capon, chicken etc.

[1] Nowadays "brining" meat means marinating it inside a solution of water with salt and spices for a long time prior to cooking. It seems Mastro uses brine as a cooking sauce, pouring it on top of the meat while it is preparing.

Making boiled chicken with agresto

To make boiled chicken with agresto, it wants to be cooked with some salted meat. And when they are cooked halfway through, take some whole agresto, and slice it open and remove the seeds, and cook it with the chicken. And when cooked take a bit of parsley and mint chopped very thin, a bit of ground pepper and saffron; and all these things will go with the chicken and its broth in a plate and served.

Making roast chicken

To make roast chicken you should roast it; and when ready take the juice of bitter oranges, or alternatively a good agresto, with rose water, sugar and cinnamon, and put the chicken in a plate; then season with this mixture and serve.

Making meatballs with veal or other good meat[1]

First take some lean thigh meat and cut it in long and thin slices and beat them over a chopping board or table with the flat of your knife. Take salt and crushed fennel and place them over the meat slices. Then take parsley, marjoram and some good fat and chop them together with some good spices, and rub this over the slices. Then roll it closed and cook it on a skewer. But don't let it dry out too much over the fire.

[1] He uses the term of meatballs, but this preparation is very similar to meat rolls, which my mother prepares in a similar way using very thin slices of beef steak.

Making Roman coppiette[1]

Cut the meat in pieces as big as an egg, but don't finish cutting it, as all these pieces must stay joined together; and take salt and coriander seeds, or some fennel seeds, and rub them well over these pieces, and then cook them with skewer, placing a thin slice of lard between each piece to make the coppiette softer.

[1] "Coppiette", a snack you can still find today in Roman's butchers or gourmet stores, is the local equivalent of pork jerky: dried meat seasoned with chili pepper and other strong spices and made into sticks.

Making veal mortadella[1]

Take some lean meat from the thigh and chop it with some lard or veal fat, as you would do for pastelli. Now take parsley and marjoram, chopped thin, 1 egg yolk with grated cheese (more or less depending on how much you want), spices and saffron; mix all this with the meat; now take some net of pork or gelding, or any other good beast and tie all the mixture well in the net, creating pieces approximately the size of an egg; now roast it in skewers, cooking it slowly and taking care not to overcook it.

[1] Nowadays mortadella is a cold meat cut similar to what abroad is known as Bologna. Here it seems to refer to a small sausage, hence the "net" made of pig entrails. Given the similar origin of the two types of food I would not be surprised if the name had changed meaning at some point in history.

Making tomacelli

Take pig's or other meat's livers and boil them, but not too much; then grate them as you would do with cheese; take pork bacon depending on how much liver you've got, and chop it well. Now take one piece of aged cheese and one piece of fatty cheese, some marjoram, parsley and raisins and spices, 2-3 eggs, and crush all this together with the livers. Now make "tomacelli" as big as a walnut, or as an egg, and wrap each of them loosely with the pig net. Now cook them in the frying pan with fat and they should cook slowly, and not overcook.

Making "cervellate"[1] of pig or young veal

Take lean meat with no nerves, that is from a thigh, and good pig or veal fat, and chop it as finely as possible. Now take aged cheese and a piece of fatty cheese, good spices, 2-3 eggs and salt, mix all these things together and make them yellow with saffron. Now take some large pig entrails, clean them well until they are thin and deprived of their fat, fill them with the mixture and tie the entrails well, and make them long or short as you prefer; then they should be boiled, and they don't keep well for more than 2 days. However if well prepared they keep for 15 or 20 days or even more.

[1] Again a type of sausage, but I do not recognize this name.

Making good sausage from pork or other meat

Take some lean and fatty meat together, with no sinews, and mince it thin. And if the meat is 10 pounds, add 1 pound of salt, 2 ounces of fennel seeds (cleaned well) and 2 ounces of coarse ground pepper; and mix all this together and let them sit for one day. And then take some cleaned guts[1] and fill them with this meat and dry them over smoke.

[1] I am not sure what is the correct term for the skin that covers a sausage, traditionally obtained from the pig's intestine lining.

For two portions of jelly

Take forty gelding feet, skin them and remove the bones, now leave them in fresh water for about 3-4 hours. Clean them well, take one mug of white vinegar, one mug of white wine and two mugs of water, and cook the feet inside this, sprinkling salt as needed. Boil them slowly, removing the foam on top diligently. When they are half cooked take one quarter of whole pepper, one quarter of long pepper, one quarter of heaven wheat, one quarter of whole cinnamon, and half a quarter of "spiconardo" (lavender). Grind these things coarsely, so they are broken but not fully ground and add them to the boiling feet. Let them boil until one third of the water is gone. When cooked remove the feet, and place the broth over fire again; when it boils, add 10 egg whites, so they will get foamy; stir once with the spoon, then sieve the broth through a wool sack, 2 or 3 times all at once so it is well sieved, making sure the mixture stays still in the sack, and even more times to make it clean and homogeneous. Now serve some chicken, kid goat or capon meat, cooked as needed; the skin should be removed and the meat should be white and well clean, then dried between two white towels, then served in dishes and covered with the broth. Then the dishes should be placed in a fresh area until they gelify.

Making seasoned roasted kid goat

Take one quarter of kid goat and roast it, then cover it in lard and stuff it with garlic cloves as if you wanted to make stuffed roast. Now take good agresto, 2 egg yolks, 2 mashed garlic cloves, a bit of saffron, pepper, fatty broth. Mix all together and place them under the meat while it is roasting, wetting it a few times with this sauce. When cooked place the goat in a dish, season with the rest of the sauce and some chopped parsley. This goat should be well cooked and eaten warm.

Making veal chops

Take lean meat from the thigh, cut it in thin slices (not too thin) and hit them well with the side of the knife. Sprinkle salt and fennel seed over both sides of each slice, and if you have time leave them out for about half a hour. Then roast them over a grill, turning them over as needed, and keeping one slice of lard on top of them constantly so they stay humid. These chops should not be over cooked, and should be eaten immediately, and will give you a good appetite and good taste for drinking.[1]

[1] My mom makes this often (minus the slice of lard). Quite good with some lemon juice on top.

Making bird, chicken, pig, or other animal's liver

If from veal, chop them in pieces as big as a walnut, and cover them with salt, fennel seed, and sweet spices; then wrap them in pig or veal net, or even better from kid goat, and cook them in skewers, and they should not be overcooked.

Making "carbonata"

Take salted meat which includes both fat and lean cut[1], cut it in slices, and cook it in a pan for a short time. Now put them on a plate and sprinkle some sugar, cinnamon, and chopped parsley. And the same way you can prepare a ham or “summata”, adding instead of vinegar some orange or lemon juice, whichever you like most, and you will drink a lot.

[1] The actual meaning here is something like the veins on a steak, where the cut is lean but has veins of fat running all across it.

Cooking thrushes and preparing the sauce

Roast the thrushes as usual. Then take some white ground almonds, and add a lot of sandalwood extract[1] to make it red, add a bit of agresto and broth, plus lots of ginger and cinnamon. Now sieve this sauce into a casserole, and boil it for about 15 minutes. And when the birds are cooked place them in a serving dish and cover them with the sauce. And you can do this a different way, by seasoning the birds with orange or lemon juice, salt and sweet spices.

[1] Yes apparently this is a thing. I didn't know this but Google confirms.

Cooking a calf or ox head

When the calf or ox is dead, remove the head and skin it with hot water as with suckling pig, clean it well and boil it. For the gravy take some “agliata”. If you want to roas it, roast it in the oven, stuff it with garlic and herbs and spices, enough to fill it up. And this way is very tasty.

Preparing a calf's brain[1]

After boiling the head take out the brain, and break it up well. Now take 2 egg yolks, some ground pepper, agresto, and salt; mix all this with the brain. Now pan fry it with some lard. And when it starts to brown take it out in a bowl, and add sweet spices. And this should be eaten immediately.

[1] Grossed out? Selling and cooking brain is not done nowadays, but you can probably find some old-style butchers that remember when it was still an option. I've eaten this as a kid a couple of times.

Making roast figpecker

Take the birds and clean them well, without removing nor displacing any of the entrails. Take grape leaves, fill them with salt, fennel, some lard, and wrap the birds in the leaves. Cook them for about half a hour, or less, because they cook quickly under hot ashes. And if you want to roast them, tie them four by four around a skewer by their heads and feet. And we do this to avoid ruining the skewer.

Preparing Catalan-style partridge

Take the partridge and roast it; when it's ready take it out, and separate the wings and the breast meat from the body. In the hole add salt, sweet spices, some mashed cloves, and some grapefruit juice or lemon juice or agresto. And you should do this when the meat is warm, and it should not be overcooked, but green, almost bloody, that is undercooked, and very warm; and you should toss it quickly.

Making pig lard

Take fresh “sugna” or lard, and chop it in pieces as large as a chestnut, and add plenty of salt. Then mash it well and leave it for one day. Next, place it over fire in a large pot. And if you have one hundred pound add 10-12 mugs of water and boil it over low heat until completely melted. Pour the lard through a sieve. Now take it from above, so that you won't take anything from the water sieved through, put it in a clean vase and keep it in a cool area. And this lard will be preserved for one year.

Making stuffed calf belly

Take the calf belly and make a hole big enough to put the filling, which should be made with the things I am going to list next, that is: some good aged cheese, four eggs, coarsely-ground pepper, saffron, raisins, chopped parsley, marjoram and mint; and mix all these things together. Then put them inside the belly, and boil it, until well cooked.

Making cooked ham.

Stick your knife in the middle of the ham, and place it under your nose; if the knife has a pleasant smell the ham is good, otherwise it is not [1]. And if you want to cook it so that it will last for a while, take some good white wine, or vinegar, and the same amount of water, but it will be better without that; and boil the ham in this wine until cooked halfway through. Then remove it from the stove, and keep the ham in this broth until cold. And then take it out, and now it will be good and last for a while.

[1] Food safety 101.

Making sinnata[1] and cooked tongue

First of all sinnata should not have too much fat, and should be bright red, and cooked as I said in the ham; and same for tongues; the fattest the tongue, the better; and they should be cooked a bit longer than ham. And any other salted meat should be cooked this way.

[1]No idea what this is, sorry.

Making pastello of crest, liver and testicules[1] of chicken

Cut the crests in three parts, and the livers in four parts, but leave the testicules intact. Take some lard chopped thin, but don't beat it. Now take 2-3 ounces of good calf fat and beat it well; and it would be even better to use an ox or calf bone marrow; take also 30-40 cherries cooked and dried, cinnamon and ginger, plenty of sugar and some rafioli[2] and mix all together, making a pie out of it. Bake it, or cook it in a pan. When it is half cooked take one egg yolks, saffron, agresto, stir them together and place them inside the pastello. Leave it until fully cooked.

[1]This is a new one. I would have never thought of eating rooster crest, let alone the testicules...

[2]The only potential translation I found for this word is a traditional sweet made of soft sponge cake covered in sugar paste. Given that the whole dish seems to be sugary this might correspond to reality.

Cooking a pigeon without bones

Prepare the pigeon and remove the impurities, and soak it in a strong vinegar for about 24 hours. Then wash it well, and stuff it with good food and good spices; boil it, or roast it, as you prefer. And for this you need a pigeon without bones.

Cooking one pigeon that looks like two

Remove the pigeon's feather without using any water, and make sure the skin does not get broken at any point. Take the entrails out. Turning the skin from the inside out so that it will remain whole, remove it from the pigeon's body, then turn it the right way again, and stuff with a filling made of good things, so it will look like a full pigeon. Then prepare the body of the bird, and cook both of them either boiled or roasted as you prefer. And when the pigeon is half cooked add some bread on top; take one egg yolks and spread it over the pigeon with a pen to create a thin crust, and cook it over high heat to get some colour. And so it will look like it was never skinned; and this way it will look like two pigeons.

Chapter II - making every sort of food

Making blanc-mange over capons

For twelve portions: use two pounds of almond, and grind them well. And to have them whiter, soak them in fresh water for one day and one night. Then grind them very well, and when they are ground add a bit of fresh water to prevent the oil from getting out. Take a capon breast and mash it together with the almonds. Take the crumbs of white bread, and soak it in a lean capon broth; then mash that with the rest, and season with agresto, half an ounce of ginger (peeled until white), and at least half a pound of sugar; dissolve all this in the capon broth, and pass it through a sieve inside a clean saucepan. Place the saucepan on embers, away from the fire, stirring often with the spoon. Cook for about half an hour, and when it is ready add three ounces of rose water. Then prepare the dishes, or cover the capon or any other dish with this preparation; serve it. And if you are using this to cover a capon, for a better presentation place plenty of pomegranate seeds on top. And if you want this dish to have two colours, take one egg yolks and some saffron; mix them with one part of the preparation, and make sure it has more sour from the agresto. We call this "ginestra". And if you have two capons, you can cover one with the white preparation and the other with the yellow one.

Making XII portions of Catalan blanc-mange

Take two mugs of goat's milk and eight ounces of fine rice flour, and boil them in the milk. Then take the breast of a capon that has died the same day, and it should be half cooked. Slice all the breast as thin as hair, put it in the mortar and give it no more than two strikes with the pestle. When the milk has boiled for half an hour, add the breast so sliced and one pound of sugar, and leave it to boil for about four hours; and you should stir constantly with the spoon from beginning to end^[1]. To recognize when it is ready, lift a bit with the spoon and it will look viscous. Then season with rose water as we said before; prepare the portions, over which you will add some sugar, and serve them.

[1] For four hours? That's metal!

Making consumed broth[1] of capons, or pheasants, or partridges, or deers, or pigeons, or wild doves.

Take any of these things and make them clean. And if you want to consume one capon and make two portions, take a saucepan able to contain four mugs of water, place the capon inside, with all of its bones, and place it over the fire. Then add one ounce of lean salted meat, and thirty or forty broken peppercorns, some cinnamon, 3-4 cloves, 5-6 sage leaves broken in three pieces and 2 bay leaves, and let the saucepan boil for about seven hours until only two portions of broth are left behind, or even less, if you want it to be tasty; and do not add salt at all. And if you are preparing the broth for a sick person don't add the salted meat, and don't use too much spices; this way it will be good both for healthy and for sick people.

[1] What today we refer to using its French name, consomme'.

Making ten portions of white broth

Take half a pound of almond, peel and grind them, and then add fresh water to prevent the oil from getting out. Now get twenty egg whites, a piece of white bread crumbs, agresto, broth from meat or capon, a pinch of white ginger, and stir everything together. Pass them through the sieve together with the almonds. Finally, cook the same was the other broth.

Making green broth

Take all the ingredients contained in the first broth, except for saffron, and some chards, parsley and a few wheat leaves if you have them; grind everything, pass through the sieve and cook as we said above.

Making zanzarelli[1]

For ten portions: take eight eggs, half a pound of grated cheese, some grated bread, and mix everything together. Then fill a saucepan with a meat broth, yellow with saffron, and place it over the stove; as soon as it boils, throw the mixture in, and stir with the spoon. And when it looks lumpy take it away from the stove, and serve with some spices.

[1] This is the name assigned to the dish. This is almost identical to what nowadays is called "stracciatella" soup, made in the areas around Rome. The cheese employed is usually grated parmesan or pecorino. Nice dish for a winter night.

Making green zanzarelli

Do as we said before, but don't use saffron, instead use the same herb as the green broth.

Making zanzarelli in single morsels either white, or green, or yellow

To make zanzarelli in single morsels either white, or green, or yellow, prepare the mixture as we said before, of whatever colour you like, and make sure it is very tough and thick. Use a small spoon. When the broth is boiling make small morsels that look like a fava bean, and throw them one by one into the broth.

Making white zanzarelli

For white zanzarelli take a bit of almond milk and white bread crumbs, plus egg white. Prepare a good meat broth, the best one would be a nice fatty chicken, in a saucepan with a bit of almond milk. Then cook them as we said before.

Making spelt with chicken or other meat broth

For ten soups: first clean^[1] and wash it, and cook it with a good broth of capons, or other large chicken, and it should boil for a long time. When cooked, add some good spices. Take three egg yolks and a bit of the spelt, now cool, and mix them together. And then add this with the rest of the spelt and stir. And it should be yellow with saffron.

[1] By cleaning Mastro often means to remove the impurities and other waste from the food, such as the skin and bones of an animal or a fruit's skin and core. He doesn't mean to wash the food with water; he uses different terms for that.

Making rice with meat broth

Do the same as for the spelt. But many don't like eggs with rice. For that follow the taste of the master.

Making millet with meat broth

Cook the millet in the meat broth, boiling it slowly and stirring well, and don't smoke it, and it wants to be yellow with saffron. But before it should be well cleaned and washed with warm water like rice.

Making a soup with bread, egg and cheese

Boil the grated bread for $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour in a meat broth. And take a bit of grated cheese, and stir it with eggs, and let the bread cool down. Then add the eggs with cheese, and stir a lot. And this soup should be yellow with saffron, and very thick.

Making "verzuso" soup^[1]

Take four fresh egg yolks, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of cinnamon, 4 ounces of sugar, 2 ounces of rose water, and 4 ounces of orange juice, and stir all these things well together, and cook them as you would cook the soup before, and it should be slightly yellow. And this soup is nice to prepare during summer.

[1] The word "verzuso" does not appear again in the recipe, so I am thinking it is not an ingredient but some sort of name for the soup. This is why I chose not to translate it.

Making mashed fava beans

Take fava beans, clean them well and place them over fire. As soon as they release water throw it away, and add as much water as you need to cover one finger above the beans, adding at the same time as much salt as needed. Now cook over embers far away from the fire, cover, and cook them until the water has evaporated, then mash it well in a mortar. Now return it to the fire in a pan. Take an onion chopped thin and sautee' it in another pan with a bit of good oil, so that it will be well cooked but not burned. Get a bit of sage and figs or apples, chop thin, and heat them up to the pan with the onion. Now you can make soups

with the mashed fava beans, pouring this oil on top, with all the things you put inside, and season with good spices.

Making peas fried in salted meat

Take the peas with their rinds and boil them. Now take salted meat, cut thin slices half a finger long, and fry them for a while. Now add the peas to fry with the meat. Add a bit of agresto, some sapa or sugar, and some cinnamon. And you can fry beans the same way.

Frying fava beans

Take fava beans, sage, onion, figs and apples as we said before, and any other good herb you have, and mix everything together; fry this in a pan with oil, make an omelette or mess and serve when it's ready with good spices.

Making meat broth

Take some lean boiled veal, and chop it thin; now boil it in a fatty broth, adding some grated breadcrumbs, black pepper, saffron, and let it boil for about half an hour. Now let it cool down for a while; in the meantime take eggs, grated cheese, parsley, marjoram, and fresh mint chopped in some agresto, and stir everything together; now add them to the meat, stirring gently with the spoon. And this soup should be as thick as gravy. You can also prepare coratelle^[1] this way.

[1] "coratella" refers to lamb entrails, usually intestines.

Making tripe soup

Tripe should be first well cleaned and washed, white, and cooked well with a bone from a salty meat to give a nice flavour, and without salt to keep them white; when they are ready cut them in small pieces, then add fresh mint, sage, and salt, and let it boil. Then serve the soups, adding spices, and cheese if you like it.

Making trout tripe soup^[1]

Clean it and cook it very well. When they are half cooked, add parsley, chopped fresh mint, and a sprinkle of pepper. When it is ready serve the soups with sweet spices.

[1] tripe generally refers to the fatty cut of meat around the belly, however nowadays the only tripe you ever find is from the pork. I had never considered tripe meat coming from fish!

Making soup from trout eggs that look like peas

Boil the eggs for a while. Then take them out of the broth, and divide them; and to prevent the broth from being too light, sieve it with some breadcrumbs; alternatively take some pea broth, which is better to have; and regardless of which broth you have boil the eggs again with some spices, parsley, and fresh mint.

Making roselli soup^[1]

[1] No idea what "roselli" are supposed to be, sorry, therefore I am skipping this recipe entirely.

Making soup from lettuce so that it looks like pumpkin

Take the whitest part of the lettuce from below, or from the middle, and cook it as you would with pumpkins, with eggs and agresto.

Making semolina soup

Semolina should be cooked with a fatty meat broth, or broth from a large chicken, and it should be added bit by bit to the broth while stirring constantly with a spoon. And boil it for about half a hour over embers, far from the fire, because it burns easily. And then prepare the soup, adding some cheese and spices. And during Lent cook it in almond milk with sugar and rose water.[1]

[1] Being a rose in the Middle Ages must have been dangerous business. I imagine scores of housewives plucking whole fields of flowers to make this rose water to put everywhere.

Making turnip soup

Clean the turnips and cut them in large pieces, and cook them well in a meat broth. Then press them using with a large spoon with holes, or mash them, and then boil them again in a fatty broth with some salted meat, pepper, and saffron.

Making fennel soup

Fennels must be cooked like cabbage, except for the fact that they want to be cut thinner and cooked more with some pepper and salted meat, or oil.

Making Roman maccheroni

Take some beautiful flour[1], and dissolve it to make a dough a bit thicker than the one used for lasagne, and roll it around a stick. Then remove the stick, and cut the dough in pieces as thick as a small finger, so it will be cut into strings. And cook it in fatty broth, or water according to how much time you have. And it should be boiling when you cook it. And if cooking in water add some fresh butter and a pinch of salt. And as they are serve them in dishes with good cheese, butter, and sweet spices.[2]

[1] Later he mentions “very beautiful flour”, which makes me think he is referring to the degree of refinement of the flour.

[2] Pasta seasoned only with butter and grated parmesan cheese is made nowadays too. It works well with an empty fridge! My mother would prepare it when I had a stomach ache on the grounds that “it sits well in the stomach”; I doubt this claim, but it certainly cheered me up when I was sick.

Adding butter to the boiling water is likely analogous to the old recommendation of adding a teaspoon of olive oil to prevent pasta pieces from sticking together or sticking to the sides of the pot. You normally don’t need to do this with pasta you buy at the store.

Making maccheroni in another way

Prepare the dough as said before. And you will cook it the same way with the same seasoning, making the dough a bit thicker and cutting it in very small pieces; and these are called “triti” or “formentine”.

Making parsley root soup

Take the small parsley roots, and remove the stick in the middle, and clean them well and cook them in meat broth. Then chop them very thin and put them in another good fatty meat broth with some pepper and saffron.

Making fried mushrooms

Clean the mushrooms very well, and boil them in water with 2-3 garlic cloves, and with bread crumbs. And we do this because naturally they are poisonous. Then take them out and let the water dry away so they will be dry, and then fry them in good oil, or lard. And when ready put some spices on top.

Making fried pumpkin

Take the pumpkins and peel them. Cut them vertically in slices as thin as a knife blade. And then boil them for just a minute in water, and take them out; place them out to dry. Sprinkle a bit of salt on top and cover them in beautiful flour, and fry them in oil. Then you get them out and take a bit of fennel, garlic and bread crumbs; and mash them together and add some agresto, enough to have a thick mixture, and pass this through a masher, and use the resulting sauce to season the pumpkins. However they are also good simply with some agresto and fennel. And if you want the sauce to be yellow add some saffron.

Making a quince dish[1]

Cook the quinces in a lean meat broth. Then mash them and add a bit of almond milk, prepared with a meat or chicken broth, if you have time; and pass them through a masher, and add them in a casserole with sugar, ginger, cinnamon, and a bit of saffron; boil it far away from the fire, over embers, so it won't burn, and stir it often with the spoon. And if you can add a bit of fresh butter or lard it will be tastier. And when it looks ready prepare your plates, and add some sweet spices and sugar.

[1] The word here is "menestra", which resembles the Italian "minestra" i.e. soup. However from the rest of the text I believe he uses this term for a generic portion or dish.

Making stuffed fava beans

Soak the fava beans; and when they are soft make a small cut on the side that is not dark; then take the beans out gently, so the outer shell doesn't crack. Then, take some white and cleaned almonds[1], and mash them well, adding a bit of rose water so they don't release too much oil. Add lots of sugar. This mixture should fill the empty fava beans shells; then you can pinch them closed so they look like cooked fava beans, and heat them up in a pot, or pan, or any other container where there is no water nor anything else, keeping an eye on them so they don't catch fire. And serve the fava beans in plates adding a bit of warm meat broth, some parsley chopped thin and some onions, chopped and pan-fried, and finally a bit of sweet spices. And if you don't like onions you can omit them.

[1] i.e. without skin.

To make hemp seed dish

For twelve portions use one pound of hemp seeds. Clean it and boil it in a casserole until it starts to open up; then take one pound of white almonds, well mashed, and add the seeds,

and mash all together with breadcrumbs. Now dissolve this in a broth made of meat or lean chicken and pass them through a colander. Then boil it in a casserole over embers, far away from the fire, stirring them often with a spoon. Then take half a pound of sugar, half a pound of ginger, and a bit of saffron dissolved in rose water; and when you are serving it season with sweet spices.

Making ravioli when it's time of meat

For ten portions: take half a pound of aged cheese, and a bit of a different fatty cheese, and one pound of fat pork bacon or heifer breast, boiled for a long time until it loses texture. Then chop it, and take some good herbs (also chopped thin), peppers, cloves and ginger; and it would be tastier with some capon breast too. All these things should be placed together with some water. Now prepare thin pasta dough, and stuff this inside the dough however you prefer. These ravioli should not be larger than a chestnut; cook them in broth made from capon, or other good quality meat, seasoned with saffron when it is boiling. Boil them for the time required to say two Pater Noster. Then prepare the plates, and season with grated cheese and sweet spices. Similar ravioli can be made using pheasant or other bird's breast.

Making Sicilian maccheroni

Take some very beautiful flour, and knead it with egg whites and rose water, or with plain water. And for two small portions don't use more than one or two egg whites, and knead a hard dough; then shape it into long tubes, as thin as a speck of straw. Now take some iron wire as long as the palm of your hand, or more, and as thin as a piece of string, and place it on top of the pasta tube, and hit it once with both hands on the table; then take the wire out, and stretch the beaten piece of pasta again in the middle. This pasta must be dried out in the sun, and they can last for two or three years, especially if you prepare them during August[1]; then you can boil them in water or in a meat broth; you serve them in small plates with lots of grated cheese, fresh butter and sweet spices. And this pasta should be boiled for about two hours[2].

[1] possibly because it's hotter so they dry out more :D

[2] I don't buy this. Even professionally dried out pasta doesn't need that much!

Making vermicelli

Dilute the pasta as we said above, and make it into thin filaments, breaking it into short pieces with your fingers to create vermicelli; now place them under the sun to dry, so that they will last for 2-3 years. When you want to prepare them, cook them in a broth of meat or a good large chicken, for about one hour. Then prepare the dishes and season with grated cheese and spices. If it's not the season for meat[1] you can cook it in almond milk with sugar, or in goat's milk. And since this milk is unable to boil as much as the vermicelli require[2], boil them in advance in water as you do with rice. And the same way you should cook lasagne, tritte or fermentine[3]. All these pasta dishes should be seasoned yellow with saffron, except when you cooked them in milk.

[1] Or you are poor and don't have any to begin with...

[2] No idea why goat's milk wouldn't boil as required.

[3] Other pasta shapes (lasagna is well known, while the others are more regional).

Making herb soup

Take one vine leaf, some borage and boil them in water that should be boiling already when you add them; then take them out and chop them thin with your knife. Take some parsley, fresh mint, and chop them together with the aforementioned herb. Then pound them well in the mortar, and put them in a pot with fatty broth to boil for a bit. And if you want you can add some pepper.

To make almond milk rice

For ten portions, use one pound of almonds and clean them well so that they are white. Then take one pound of rice, and wash it two or three times with lukewarm water, and boil it with some clean water until it is well cooked. Then you drain it and place it out to dry. Then mash the almonds well, wetting them with some fresh water every now and then, so that they won't get too oily; then cover them with water and pass them through a masher. Now boil this milk in a casserole with one pound of refined sugar. And when it starts to boil add the rice and move the casserole over embers, far away from the fire, stirring continuously with the spoon to prevent burning. It should boil for about half a hour. Similarly you can cook this rice with goat's or any other milk. And given that this dish is easy to burn, when it starts doing so, this is how you should fix it: take the food out of the casserole, but don't touch the bottom, and place it in another clean casserole. Then take a tea towel, fold it three or four times and wet it, wring it and place it over the initial casserole still folded; and leave it there for a quarter of a hour, then wet it again and repeat the same process if necessary; this will remove all the smoke. I haven't found a better way to remove the smoke. And you can also prepare spelt like this.

Making rice in a better way than what we said

Wash the rice with hot water until it is sparkling white and let it dry over a cutting board; when dried out boil it with almond or goat's milk depending on the time, and this is because the milk will give it substance when cooked together, better than water; add a pinch of salt, but not too much. And if you want it to be tasty don't skimp on the sugar but add a lot.

Making an almond dish

For eight portions: use one pound of white cleaned almonds, and mash them well, wetting them often with water as we said before, so they won't get too oily, and adding some breadcrumbs. Now dissolve this in water, pass through the masher and boil it in a casserole over embers. It should boil about $\frac{1}{8}$ of a hour. If you want add half a pound of refined sugar to boil with the almonds. This soup wants to be a bit liquid. If you add some rose water it will be tastier.

Making capon skin lasagna

Remove the skin from a boiled capon, chop it in pieces and boil it for half a hour in a broth of fat capon with a bit of saffron. Then prepare the lasagna as before and season with some cheese and spices.

Making red chickpea soup

For 8 portions: take one pound and a half of chickpeas, wash them in warm water, and when dry place them in the casserole you are going to use to cook this. Add half a ounce of flour, the “germ”, a bit of good quality oil, a sprinkle of salt, and about twenty ground peppercorns, and some ground cinnamon, and toss these things around with your hands. Then add three mugs of water and some sage, rosemary, and parsley roots, and boil for as long as it needs. And when almost cooked add some garlic. And if the broth is to be used for a sick person don’t add neither oil nor spices.

Making “manfrigo” as a dish[1]

For 10 portions: take three bread slices and scrape the crust away with your knife, then grate it well. Move it onto a table and sprinkle around one pound and a half of beautiful flour, then mix 4-5 eggs, and stir well together with a knife taking care of mixing the bread with the flour. When it’s all mixed together place everything on a sieve and take out the flour, and the remaining bread will be placed out to dry. When it’s time to prepare this, cook it in meat broth, or good chicken broth. And add a bit of saffron, and boil over low heat for about half a hour. Season the dishes with some cheese and spices.

[1] Variations of these dish have been around for centuries as a way to recycle stale bread. Nowadays they are called “pancotto” or “bread cakes”, and you can add pretty much anything else you’ve got in the fridge to spice things up.

Cooking pumpkins

Peel them, then boil them in meat broth or water and add some onion, depending on how much you have. When it looks cooked drain it, and mash everything with a holed spoon, and cook them in a casserole with fatty broth and some agresto.

They should be a bit yellow with saffron; when ready take them out of the fire and let them cool down a little. Take three egg yolks, stir them with some aged cheese and add the pumpkins, while stirring so they don’t get lumpy; then prepare the dishes and season with sweet spices.

Cooking pumpkins with almond milk

Cook the pumpkins in water, then drain as much water as you can, and sieve them or mash them through a holed spoon; now boil them with the milk and sugar, and with some agresto according to your master’s tastes.

Cooking “cabaraze” Catalan-style

Take “cabaraze” i.e. pumpkins, and wash them well, then put them in a dry saucepan with some good lard, and place the saucepan over embers far away from the fire; boil the content while stirring constantly with a spoon. And they should boil this way for about four hours. Now you should have some good fatty broth made yellow with a pinch of saffron, and add that plus sugar, sweet spices and agresto according to your master’s tastes. And as we said before in the first chapter about pumpkins, you can add some egg yolks stirred with good aged cheese.

Making fresh fava beans with meat broth

Take the fava beans and clean them under warm water as you do with almonds, and then boil them in good broth. And when they look ready add some parsley and mint, and salted meat if you have it. And this dish should be a bit green to look nicer. The same way you can prepare peas, or any other fresh legume, but keep in mind that those should not be cleaned with warm water like fava beans, but leave them as they are with their thin rind.

Making “verzuso” during Lent

For ten portions: take one and a half pound of almonds washed in lukewarm water, and mash them well as we said before, adding a bit of fresh water to prevent them from releasing oil. Now take a piece of white bread and soak it in good agresto. Then, take the almonds, and the bread, some orange juice, and rose water, and mix together all these things, adding one ounce of cinnamon, and one pound of fine sugar. Sieve this mixture, making it yellow with a bit of saffron. Then you will boil it in a saucepan away from the fire. Make sure it does not burn by stirring it often with the spoon. It should boil for about one eighth of an hour.

Making blanc-mange during Lent

For ten portions: take one and a half pound of clean almonds, mashed well as we said before, and a piece white bread crumbs soaked in a white pea broth. If you don't have peas you can use another broth, boiling a very white bread in water for half a hour, and then soaking your breadcrumbs in this broth. Now take some good seawater fish, or a nice lake pike, boiled. Take half a pound of their whitest and most hard flesh, and mash it well with the almonds and the bread, a bit of broth, and orange juice; if you don't have that you can replace with a bit of agresto plus rose water, and half a pound of ginger, with eight ounces of sugar. And once these things are mixed together and sieved, you should cook them in a saucepan for one eighth of a hour, far away from the fire so they don't get burned; and stir them constantly with your spoon.

Cooking peas during Lent

The same way you can prepare peas with almond milk during Lent, as we said for blanc-mange in this chapter.

Cooking vegetables with almond milk

Take the vegetables and boil them first in water, which should be boiling when you add the vegetables. And then take them out, and place them over a table, or board, and chop them thin with your knife, then grind them in the mortar; now you boil them in the almond milk adding as much sugar as you want.

Cooking vegetables without milk

Take vegetables; and first, boil them as we said before. And you can prepare fat or lean dishes according to the time of the year, or according to what you want.

Cooking hemp seeds

Take the hemp seeds, and soak them for one day and one night, throwing away the little granules you will find floating in water because they aren't very good [1]. Now take peeled almonds and grind them together with the seeds. To grind them properly you should add

some water and pea broth, adding fine sugar and a bit of rose water. All these things should cook for about one eighth of an hour, stirring constantly with the spoon.

[1] The word he uses means “they are sad”, which makes me laugh :D Although we should note that this word back in the day often mean “bad” or even “evil”.

Cooking cabbage the Roman way

Break the cabbage heads with your hand according to custom, and add them to boiling water. When they are about halfway cooked throw away the water, take some good chopped lard in abundance, and add it to the now-dry cabbages, stirring with a spoon. Now take some good fatty broth, and with that you will boil them for a short while.

Cooking yellow food soup

For twelve portions: take one pound of unpeeled almonds and grind them well. Take the breast of a capon or another bird that you like to eat boiled, or roasted, with four egg yolks, stirred with the almonds. Add half a pound of sugar, cinnamon, ginger, and a bit of saffron. Now with some good chicken broth, or another good broth and a bit of agresto you will dissolve the aforementioned preparation, passing it through the sieve. Now you will place it far away from the fire so that it won't burn; stir it constantly with the spoon, and boil it for about one hour. Keep in mind that when it is halfway cooked you should add two ounces of good lard, or fresh butter; then prepare the dishes, and serve with sweet spices.

Making elderflower soup

For twelve portions in period of Lent take one pound of a half of peeled almonds, ground as we said before. Now take three ounces of elderflower, when it is dry. First soak it in fresh water for one hour, wringing it to get the water out. Now you will grind half of these flowers with the almonds, adding the crumbs of a white bread, half a pound of sugar, and a pinch of ginger. And if you want to make it yellow you can add some saffron. Sieve all of this, and cook it as we said in the previous chapter. Once it is on the fire, add the remaining flowers, whole. When it is ready, serve the portions with some good sweet spices.

And if you want to make the same soup when meat is allowed, add three egg yolks, and dissolve it in chicken broth or other good broth, then adding the sugar and the whole flowers as we said before. But keep in mind that when it is almost ready it is good to add two ounces of good lard or fresh butter.

Making white “zanzarelli”

For ten portions: first take one pound of peeled and ground almonds (as we said before), grinding them with a couple of elderflowers; dissolve this in water and sieve it. When you have sieved enough for eight portions, place this liquid mixture in a pot to cook, keeping the raw part aside in a cup. Now take two slices of white bread, grated, and ten egg whites. Stir these two ingredients with the liquid you kept aside in the cup, adding half a pound of sugar. When the soup you put on the fire will start to boil, add this second mixture inside, and don't touch it at all with the spoon. When you see it is well mixed, serve the dishes with sweet spices.

Making Catalan blanc-mange

For ten portions: take one pound of peeled and ground almonds, dissolved in chicken broth or other good broth, and sieved. Put them to boil in a clean pot, adding two ounces of rice flours dissolved in some almond milk until no lumps remain; and boil for about one hour stirring often with the spoon. Add half a pound of capon breast chopped thin, which should be cooked initially in the same milk. And when all of this is ready add a bit of rose water, and serve the portions with sweet spices.

Chapter III - making every possible sauce

Making white sauce

Take some almonds, depends on the amount you prefer, and they should be peeled and ground. And to avoid releasing too much oil as I already said several times, add some fresh water when you grind them. Then you will get some white bread crumbs that has been soaked in agresto, mash it with the almonds, adding some white ginger, again well cleand. And this mixture should be dissolved and stirred with good agresto, or orange or lemon juice, making it sweet with sugar and sour with agresto, plus more or less oranges depending on your Master's or other people's taste. And this sauce goes well with any boiled dish either with meat, or other things during Lent.

Making red sauce

Take some raisins and mash them finely. Then take 2-3 slices of bread, toasted and soaked in some amount of red wine, depending on how much sauce you want to make. All the aforementioned things need to be grated together. Then you take some red wine, sapa and agresto, and if you don't like agresto you can use vinegar, making it sweet or sour depending on your preference. All this mixture should be sieved, adding lots of good cinnamon, some cloves and ground nutmeg.

Making pavo sauce

Take some hard boiled egg yolks, and boiled chicken livers, and toasted almonds, depending on the amount you need. All these things should be mashed and well stirred together with good vinegar or agresto. Then they will get dissolved in water and sieved, adding cinnamon, a bit of ginger, and sugar. And note that this sauce should be slightly cooked and made yellow with saffron.

Making prune sauce

Take the plums and soak them in red wine, take out the core, and mash them well with some whole almonds, some toasted bread which should be soaked in the same wine where the plums have been. And all these things will be stirred with agresto, and the aforementioned wine, some sapa or sugar (which would be better). Then dissolve and sieve with some good spices, especially cinnamon. To make a "peperata" instead look for the chapter where we talk about that, and follow those instructions.

Making green sauce

Take parsley and thyme, some chards and any other good small herb, pepper, ginger, and salt. And chop everything thin, adding some good strong vinegar, and sieve this. And if you

want to taste garlic you can mash, together with the previous ingredient, some garlic leaves. And this depends on the taste.

Making “fior di persico” sauce

Get some peeled white almonds, ground with white bread crumbs, some ginger and cinnamon, and agresto made from red wine, and pomegranate juice, adding some sandalwood essence too. Then dissolve the mixture in water, sieve it, and with red wine you can make it sweet or sour as you like.

Making broom flower sauce

Take almonds, saffron, and egg yolks; the almonds should be peeled and ground. Dissolve this in good agresto with a pinch of ground ginger.

Making grape sauce

Get some good black grapes and break it nicely in a pot, breaking also some bread according to how much you want to prepare. Add some good agresto, or vinegar, so that the grapes won't be too sweet. And now this should boil over fire for about half a hour, adding cinnamon, ginger, and other nice spices.

Making chestnut sauce

Take some almonds, peeled and ground with a piece of white bread crumbs. Now take the chestnuts, and mix all this with perseverance. You should not hit them directly nor grind them, to avoid breaking those tiny granules they have inside; now add cinnamon, ginger and a bit of nutmeg. Finally sieve this.

Making black cherry or sour cherry sauce

For these similar sauces you should follow the instructions I wrote in the previous chapter about grape sauce. But you can make them in different colours, lighter or darker depending on who you are serving it to.

Making red “crognali”[1] sauce

Follow the same instructions written for the cherries and the grapes.

[1] No idea what this is, possibly a red berry or fruit given the other recipes here. One old source I found seems to imply they are similar to black and sour cherries.

Making mustard

Take a mustard plant and soak it in water for two days, changing the water often to keep it white. Take also some almonds, peeled and ground. And when ground add the mustard plant, and grind them again together. Now take some good agresto or vinegar, stirred with white breadcrumbs; finally dissolve in water and sieve. And you decide whether it should be sweet or tangy.

Making red or orange mustard

Take the mustard and grind it well. Now take raisins and grind it with this as much as possible. Now get some toasted bread, some sandalwood extract, cinnamon, agresto or vinegar and sapa, and dissolve all this together and sieve it.

Making mustard to carry in small pieces when riding horses

Grind the mustard as we said before, and take some well ground raisins; with these things you add cinnamon, and a pinch of cloves. Now you can prepare small round balls like those you draw with a bow[1], or square pieces of any size you like; leave them out to dry over a table, and when they are dried you can carry them around wherever you want. When you want to eat them you can “revive” them by adding agresto, vinegar, or cooked wine, i.e. sapa.

[1] ??

Making blue sauce in summer[1]

Take some wild chestnuts that sprout in the bushes, and almonds ground with a pinch of ginger. Dissolve all this in agresto and sieve it.

[1] *Wat! This isn't even blue. Not sure what's the point :-)*

Preparing yellow sauce for fish

Slice some bread and toast it; then get some red wine, a bit of vinegar, and cooked wine, and boil the bread slices inside; then sieve the result, adding some sweet and strong spices; and make this yellow with saffron.

Making white garlic sauce

Grind some peeled almonds; when they are halfway done, add as much garlic as you like, and grind very well with some fresh water to prevent them from releasing oil. Then take white breadcrumbs and soak it in a lean meat broth or fish broth depending on the time of the year; this garlic sauce can be serve in any season, lean or fatty, as you prefer.

Making red garlic sauce

Follow the same instructions as the previous chapter, except for the fact that you should not use broth; instead, take some black grapes and break them well with your hands inside a saucepan, or other container; boil them for half a hour; and then pour the mixture, and use it to dissolve the garlic sauce; you can also do the same procedure with cherries. This garlic sauce can be served during meat days, or fish days[1], as you prefer.

[1] *In Catholic countries it was a strong tradition to never eat meat on Fridays, while fish was allowed. In Italy this is reflected even nowadays, where fishmongers stock and work much more on Fridays compared to all other days of the week, and most fish markets also occur on Fridays.*

Making green agresto

Take some bitter green which we call “usiglie” or “agrette”[1], chop it, and season with salt; now use some old agresto to dissolve it, and sieve the result.

[1] *“agretti” (also called “priest's beard in some areas) is a bitter green we still eat today, usually seasoned with plenty of lemon juice.*

Making “salsa”

Take some “pampane” and grind them well; if you like it you can add some garlic bulbs, with a bit of breadcrumbs and salt. Now dissolve this in vinegar or agresto, and sieve it.

Making fennel agresto

Take some garlic if you like it, and flower of the fennel plant, the sweetest and tastier you can get, and mix them together with some new agresto; together with this agresto you will pass this through the sieve; and it should be slightly salty.

Making “roselli”[1] sauce

[1] Again with the mystery ingredient...

Preserving crognali juice during winter

Get some ripe crognali, and break them with your hands, as much as possible, inside a saucepan or other container; now add a good amount of new agresto, some pepper, and lots of salt, and boil them for at least two hours. Pass them through a large-holed sieve, saving the juice in some container, or other vase. And all of this should have plenty of salt, and the resulting juice will be good to add colour to any other sauce you want.

Chapter IV - making every type of pie

Making white pie.

Take one pound and a half of good fresh cheese, and chop it thin, and press it well; and take 12 or 15 egg whites, and stir them well with that cheese, adding half a pound of sugar, and half an ounce of the whitest ginger you can have, and similarly half a pound of nice and white pig fat, or alternatively similar good and fresh beef fat; the same amount of milk, as much as you need, about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mug. Then you'll make the dough or crust in the pan, as thin as you want, and you will cook all this with high heat both above and below; and you will brown it a bit thanks to the fire. And when it looks ready, remove it from the pot, and you'll sprinkle some fine sugar and good rose water.

Making Bologna pie.

Take the same amount of cheese as said for the white pie, and grate it. And note that the fattest, the better; then take some chards, parsley and majoram; wash them, then cut them well with a knife, and place them with that cheese, tossing and turning them with your hands until well mixed, adding four eggs, a bit of pepper, a bit of saffron, and then some good fat, tossing and mixing all this very well as I said. And this filling you will place in a pan with a crust both above and below, over medium heat; and when it looks half cooked, and will look prettier, you will make it yellow with one egg yolk stirred with some saffron. And you will see when it is cooked, because the crust above will rise; then it will be right and you can remove it from the fire.

Making greens pie

Take the same amount of fresh cheese we said before, and mash it well. Then, take 15-16 egg whites with about one quarter of a “vel” of good milk, a good amount of chard (that is, the largest part), a bit of marjoram, los of sage, a bit of mint, and plenty of parsley. All these greens should be chopped and stirred together well, pressing their juice out and passing it thoruhg the sieve. The juice is then mixed with the aforementioned things, adding half a pound of good lard or fresh butter; take a few parsley leaves, and just a bit of marjoram leaves, chopped as thin as possible with the knife. Grind them nicely in the mortar and mix them with the aforementioned things, adding half a ounce of white ginger and eight ounces of sugar. This mixture should be well mixed in a vase, which should be put over embers far away from the fire, stirring constantly with the spoon or other suitable instrument, until it starts to become soup. After this, prepare a thin dough in a pan, and fill it with the things, that is the filling, giving it low heat at the same time from below and above. And when it looks ready, get it out, and season with fine sugar and rose water. And such cake or green cake as you might call it, the greener it looks, the better it is, and will be appreciated.

Making pumpkin pie

Peel the pumpkins, and grate them as you would grate cheese, then boil them for a while in a good broth or milk. Take the same amount of fresh cheese we said in the previous chapters, adding a bit of good aged cheese together. Now take one pound of good pig bacon, or the breast of a female veal boiled for a long time and sliced with the knife. And if you prefer, you can replace these two things with butter or lard, adding half a pound of sugar, a pinch of ginger and cinnamon, one glass of milk and six eggs. And when the pumpkins are ready, take them out of the water, and press them through the sieve. Add sesame to make the mixture yellow. Then place them on top of a thin dough in a pan, with no dough on top, and heat up from above and below at the same time; and when it looks ready you will add on top, instead of the usual crust, some small lasagne. And when ready, season with nice sugar and rose water.

Making other pies

According to the times and the seasons you might prepare cakes with turnips, or with pears first cooked and then matured under the embers, or quinces chopped in quarters or pieces, peeled and washed; and they should be boiled in a good broth. And if you prefer you can also cook them in embers, which might be even better, always pressing them through the sieve and adding the rest of the stuff on top as we said for pumpkins.

Making migliaccio[1]

For migliaccio for 4-5 people mash one pound of the freshest cheese you can get, so much that it looks like it became milk again; then take 3-4 ounces of flour, 8-10 egg whites, and half a pound of sugar. Mix all these things together. And if you don't have flour, replace it with white bread crumbs, finely grated. The pan should be used without any dough or crust; put some lard at the bottom, just enough to have a layer one finger thick, then put the pan over embers until the lard is hot. Add the mixture inside, heating up at medium heat from below and above as we said for other cakes. And when ready take it out, and sprinkle with good sugar and rose water.

[1] In modern times, migliaccio is a sweet cake prepared in Naples, whose basic ingredients are semolina and ricotta. Not so different from what is explained here!

Making flower pie

Make sure the flowers are deprived of the seeds and the little stems, and mix them with all the ingredients we listed for the white cake. But keep in mind that this flower mixture must be thicker; this way the flowers will be incorporated better, and will be distributed evenly all around the cake.

Making “caprioli” pie[1]

Pluck some caprioli you find in vineyards, and boil them after chopping them thin with the knife; a similar thing you can do with red roses too. Now take some good fresh cheese and a piece of female veal’s breast well boiled, chopping everything together. And if you prefer it, instead of the breast you can use lard or butter, adding ginger, cinnamon and enough sugar. This mixture should go in a pan, with a crust both below and above. And when it is almost ready, puncture the crust above in many places, all over. When it finished cooking, sprinkle with sugar, and enough rose water for your needs.

[1] Capriolo means young deer in modern Italian, but from context here I believe it is a type of flower. I cannot find out which one though.

Making rice pie[1]

Wash the rice well, then cook it in milk or a nice fatty broth until well done; drain it over a board, let it dry. Now get some nice fresh cheese, stirred well, and add 10 egg whites, some sugar and rose water. If you like you can also add a bit of milk, enough to fit inside a tiny glass. After mixing all this together, cook it in the pan following the same instructions we said for the white cake. And keep in mind that this dish requires less cheese than the others.

[1] This is also done nowadays, either savoury or sweet depending on the occasion.

Making spelt pie

Clean the spelt well and cook it a good fatty broth, then take it out to dry as we said for rice. Now take one pound of fresh cheese, and half a pound of good aged cheese, mashing the first, while grating the other as it is common to do. Now take some pig bacon, or some female veal breast cooked until it almost dissolves and chopped, adding some good spices and sugar if you like, plus 15 eggs with a pinch of saffron. All these things should be mixed together and cooked with only a crust below. When it is almost ready, take some dry lasagne sheets and cover the top with a nice layer; cook for a while longer, and when it is done, sprinkle sugar and rose water.

Making pie with veal, roe deer, or young capon.

Take any of the aforementioned meats that you like, boiling it first, and making sure you get both a lean and a fatty part; remove all the nerves, chop it with the knife, and mash it in the mortar. Now take some fresh cheese, a piece of good aged cheese, parsley and marjoram, both chopped thin, ten or fifteen eggs, pig bacon or female veal breast well boiled, chopped

and season with pepper, ginger, cinnamon and saffron. Prepare this the same way we do with the white cake.

Making chestnut cake

Boil the chestnuts, and after grinding them a bit pass them through the sieve together with a bit of good milk, adding all the spices and things that we use for the filling and mixture of the spelt cake we described before, and make this yellow with saffron.

Making a common pie

Take some good cheese, eight eggs, and some good pig or veal fat, or butter, raisins, ginger, cinnamon, some grated bread, plus a bit of fatty broth made yellow with saffron. Prepare this the same way we said for the white cake.

Making fried millet custard[1]

Take the best millet, well washed and ground, until it is white and nice. Cook it in a good goat's milk, or cow's milk, and make sure it thickens and cooks thoroughly; now take a bit of flour and dissolve it in two egg whites. If you don't like eggs you can dissolve the flour in milk. After doing this, add this to the millet stirring well with a spoon, and boil it for a while longer, then add some good sugar, then stir again well. Move this mixture over a board, rolling it over and spreading it out as you would do for a cake filling, and let it cool down. And when you want to cut it for the table, you can make bigger or smaller slices, which you will then cook just enough to colour them a bit on top and on the bottom. Take them out slice by slice and place them on the dish, sprinkling some sugar and rose water. During Lent, use the almond milk instead of the real milk and fry this in good oil. Rice too can be prepared this way.

[1] If you remove the millet or rice, this is basically fried custard, which is traditionally prepared in my regions around Easter.

Making cherry pie[1]

Get the darkest cherries you can find, and after removing the cores mash them well in the mortar. Now chop some red roses with a knife, adding a piece of fresh cheese and a piece of aged cheese, plus spices, that is cinnamon, ginger, a pinch of pepper, and sugar; mix all this, then add 3 or 4 eggs depending on the amount you are making. Cook it over low fire in a pan with a crust on the bottom. When ready, season with sugar and rose water.

[1] Finally, something that can reasonably be called a dessert!...never mind.

Making mixed green pie

Boil the shrimp, and then take out all the good parts they have inside, and mash it around in the mortar; prepare some very thick almond milk, passing these almonds or the milk through the sieve with a bit of rose water, and if you don't have this, you can replace it with pea broth, or broken white chickpeas; now mash this with some raisins, 4-5 figs, adding more whole raisins, a bit of parsley, marjoram. Add chars, fried previously in good oil, chopped thin with the knife, and seasoned with ginger, cinnamon and sugar. This mixture or preparation needs to be mashed well in the mortar. And to make sure it thickens well as the

other pies, add a pinch of cornflour and stir it well inside the other stuff, or you can do the same with a few mashed pike eggs passed through the sieve, that make everything very thick quickly. Prepare the usual crusts both below and above as with other pies. When ready sprinkle sugar and rose water.

Making eel pie

Skin the eel and cut in pieces 2 fingers thick, boiling it for a short while, it should not be cooked too much. Prepare some almond milk, nice and white, passing the almonds with good agresto and rose water through the sieve, and make sure the milk comes out very thick. Now mash some raisins well with three or four dried figs. Then take some spinach, breaking them in small pieces with your hands, and fry them in oil, adding some chopped parsley, one ounce of whole raisins, one ounce of peeled pine nuts, ginger, cinnamon, pepper and saffron depending on the amount you are making. Prepare the final filling by mixing all this together with your hands, and make the bottom crust in the pan. Cover it with the filling, first by making one normal layer, and then another with only the eel; and proceed this way, making more layers until you run out of filling; finally, place the second crust on top, and cook very slowly, giving it fire both above and below. And when it is halfway cooked, take some agresto, rose water and sugar; punch many holes in the top crust so that these things will penetrate, sprinkle them, and cook for longer, since this should be well cooked.

Making pie with dates, almonds and other things

Get one pound of peeled almonds and grind them well, and with some good fatty fish broth, and a bit of rose water, pass it through a small sieve; now take half a pound of good and clean dates, and mash them with a bit of raisins and 4-5 dried figs. Then add two ounces of cooked rice. All of this should be ground nicely in the mortar. Now take some spinach, parsley and marjoram, and fry them in good oil, chopping with the knife; and with these herbs it will be good to add some fish fat or liver. Now take one and a half pound of pine nuts, peeled and kept whole, and you will need them to put on top of the pie filling when it is arranged. Now take one ounce of whole raisins, half a pound of sugar, cinnamon, ginger and a pinch of saffron, and mix them together. And to make the mixture thick enough add half an ounce of cornflour, or pike eggs as we said before. Prepare the crust below, and use lasagne sheets to create top layer as we said in the previous chapters; cook it over low heat, and when it looks ready sprinkle sugar and rose water. And keep in mind that this pie should be short.

Making white rice pie

Take one pound of peeled and ground almonds, a bit of rose water, and a bit of rice broth when it is almost cooked. Dissolve the almonds in the liquids, and press them through the sieve. Now take eight ounces of rice, and after cooking it grind it together with the almonds, adding two ounces of white yeast, and a quarter of ounce of cornflour, or some egg pikes passed through the sieve as we said before, then half an ounce of sugar, half an ounce of peeled and slightly ground pine nuts, but not ground all the way through. Mix everything together, and cook with a crust underneath. When it is halfway cooked, arrange some dry and thin lasagne sheet on top. When it is ready, sprinkle sugar and rose water. And keep in mind that this pie should not be overcooked.

Making chickpea pie

Cook one pound of red chickpeas, then mash them well, and using a bit of the cooking broth and rose water press them through a fine-holed sieve; now get one pound of peeled and white ground almonds, since we won't pass them through the sieve. Now mash this with two ounces of raisins, 2 or 3 dried figs, and one and a half ounce of broken pine nuts. Season with sugar, rose water, cinnamon and ginger. And to thicken the mixture add a bit of cornflour or eggs from the pike^[1] as we said before, and cook it on top of a crust; when it looks almost ready sprinkle sugar and rose water, and finish cooking on high heat. And keep in mind that this cake won't be very tall.

[1] Brrr. Let's stick to the cornflour!

Making pie with fish, fish livers or milk.

Boil the fish with these entrails, then take one pound of peas, boiled and mashed, and press them through the sieve. The same way, mash the fish, the livers and the milk, getting all the bones out, and if you have some trout or tench eggs it will be good to add them to this mash. Now take some parsley and marjoram, and after chopping them thin mash them in the same mortar, adding suga, ginger, enough cinnamon, and a bit of rose water to mix everything together; this pie should cook slowly and be well done, following the instructions we said many times before.

And keep in mind that all the pies we described before can be made of different colours in the same pan according to the season, or with different fillings, or with a different crust, dividing things in half or thirds or quarters as you prefer.

Making pie in soup

Prepare a thick dough as you use for quiches, as big as you like; take some chicken or pigeons, boiled a bit and first cut into four quarters, then each quarter cut in two-three pieces; take ground almonds, a few egg yolks, saffron, and a good fatty broth with a bit of agresto; let the dough dry out as you do for quiches, and to make sure the sides stay up fill it with flour, cover with more of the same dough, and cook until it stays up on its own. Then cut the cover away, remove the flour, and add the pieces of meat, arranging them nicely as for any other quiche. On top, you will sprinkle with the mixture made with the broth and the other things we said. And make sure it has a strong flavour of ginger and pepper. Finally the pie should be baked in the oven, or in the pan, as with other pies.

Making marzipan.

Peel the almonds carefully, and grind them as much as possible, since you should not use the sieve with them. And keep in mind that to get almonds that are whiter, tastier and sweeter in the mouth, you should soak them in fresh water for at least one day and one night, until they peel on their own with a gentle pressure of the fingers. When you grind them, wet them with a bit of rose water, to prevent them from releasing oil. And to get a good cake, add the same weight of the almonds in sugar, for instance one pound of each, or more or less according to your preference, plus 1-2 ounces of good rose water. Mix all these things together. Then you will take some wafers made with sugar, and kneaded with rose water; spread them out on the bottom of the pan, and put the filling we prepared before on top. Sprinkle more sugar. And when it is covered in sugar, bake it in the oven or over the fire

as with other pies, over low heat, being careful in not exaggerating with the heat and watching it often to prevent it from burning. Keep in mind that this marzipan cake should rather be short and thin, than tall and thick.

Making caliscioni[1]

Prepare the same filling as we said for marzipan, and prepare the dough, kneaded with sugar and rose water; and after rolling out the dough as when you make ravioli, fill them with the preparation, making them of the size you like. And if you have some sort of wooden shape with a pretty engraving, when you shape the pasta you can press it on top of the pieces, so they will be nicer to look at. Then cook them in a pan like marzipan, but be careful not to burn them.

[1] A highly regional dish, no translation for this word.

Making pastry[1]

Take some good parmesan, not too old, and a piece of some other fresh cheese. Grate them together, then add egg whites, raisins, cinnamon, ginger, and a pinch of saffron. Mix all these things together, until you get a thick mixture. Now get a thin dough, like the one used for lasagne, and tie the mixture in this dough, making several of them, large, medium or small as you prefer, making the yellow with saffron, or making them of other colours you like. Bake them in the oven, and make sure it is not too hot since they should not overcook.

[1] I looked up the name "ofella", and I get something similar to panettone.

Making eel pie

Get an eel skinned and clean, and if you want other fish similarly prepared. Cut pieces as big as two fingers; now get some good fat and milk from fish, chop it and put it over the fish pieces. Then take a bit of chopped mint and parsley, one ounce of raisins, cinnamon, ginger, pepper, and cloves. Mix together all these things. Now get the usual dough, already prepared and aged, and fill it with the mixture; sprinkle good oil on top and cook it. When it is almost ready, take two ounces of peeled and ground almonds, dissolved in agresto and passed through the sieve, put them over the dough and place another layer of dough on top, and season with saffron. And now leave it to be cooked for slightly longer, since it wants to be well cooked. And when it is the right time for eggs you can also add, together with the other things, two egg yolks dissolved in agresto, which will improve the flavour a lot.

Making dry pies with whole fish

Take the clean fish, and slice it on both sides around the back, and rub salt and good spices mixed together all around the fish an inside. Then get a slightly thick dough and tie the fish inside. Bake it in low heat until ready.

Making quince pies

Prepare the dough as for the other quiches, then get some quinces well washed and peeled. Take out the cores and all the other hard parts the quinces have in the middle, making in each one a big hole. Each hole should be filled with a good bone marrow of ox or veal, plus plenty of sugar and cinnamon. Arrange the quinces nicely over the dough, adding more bone

marrow inside and all around, together with the sugar and cinnamon, until all the corners of the quiche are covered. Cover with a lid, and cook the same way as the others.

Making almond junket[1] during Lent

Get peeled almonds and grind them well with a bit of rose water to prevent the oil from getting out. Add two ounces of sugar, two ounces of rose water, a quarter of a mug of a good fish broth which you should prepare either with pike or tench, since any other sea or fresh water fish won't be good here. And make sure the broth is not too salty, but it should have a good substance and the fish should be very fresh. All these things should be stirred together and passed through the sieve until the mixture is really thick, and nothing of the almonds will remain on the sieve. Leave the preparation overnight in a plate or other container, and the next morning you will find it curdled and looking like the junket made from real milk. If you want you can tie it all around with leaves or herbs as it is done for other junkets, or you can leave it on the plates and season it with sugar or pieces of star anise.

[1] I am not sure this word retained the original meaning; at the time it meant a fresh cheese similar to ricotta.

Making fake ricotta during Lent

Take one pound of peeled and ground almonds, as we said in the previous chapter, four ounces of sugar, one ounce of rose water, and half a glass of fish broth of the same type we said in the previous chapter. And after mixing all this together, pass it through a narrow sieve. This mixture then goes in the mould, and left in a cool area the evening for the next morning. Then you can turn the moulds upside down over plates or boards, and serve the ricotta, but don't forget sugar or star anise, which won't ruin this dish at all.

Preparing fake butter during Lent

As we said before, take one pound of peeled and almonds, and grind them well with one glass of rose water. Pass them through a fine-holed sieve; and to make sure it thickens well, add a bit of cornflour, or, even better, half a glass of pike broth plus four ounces of sugar and a pinch of saffron to make it yellow. Again make it sure it is sieved nicely. Then you can shape it as a stick of butter; leave it to solidify in a cold place, in the evening for the next morning.

Making a dish of hemp seed milk

Boil the seeds for a while until the hull of the seeds start to open, then grind it in the mortar with some peeled almonds. Dissolve in fresh water and press through the sieve. Then boil them for a while, adding a pinch of salt and enough sugar, and a bit of pepper if you like it; this should boil for as long as it takes you to say a Miserere[1]. Take a few slices of toasted bread, arrange them in a plate, wetting them with the milk made from the seeds while you do so; finally pour the remainder of the milk making sure the bread doesn't move around. Make another layer, repeating this two or three times. Finally season with good sweet spices, and serve.

[1] That's one way to count time without clocks, yes!

Making “diriola”.

Prepare the dough in the shape of a quiche, fill it well with flour so it stays in shape, and cook it in pan until it dries out a bit. Now get the flour out, and take a few egg yolks, milk, sugar, and cinnamon. Place this composition in the dough, cooking it like a cake, moving it around and stirring it often with the spoon. And when it starts to thicken and solidify, add a bit of rose water, and stir well with the spoon. When it is fully solidified it is ready. And keep in mind that it shouldn't cook too much, it should be a bit wobbly like “gioncata”.

Making this during Lent

Take almond milk with sugar, rose water, and cinnamon. And to make it thicken use a bit of cornflour, following the same instructions of the previous chapter.

Making cheese in small pans

Take a fatty cheese, not too old nor too salty, and chop it in square pieces of small slices, or as you prefer; make sure you have small pans suitable to this. On the bottom, add a bit of butter or fresh lard, place them to heat over the embers, and add the cheese pieces inside. When it looks tender enough, turn it over once, sprinkling sugar and cinnamon; serve it immediately, since it should be eaten after the meal and hot. The cheese can be prepared in a different, “toasted” way: toast bread slices over fire until they are slightly “roasted”, and arrange them in a cake pan. On top, arrange other cheese slices, slightly thinner than the bread; cover the pan with a heated lid, so the cheese will start to melt^[1]. Finally, sprinkle sugar, a pinch of cinnamon, and ginger.

[1] I like that one of the words he uses for “melting” resembles a modern word meaning “tearing up”.

Making armored turnips

Cook the turnips in embers, or boil them whole, then slice them as thick as the handle of the knife; take a good fat cheese and cut slices as big as the turnips, but thinner; take sugar, pepper and sweet spices mixed together. In a pan used for cakes, you will arrange the following things in order from the bottom: cheese slices to get a crust at the bottom, one layer of turnips seasoned with the spices we said before and plenty of fresh butter; continue like this with layers of turnips and cheese until the pan is full, and cook this for a quarter of an hour or a bit more, like a cake. And this preparation is served after other things.

Making golden dish

Get some slices of bread without the crust, and make sure they have a square shape. Toast them until they are well coloured on both sides. Now get some eggs stirred with plenty of sugar and some rose water; use this to soak the bread slices. Take the bread slices out quickly and fry them for a while in the pan with a bit of butter or lard, turning them upside down often to prevent burning. Then you will arrange them on a tray; and on top you will add rose water made yellow with saffron, and lots of sugar.

Making bird tart

Prepare a large tart crust, and make a hole in the bottom as large as your first, or bigger if you want. The “walls” around should be a bit taller than normal. Bake it in the oven filled with

flour. Then use the hole at the bottom to remove the flour. Now you should have prepared another smaller tart, full of food, well cooked and dried, of the same size of the hole in the larger crust. Place it in the hole, and in the empty crust you have around put some live birds, as many as you can fit; and these birds should be arranged the same way you want to serve them; and after serving the dish to your guests, you will remove the lid on top, and the little birds will fly away. And this will bring enjoyment and laughter to the table. Not to leave them empty handed, serve them the smaller tart. And as I said for one you can make more, as many as you like. The same you can do for a cake, arranging every piece in a pleasant way.

Chapter V - making fritters

My great-grandma used to say that even air is tasty when fried. This chapter will put her belief to the test!

Making elderflower fritters

Take some good fresh cheese, and a bit of good aged cheese, and make them well mashed and add a bit of flour and egg whites according to how many you want to make, plus a bit of milk and sugar; and toss these things well together, take them out of the mortar, add some elderflower to taste; and such flowers must not be broken nor mashed, creating a mixture that is not too light nor liquid, so that you can make round fritters with your hands or other shapes you want. Fry them in good pig fat or butter, or good oil; and serve them well hot.

Making fritters of egg whites, flour and fresh cheese.

You will follow the instructions of the previous chapter, but without adding milk nor elderflower.

Making fritters of curd, and curdled milk

Take the curd, and place it in a sieve so that all the whey or water has come out. And after this take the whey with a bit of flour, egg white, sugar and rose water (according to how much you want to make), and mix all this together. And this mixture should not be too thick, making patties one by one with a spoon, big or small as you prefer; and fry them in good fat or butter until they harden.

Making rice fritters[1]

Cook the rice well in milk, and taking it out to make fritters you will follow the same procedure as above, but don't add cheese nor other milk.

[1] These are really good, I can attest. Perhaps I just like rice a lot...

Making sage fritters[1]

Take a bit of flour, and dilute it with eggs and sugar, and with a bit of cinnamon and saffron to make it yellow; and take some whole sage leaves, and one by one you will toss it and cover it in this mixture, frying them in fat or good oil.

[1] I have found recipes for this in modern cooking blogs. I should try it once to get rid of all the leftover sage I normally end up with when I buy it.

Making apple fritters

Peel the apples, cut them in thin slices removing the seeds and cores they have in the middle, and fry these slices for a while in fat or oil; then take them out and dry them over a cutting board. Then covered in the same mixture as the previous chapter, you will fry them again in a good fat; and if we are during Lent you can fry them in oil, without adding fats or eggs.

Making bay leaves fritters

Fry the bay leaves in some good fat. Then take them out and dry them; and with the same mixture as we explained for the sage you will make these fritters too.

Making almond fritters

Take white almonds, well crushed, and with rose water and a bit of milk you will pass them with a masher. Then take some boiled chicken breast, and mash it separately from the almonds; then take a bit of flour, 2-3 egg whites, depending on how much you want to make, and mix all of this with some sugar; making fritters of the shape you prefer you will fry them in good fat or butter, but make sure they don't cook too much.

Making fritters during Lent

[This is just an empty chapter in the original book I found. Transcription mistake?]

Making elderflower fritters

Grind some almonds, or pine nuts if you prefer them, and pass them through a sieve together with rose water or pea broth; now get some white yeast and elderflower, and mix all this together using some flour. And keep in mind that this mixture should be prepared in the evening for the morning after, so the fritters will be spongier; in the morning you will add some sugar, and shape them however you prefer, round or otherwise; and fry them in good oil.

Making fritters with bitter greens

Get some flour and a bit of yeast, and mix them with the vegetables chopped thin, preparing them the evening for the next morning so that they will be spongier; in the morning add some dried figs chopped thin, and raisins. And this mixture should not be too tender. Now shape the fritters and after frying them in good oil sprinkle sugar or honey.

Making different rice fritters

Cook the rice well, and take it out to dry over a table; if you want you can mash it a bit, otherwise leave it whole. Now take some almonds, as much as you like, and after grinding them well sieve them with rose water or with the same broth where you cooked the rice. And the resulting almond milk should be quite thick. Now take some flour and sugar, and after mixing everything together you can make fritters in whatever shape you want, and fry them in good oil.

Making different apple fritters

Peel and clean the apples well, and boil them or cook them under some embers; after taking out the hard piece inside mash them well, add a bit of yeast, flour and sugar; prepare the fritters and fry them in good oil.

Making stuffed fig fritters

Take some almonds, and pine nuts depending on how much you need, grind them very well, and make sure they are white and clean. When grinding add also some dried figs and a bit of raisins. Then, take some parsley chopped thin, and a bit of whole raisins seasoned with good spices. And if the final mixture is too thick you can add a bit of rose water; now take some dried figs, opened from the bottom, that is from the part of the flower; and you will stuff them well with this mixture, frying them in good oil over low fire, and sprinkling a bit of flour on top.

Making fish fritters

Boil the fish, and mash its whitest flesh very well. Now take some thick almond milk, and a bit of flour mixed with sugar; dissolve this with rose water or other common water; then shape the fritters as you prefer, and fry in good oil.

Making fish-like fritters

Clean and peel the almonds until white; take the flesh of some nice fish, and mash it together with the almonds, adding at the same time some raisins with sugar, then some parsley and marjoram chopped thin with good spices and a pinch of saffron; and you should first prepare a thin dough similar to what you would use to make lasagne. Tie inside this dough smaller or larger pieces of your mixture, as you prefer.

Now get some wooden moulds, cut with the shape of fish of different types, and inside the moulds you will place the pieces of dough with the filling. These fritters should then be fried in good oil, or you can cook them dry in a pan like a cake; and when served they will look like fish.

Making different fish-like fritters

Grind the almonds, dissolve them in rose water and sugar; then take flour dissolved in common water, with some sugar; after mixing everything together prepare the fritters, and place them in the fish-shaped moulds as we said before. And keep in mind that this dish should be cooked dry in a pan like cakes.

Making ravioli-like fritters

Prepare a mixture similar to what we explained before, using almonds, flour, sugar, and prepare the fritters. Or to make similar fritters you can take some peeled almonds, pine nuts or walnuts, ground with raisins and dried figs; and if you add some fish broth it will be quite good, plus some parsley or marjoram chopped thin with good spices. Finally the mixture should be made yellow with saffron. Then shape the fritters and fry in good oil.

Making fritters with the shape of small pieces of pasta

Boil the rice well in water, grind a few almonds, and sieve them with a bit of rose water to get a thick milk. Mix the milk with the rice, then add sugar, and a sprinkle of cornflour (a tiny amount). Shape the fritters like pasta pieces and fry them in oil.

Making fritters filled with wind[1]

Take some flour, water, salt and sugar; dissolve the flour, creating a dough that should not be too hard. Roll it thin like for lasagna; and with the dough rolled thin over the table, using a round wooden mould or a glass cut small pieces and fry them in good oil. Make sure there is no hole anywhere on the piece: this way the fritters will inflate, and they will look filled, but will be empty.

[1] Ahahaha. You know that in Italian we say “fried air” to mean empty promises? This is probably the origin! However it looks similar to a Yorkshire pudding.

Making different fritters

Prepare a mixture the same way we said for the “gioncata fritters” chapter; take some fennel if it's in season, and if you want to use the whole fennel, otherwise you can take all the little branches or leaves one by one, or two by two if you'd like, tossing them well in the aforementioned batter. Then fry in good lard, or in a mixture of half oil and half butter.

Making big parsnips[1]

Clean them well, and remove their core, i.e. the hard part in the middle; boil them, and when cooked cover them well in flour and pan-fry them in some oil.

[1] Not sure why these are called “big”, perhaps he refers to the type of parsnips. Parsnips have been known for a long time in the Middle Ages, much longer than carrots, but are not used a lot in modern Italy.

Chapter VI - cooking eggs in many ways

In this chapter our Mastro lists a lot of different ways to prepare eggs. Most of these will sound very familiar! Also you can see that Mastro was not a fan of overcooked eggs: he keeps recommending you not to cook them too much.

Making omelette

Stir the eggs well, together with some water and a bit of milk to make it softer, then add some good grated cheese, and cook it in a good butter to make it fatter. And note that to be good it should not be turned too much, not cooked for long. And if you want it green, you will take the same things but add the juice of the herbs, such as chards, lots of parsley, borage, mint, marjoram, a smaller amount of sage, mashing and sieving their juice; then you will take the mashed herbs for “stamegna”. Or in another way, you will take the same herbs, chop them thin and fry them in butter or oil. Mixing them with the eggs and the same things as before you'll make the omelette and cook it as instructed, well hardened and not over-cooked.

Making fried eggs

Put a bit of oil in a pan, and heat it up, then break fresh eggs inside, cooking them over high heat, and while frying constantly throw the frying oil over the eggs with a spatula; as soon as they are coagulated and white they are ready, you don't want to cook them too much.

Making lost eggs[1]

Boil some water and break very fresh eggs inside, then take them out when they are still squishy. Season with sugar, rose water, some sweet spices, and a bit of orange or agresto; and if you like, together with these things you can add some good grated cheese and more sweet spices.

[1] This sounds like a sweet poached egg. Perhaps they were called “lost” because you “lose” the egg inside the large saucepan of boiling water?

Making lost eggs with milk or sweet wine

You will follow the same procedure as the previous chapter, except that this won't go well with cheese.

Making stuffed eggs

Boil eggs whole in water, until they are well solidified; when cooked cut them in half, take all the yolks out, being careful not to break the white. Of those yolks, you will mash a part with some raisins, a bit of good aged cheese and a bit of fresh cheese; add parsley, marjoram and mint chopped thin, adding one or two egg whites, depending on how much you want to make, with strong or sweet spices, as you like. This mixture, well tossed together, will be made yellow with saffron. Then place it inside the whites, frying them in hot oil; and to add a pleasant sauce, you will take some of the remaining egg yolks with raisins. Mash them together, then add agresto or sapa, that is cooked wine; you will transfer this to a casserole with a bit of ginger, cloves and lots of cinnamon, making this sauce cook a little. And when it's time to serve the eggs pour this sauce on top.

This is a quite “sophisticated” way to prepare eggs, including a nice sauce. Linguistically speaking it's interesting to see that sauces are generally referred to as “flavours”.

Interesting historical note about saffron: it arrived in Italy from the Persian area during the Middle Ages and became quickly widespread; the first known recipe of risotto is a simple risotto flavoured with saffron, which is still prepared and served nowadays as “Milano risotto”.

Making eggs over a grill

Stir two fresh eggs, then heat up an empty pan and place the stirred eggs inside, letting them run all over the pan until you get a paper-thin omelette. And when it looks cooked fold it from four sides so that it looks like a square. And that you can put over the grill, breaking as many eggs on top as you think will fit, giving it fire from above and below like a cake, then adding sugar and cinnamon; and when the new eggs look cooked, you will serve them inside their little square.

Eggs over eggs. We must go deeper...

I am pretty convinced that “fire from above and below” means to bake in the oven or similar equipment, since that's the only way you can get heat coming from all directions to the dish. Ovens existed, although they surely weren't sophisticated and must have been quite expensive to prepare for use in a common household.

Making skewered eggs

Heat up the skewer and spear the eggs from the long side or however you want, and turn them over the fire like roasted meat. When they look cooked, take them out and serve them.

Making pan-fried eggs

In a pan or copper pot add some good butter and let it heat up a bit. Prepare fresh egg yolks, divided from the white part if you prefer, and put them to cook in the pan, seasoned with sugar and cinnamon. Make sure they receive fire from below and above at the same time, and they should not be overcooked. Then you will season with orange juice or rose water.

Making eggs with warm ash

Place the fresh eggs inside warm ash, tossing them often with diligence, so that they will receive an equal amount of heat everywhere. And when they are “sweating” a lot, take them out and they will be ready.

Making eggs “dived” with the shell

Place the fresh eggs in cold water, and let them boil for the time required to say one Pater Noster or a bit more, and take them out.

Making omelette eggs Florence-style

Take fresh eggs and break them one by one over the pan with some very hot oil, and as soon as they touch the oil move them together with a spoon or spatula, making them as round as possible. Toss them around often when cooking, so they will get cooked on the outside, and won't be overcooked on the inside, but soon tender and soft.

Making “lost” eggs over embers

Take whole eggs and place them over live warm embers; hit them with a stick until you break them, and let them cook; and when they look ready get them out, and season with vinegar and parsley.

Making stuffed omelette eggs

Prepare the omelette eggs Florence-style as we said before, and make sure they are not overcooked. Make a hole on the side of each egg and slowly take all the yolk out. Now get some good grated cheese, fatty and aged, with a bit of mint and parsley, some raisins, a bit of pepper, plus 1-2 raw egg yolks, depending on how much you need; and after mixing all this together you will stuff the initial eggs using the new holes they have, and fry them again for a short while, turning them often. When they are ready, season with orange juice or agresto, and a pinch of ginger.

Making eggs with the shape of ravioli

Prepare a dough like for lasagna, not too thin nor too tender, and break the fresh eggs inside, sprinkling sugar, sweet spices and a pinch of salt. Then one by one you will tie these eggs inside the dough as you would do for ravioli, and boil them or fry them, as you prefer. But they will be tastier if fried; similarly you can prepare eggs that look like other types of pasta, adding the same spices as before, plus some agresto if you like it, and cooking the

pasta pieces like cake, or frying them. But make sure the eggs are not overcooked, because the egg has this nature: the longer you cook it the tougher it gets and it is worse.

Making fake eggs during Lent

Take some peeled white almonds, and grind them very well, wetting them with rose water to prevent oil from being released. Now dissolve them in a good broth made from fatty pike, well nutritious. Pass this through the sieve, creating a sort of milk; now get about half a pound of rice, more or less depending on how many portions you are preparing, clean and washed. Cook this in half of the almond milk you just made. In the meantime take three ounces of cornflour, the best and whitest you can get, and dissolve that in the remaining half of the almond milk until you cannot see any lump; then, boil the milk with cornflour together for about 7 minutes, stirring constantly with the spoon, being careful not to burn it. When this is done, take the rice with all the milks we have said before and sieve them by pressing strongly with your hands, since the thicker the mixture, the better it is. Don't forget to add plenty of sugar too. Now take all of part of this mixture, make it yellow with saffron at your discretion, and create round small balls that will resemble the egg yolks; now take two wooden moulds that look like eggs; and if you don't have such moulds, you can use instead two eggshells. By placing the white mixture on the bottom and all around the "egg yolks" you will create something that looks like eggs. And one by one you will place them on the tray, so that they will look like hardboiled eggs without their shells. Now if you dissolve a bit of that white mixture with rosewater and sugar, until well liquid, either warm or cold as you prefer, you can sprinkle it on top of the eggs, and it will look like milk. And if you prefer them dry, you can leave them without any liquid on top, but replace that with a sprinkle of fine sugar.

Chapter VII - preparing every type of fish

This was the hardest chapter to translate, as there are instructions for a large variety of different fish, much more than I am familiar with. For many names I had to resort to modern Italian dialects, or to the wisdom of Wikipedia. Some of them did not even have corresponding names in modern Italian, only Latin scientific ones, in which case I left the original names from the book.

In this final chapter I would like to note that generally every fish you want to boil or fry must be deprived of its scales and scraped externally; then you should slice it open and take the entrails out, and wash it well; and instead, a fish you want to roast should not be deprived of the scales nor scraped nor opened, except for salpa, which you need to open and clean of its entrails. And for the pike too you should remove, through the ear, a sort of hook where some entrails usually clings, which should be gone while cooking it.

The best way to prepare sturgeon fish

First take a sturgeon fish, which should be a bit mashed or chopped and not fresh; and if you want to make it perfect take some good white wine, or vinegar mixed with pure water in the same quantity, and plenty of salt; and first you will boil it for the same time as veal or beef, chopping it in large pieces as you prefer and depending on its size; however if for a better presentation you want to cook it whole, make sure to have suitably large containers so you

can cook it as God made it, since every fish is always better when whole, compared to chopped in pieces or any other way.

Seasoning for sturgeon fish

With sturgeon fish you can use a white sauce with lots of ginger, or some nice white “agliata”, or mustard, according to your time and appetite; and these seasonings should be prepared as explained before in their chapters.

Cooking umbrine fish

Umbrine should be prepared and cooked like sturgeon, except for the fact that it needs to be boiled for less time, because it cooks quickly, and you will prepare the same seasoning as for sturgeon.

Cooking snapper fish

Snapper should be boiled when very fresh, you should not add as much wine or vinegar as said before. But keep in mind that wine or vinegar dry out and solidify a fish and it will keep for longer, and also give it a better taste, because the gravy won't be simple salty water.

Cooking a big seabass

Boil it the same way we've already described; if it's smaller than 4-5 pounds pan-fry it in good oil, or roast it over the grill, remembering as we've already said that you should not rub the scales nor open it. This goes well with a brine made of vinegar, oil and plenty of salt; and with a small working branch or a rosemary twig, wet the fish with the brine many times, turning it over often on the grill, cooking it well and slowly, until ready. And keep in mind that any fish must be above all well cooked, because it is very wet by nature, and when it is not well done it will be unhealthy.

Cooking a large flying fish

Boil it as we said for the seabass; and if it's small, again, roast it or fry it instead. And when fried the green sauce goes well as seasoning, with a bit of garlic flavour, and plenty of ginger. Moreover you can season it with mustard if you like that.

Cooking sea bream

If the bream is big boil it and age it. If it's smaller fry it or roast it the usual way.

Cooking brill

Boil it, and since it is quite fragile and breaks easily cook it inside a basket, or tie it in advance on the table so that you can get it out whole when ready, without breaking it into pieces; and it should boil over very low heat. Keep in mind that in general, every fish should be boiled over low heat; you should use your discretion and experience and know every quality of fish, since there are some that are firmer and tougher, and others that are softer; and so they should be cooked more or less according to their need, but all of them should be boiled slowly, gently, over low fire, until well done.

Cooking sole

They should be fried, and seasoned with some ground salt, orange juice or agresto, and parsley chopped thin.

Cooking bonito

You should boil bonito fish as we said for sturgeon fish, with the same flavours and sauces. And since it is small you can fry it, but you cannot roast it because it lacks scales. And if you are frying large ones, slice them from the longest side, 1-2 fingers thick, and fry them over low heat. Then sprinkle plenty of orange juice with good strong spices, and a piece of chopped parsley if you like that.

Cooking common pandora

It will be good when boiled, roasted or fried for the big one, the small one however you like; its best flavour is the green sauce.

Cooking mullets

They should be diligently roasted, and they should not be sliced open but simply cleaned using the aforementioned brine; and if you want to store them for 8-10 days, you will place them one over the other, in a neat pile, on top of a dish or other container; and on top you will add plenty of brine so they are covered, and this way you can preserve them.

Cooking dreamfish

For its composition it should be fried, but take care of getting all the entrails out first, because it has plenty of them; and if you want to roast it when getting the entrails out, make sure you make the hole as small as possible.

Cooking mussels

Boil them, because given their composition and quality they are better this way than in any other way.

Cooking scorpionfish

When big it should be boiled, when small it should be fried.

Cooking red seabream[1]

Red seabream is better if fried or roasted than boiled.

[1] In Italian dialects, and in this book, this fish is called "big glasses".

Cooking "sorgo"[1]

Sorgo is good when fried or roasted however you like it.

[1] Too difficult to find out which fish it is meant here, since it happens to share a name with a grain (sorghum).

Cooking moray eel

First skin it or peel it in hot water, and throw away both the head and a piece of the tail. Fry it well, and season with green sauce with a strong garlic flavour.

Cooking mackerel

This should be fried, but they are also good when boiled with pepper and parsley.

Cooking gray mullet

This fish given its quality should be roasted, but if very large then boil it; and for the roasted preparation season with brine, for the boiled one use the white sauce.

Cooking European flounder

It will be good if boiled with a piece of parsley. It is also good when fried, with orange juice sprinkled on top.

Cooking “bestino” fish

Boil it in half wine or vinegar and half water, and as a sauce use a very strong “agliata” (garlic sauce), keeping in mind that any bestino is very vulgar, more suitable for farmers than gentlemen.

Cooking shark

Boil it the same way we’ve already explained in this chapter. Now take some very strong garlic sauce mixed with a piece of very strong mustard, and fry these two things together for a while; but no matter how well you will prepare it, it will never be very good, since it is rather bad by its own nature.

Cooking eel

A large eel should be roasted, skinning it and cleaning it well in advance, and spearing it with a skewer, and cooking it over low fire; even more than other fish it should be well cooked. And to preserve it well you can chop it in pieces as big as your hand or slightly larger. The small eel can be fried in oil; you can also boil both the large and the small one, adding some odorous herbs to the broth, such as parsley, sage and a few bay leaves, plus pepper and a bit of agresto.

Cooking sea walnut

They should be boiled similarly to fresh water calamari, and vinegar is its best flavour.

Cooking sea calamari

Boil them together with some fennel, and again season with vinegar.

Cooking oysters

The oysters are cooked over live embers, and they are ready when they open, and you can eat them. Alternatively if you want get them out of their hard shell, fry them in a bit of oil, and season with agresto and strong spices.

Cooking mahi-mahi (“lampuga”)

Lampuga must be fried with orange juice on top.

Cooking leerfish

It will be good if roasted, but first get out from the ear the hook and the intestines as we said before; its best seasoning is the green sauce; it is also quite good if boiled, in this case use the white sauce.

Cooking scallops[1]

Take a pan with nothing on it, and place the scallops there over fire, and they will open as soon as they are ready; so as soon as you notice them open up, add to the pan a bit of agresto, pepper, and parsley chopped thin, and toss this upside down a couple of times by shaking the pan. The same way they can be cooked over a hot iron board or over ember, and again they are ready when they open up. But keep in mind that, in order to be tastier, before being cooked they should be kept one day or one night in salted water, because this purges them of the sand they have inside.

[1] I am pretty sure he means scallops, but I am not 100% confident.

Cooking cod

Boil it, and use white mustard as a sauce.

Cooking lakewater pike

When big boil it, getting the entrails out first, but don't scrape the exterior part, because you will clean it of the scales after it is cooked; use white sauce or agliata or mustard. And if the pike is small fry it instead.

Cooking large trout

Clean them very well and chop them obliquely in pieces as large as your hand; place these pieces in order in the saucepan or other container where you are going to cook them, making sure the chopped parts are on top, and after you placed all of them sprinkle lots of salt on top. And when you have done this for all the amount you are going to cook, add water slowly, careful not to wash away the salt on top of the fish. Add a bit of vinegar, so that the broth covers the fish plus two fingers, and boil this, removing the foam you see on top. And when there is no longer any foam lower the heat almost to nothing, and boil it over the lowest heat you can make, until cooked. Now move it over a clean board to dry out, and season with sweet spices. And with this trout you can use white sauce with plenty of ginger. And if it is small, clean it well and slice it on the long side over the back on the two sides. Rub salt in the cuts, and add more salt inside the body. Leave it between two boards with a weight on top for 2-3 hours. After this step, cover the fish in flour and fry it well with good oil over low heat. And this way it will keep for 3-4 days should you wish to do so.

Cooking tench

There are three good ways. The first, when big, is boiled, and as a sauce you can prepare a thin broth of agresto, spices, and parsley chopped thin; plus a bit of the broth of the fish itself. The second way is "upside down"; being large, scrape it and clean it well. Slicing it from the head to the tail along the back you get all the entrails out, and take the bones out from both sides. Now take its eggs, fat and liver, and if you don't have any from the tench you can also use those of other fish. Now take some parsley and other nice odorous herbs, and chop them well with the livers and eggs and fat from the fish, adding some garlic

chopped in small pieces, a pinch of pepper, saffron, salt, a bit of oil. Do the same with some dried Damascus plums, or sour cherries or cherries or raisins with the same amount of peeled pine nuts; then again with 1-2 fresh egg yolks, if the time allows; and after mixing these things well together add them on top of the tench places upside down, that is above the skin, since the skin will be on the bottom. Now sew it with needle and thread, or tie it well all around with a string so that the filling stays inside. Place it over the grill with low heat, and it will take a lot of time to cook it. Prepare a brine with vinegar, oil, salt, saffron, pepper and a bit of sapa. And every time you turn it upside down, which you should do a few times, wet it with the brine. The third and last way, when your tench is small, clean it well, slice it open again along the back, sprinkle some salt and cover it both inside and outside with flour. Fry it in good oil. For the sauce, season with orange juice or agresto.

Cooking European perch

When big it should be boiled without the entrails, but don't scrape anything else out; since it is very fresh cook it in pure water, i.e. don't put any vinegar in the water. And when cooked you will clean the outside as we said for the pike. When small it should be scraped and fried in oil. Moreover it will be good when roasted and wet with brine.

Cooking lamprey

Soak it in a bit of water and scrape out the thick stuff it has on top, but don't scrape nor break the skin. Take out the tongue and teeth, and at the bottom of the stomach, where its sex is, drill a hole as small as your fingertip, and using a knife or a sharp wooden stick you will lift its entrails by the hole, so that you can grab them with your hand, covered with a tea towel and pull it out whole, without breaking it, since lamprey has nothing poisonous in its body except for this piece; and you will collect all its blood as it's needed for the sauce, and you will place half a nutmeg in its mouth. Place a clove in each hole around its head; now you will put the lamprey in a large casserole; add half a ounce of good oil with some agresto and some of your best white wine, making sure these liquids cover the whole fish plus a half. Sprinkle salt, and cook it over high fire like a cake. When it starts to cook slice open with a knife all the holes below the head, and squeeze it on top, so the blood gets out, and mixes with the rest; and for more comfort this process can be done before cooking the fish too. For the sauce prepare some almonds or hazelnuts; without peeling them toast them with warm ash, clean them and grind them with raisins, one slice of toasted bread, agresto, some sapa and more of the whine or other liqueurs we mentioned before, in which you cook the fish; now sieve everything, add ginger, a bit of cloves, lots of cinnamon, and all the blood you collected before cooking the fish; mix this with the aforementioned things, and you will put all this to boil together with the lamprey until wekk cooked. Then toss it around the place in the sauce and serve it.

Similarly you can cook it a different way, that is roasted in a skewer, keeping some vase below it while you turn it to collect the blood, the fat that while cooking drips from the lamprey, and that's the best part it has to offer. And for this you can prepare the same sauce we showed before, to season the lamprey; but for small ones, the "little lampreys", should be roasted over low fire on the grill, and seasoned with a sauce of orange juice and sapa. And if you don't have oranges, you can replace that with agresto with a bit of oil, salt and sweet spices. And while they roast you will wet them often with this sauce. When ready, cover them with the remaining sauce and serve them.

Cooking barbel

Prepare it however you like, but it is not regarded as a tasty fish and its eggs are dangerous to eat, especially in May.[1]

[1] Old-time superstitions are the best, really.

Cooking grayling

Grayling is an excellent fish, and prepare it however you like, since it is always good, but the best way is to fry it.

Cooking shrimps

Boil them in water and vinegar, in the same quantity, and lots of salt, and since they release a lot of water don't add too much yourself. Boil them strongly until they release their own foam by themselves. And to know when they are ready, pay attention to see when the broth will have overflowed the pot 2-3 times, as we said; then they will be good, but to be sure you can try one and you won't be fooled[1].

[1] Ahahaha.

Cooking stuffed shrimp

Cook them as we said in the previous chapter, and with the tip of a knife open them skillfully over the belly between the legs, and take out all the stuff they have in the belly, tail and in the legs. Place the tail and the leg to grind with almonds and some raisins; and if it is time for eggs add one egg yolk or more, depending on how much you are preparing, and the same for a piece of cheese, parsley and marjoram chopped thin. And you will stuff the shrimp with this mixture, frying them in good oil as slowly as possible; and if it were during Lent don't add neither eggs nor cheese. And if you want to stuff them in different ways, get some ground almonds with sugar and rose water, and stuff the legs, so you can have half the shrimp with one mixture, and the other half with the other.

Cooking sea lion[1]

Plug its mouth and the hole it has below the tail with cotton, so its good parts won't spill out, and put it dry in the oven to bake at low heat, or over a warm and clean fireplace, creating all around a circle of live embers, big enough not to have them touch each other. And we do this to make it cook better and faster. And turn it around often to prevent it from burning. Similarly, if you like, you can boil it in water and vinegar like a shrimp, boiling it for longer according to our description, because it's larger and tougher than shrimps. And the sauce should be vinegar.

[1] Where the hell did he find a sea lion in Italy remains a mystery.

Cooking "laguste"

Plug its holes as we said before and cook it like you would do with the sea lion.

Cooking sardines

Cook them as you like because there is no grace and it's not a remarkable fish.

Cooking "carpani"

Boil them if large, and if they are small you can also roast or fry them.

Cooking salmon

Salmon is a very nice fish and the best way is to boil it, but it will be good no matter the preparation.

Cooking nases

They should be fried over a low fire to prevent burning, and as seasoning use the green sauce or the green agresto.

Cooking atherins

Fry them, and as seasoning use the green sauce or the green agresto.

Cooking rubilio

Again fry them, and use the same sauce we said in the previous chapter.

Cooking garfish

The best way is fried, but boiled or roasted is nice too.

Cooking the ocellated wrasse

Boil it if big, and fry it if small, and use the mustard as seasoning.

Cooking Alosa agone

It is good if boiled with parsley, butter and spices; similarly it is good when fried, seasoned with orange juice or agresto.

Cooking sardines

The best way is to fry them, and you can roast them if you like, and season with orange juice or agresto mixed with a bit of oil.

Cooking octopus

Octopus is a vile and unremarkable fish; therefore cook it however you like it.

Cooking crabs

Prepare them as we said for shrimp in that chapter, and season with vinegar.

Cooking eel

We said enough about eels in another chapter, but to recall, when you skewer the eel pieces one by one, you should always place one sage or bay leaf between them, turning the skewer as slowly as possible; and wet it often with a brine prepared as we said before. For the other pieces, when it is almost ready, get some flour or a bit of grated bread, with cinnamon and salt mixed in. Toss this skillfully on the eel to create a crust all around it, which will give it a

nice taste. And when it is small you can boil it with water, wine, herbs, spices, as we said in the other chapter.

Cooking carp

Take the same brine we explained for other salty fish, and as soon as you have the fresh carp, submerge it in this brine and leave it there for two days. Then fry it in plenty of good oil, until well done; and this way you can preserve the carps for twenty days or even more than one month, preparing them, that is frying them again, for 2-3 times if needed; but note that the more you fry them, the more they lose their substance and are worse, and we cook them again only to preserve them for longer. When big boil it, while the small one should be fried, making sure you don't get pricked by the needle they have on the head, which is poisonous.

Cooking squid

The smaller the better; and after washing them prepare a stuffing, as we said for tench, or a better one if you know one; and fry them in good oil, seasoning them with orange juice and some good spices. The big one can be boiled after cutting it in pieces, like you would do for veal tripe or ox meat, with a bit of broth, and make sure it is well done. Season with parsley chopped thin with other spices. Again when it is a large one you can do this in another way, first washing it in some white wine, agresto and sapa, making sure you squeeze out with these things the black stuff it has inside, which will be good for the sauce; then take one ounce of almonds, toasted in ash, and grind them with a piece of toasted (or regular) bread. All these things should be dissolved in the squid mixture we said before; sieve all this, and boil the result, adding cinnamon, ginger and some cloves; after frying the squid in good oil, season with this sauce.

Making fish jelly

Get water, wine and vinegar, and to preserve it for longer add less water and more spices. And to know which fish is better and more nutritious for the jelly broth, I can tell you that tench and pike, especially when fat and big, are the best. And you should not scrape this fish; simply slice it open. It should also be really fresh, and cooked slowly in a bit of broth, just enough to cover it, to make sure this broth takes lots of flavour. And when the fish looks ready, take it out, skin it and set it aside, save for the skin that you will leave to boil in the broth for a bit longer. And when it looks like it has boiled enough, pour the broth carefully following the instructions we said for the meat jelly, so that it will be light and nice like everything else, keeping in mind that this should taste strongly of spices; and you can combine this broth with jelly made from different seawater fish, cooked separately, or from any other type of fish you like.

Making meat or fish jelly with two-three colours in a container

To make it white, use a very white vinegar or old agresto, and add plenty of water. Then take some gelding or goat's feet, skinned and well cleaned especially around the nails. Chop them diagonally, taking out the bones, that is the long bones in the leg, and after rinsing them well in cold water boil them in the aforementioned vinegar and water mixture, cooking it as slowly as possible. While cooking add some cleaned and chopped ginger, plus some grains of paradise^[1] that must be just broken; and when the feet look cooked, get them out and let the broth boil on its own for a while longer. Then prepare ten fresh egg whites (more

or less according to how much you want to prepare), following all the instructions for pouring, whitening and everything else we said in the chapter on meat jelly; then prepare your plates with the capons or chicken or anything else you want to add to the jelly, and on top of those you will pour your preparation in a nice serving, leaving the dishes in a cool area so that it will gelify; and once it gelifies, to make different colours you will cut out one quarter of the jelly in the plate, and you will put it on the fire in a container, until it liquefies, i.e. it becomes broth again. Then with saffron you can make it yellow, and when it cools down again you can put the broth again in the plate, but make sure it isn't hot when you do that. And after uniting the pieces again, as soon as it gelifies, cut out another quarter and make it red with cherries as we said for the color yellow; and then you will make the next quarter white, while to make it green you will take some wheat or barley leaf when it has not yet sprouted, and some parsley, all chopped and ground well together. Pour them the same way we said for the other colours. In a similar way you can make the white part orange, using carrots cooked on embers and peeled; then you will skillfully chop away with your knife the top orange part. You will put this part on the bottom of the container where you are pouring the jelly mixture, and for several times you will keep pouring there the hot white broth, until it takes the colour. After following this and having prepared all the colours we mentioned, you will add them to the dish in the same place; and if you want to prepare more colours then you can do so, since this way you can make as much as you'd like.

[1] Well I had never heard of this before, and I thought I knew all the spices out there.

Making jelly in a basket

Make sure you have the mixture good and ready, then take a new basket or tin. Inside, place in an orderly manner the chickens or any other meat you want to put in the jelly, as you would do on the plate. Then take another clean container, of good size, so that the first basket fits inside. Place the basket inside and pour the prepared mixture on top, leaving it in a cool area to solidify and gelify. And when it is solidifies, heat up your knife slightly, and shake it all around the basket to be able to get it out easily from the vase. Make sure you wrap the basket all around with a white cloth or in any other way, and therefore you will be able to carry the jelly around wherever you want; and the same way you can have jelly in a container if you prefer. And during Lent you can make it the same way, placing inside a whole fresh fish, which will look alive and will be pleasant for the eye.

How to recognize a good rasher[1]

Cut slices half a finger thick, and clean them well all around. Grill them, turning them around often and wetting them constantly with oil and vinegar mixed together, using the same amount of both; and in general they shouldn't cook or dry out too much, and as soon as it looks like the heat has penetrated every side, they will be ready; then season with more oil and vinegar and serve them. And to recognize when the rasher is nice, slice it, and if it looks well coloured and red, that's a good sign. But be careful that it doesn't look too old and it isn't smelly.

[1] I am not sure about this. He uses a word that looks a lot like the word for "back" in Italian, hence my translation of rashers, but this looks out of place in this chapter about fish. I couldn't find any fish with even a remotely similar name though, so it will remain a mystery.

Making sturgeon egg caviar and the cooking it

Get some bread slices, toasted just enough to colour them slightly. Cut the caviar in slices about the same size as the bread, but less thick, and place them on top of the bread. After placing the slices over the tip of a knife or other implement suited for the task, get them close to the fire just enough for the caviar to harden and sport a slightly coloured crust. Another way to cook them is to first clean it well in lukewarm water, so it won't be too salty; next, take some nice herbs chopped thin, grated white bread crumbs, a piece of onion chopped and sauteed for a while, a pinch of pepper. Adding one glass of water, mix all these things with the caviar and prepare one or more "omelettes", frying as you would do with eggs.

And to make caviar, get sturgeon eggs in the best season for sturgeons, and from the eggs remove all the nerves they have inside, rinsing them with good white vinegar, or good white wine. Let them dry over a table, then move them to a container and salt them just enough, stirring well with your hands, but carefully, so they won't break. After this make sure you get a white cloth sack, and put the caviar there for one day and one night, so the water the caviar has inside will get out. After this, move them to a long and narrow vase, pressing well with your hands. On the bottom of the vase, make three or four holes to let the humidity out, if it wasn't well dried beforehand; if you keep the vase covered, you might eat the caviar when you want.

Making good bluefin tuna

Get water with a bit of vinegar, and enough bran to remove the salt. Boil the tuna inside, cooking it moderately, but not too much. After it is ready, take it out, clean it and soak it in vinegar. And to recognize a good one, the fattiest the better. And you should take the insides of the tuna, and they should be hard and solid, not too soft.

Cooking tuna

Soak it in lukewarm water for six hours, changing the water two or three times, then boil it for a while, i.e. make it boil 2-3 times. Finally take it out and season it with vinegar.

Cooking salty eel

Skin the eel, chop it in pieces as large as your hand. Boil it in water for half a hour; then throw the water away and place it in cold water, boiling it for some more time until ready; finally take it out, and season with vinegar and parsley.[1]

[1] He clearly knew that acid flavours go well with fish, but he never discovered that lemon juice is much better than vinegar for the purpose...I feel sad for him :D Actually I don't see lemons mentioned anywhere, only orange juice from time to time. Perhaps they weren't so common back in his days.

Cooking salty trouts or other lake water salty fish

Soak it in lukewarm water for four or five hours, and boil it in water for around one hour, more or less according to the need and their size; and every salty fish can be prepared this way. Keep in mind that for all types and qualities of fish you want to get the bigger one, according to the saying that goes: old fish, and young meat.

Cooking bottarga[1]

Take mullet eggs, making sure they are fresh if you want to have the good ones in the right season. Make sure you don't ruin the thin film around the eggs. Add some fine-grained salt on top with discretion, not too much nor too little, and leave them with the salt for one day; then you leave them under pressure between two boards for one day and one night.

Afterwards, tie them close to smoke but far from the fire, so they won't feel the heat at all; and after they dry out, to preserve them, put them inside a wooden box or barrel, adding plenty of bran. And bottarga is commonly eaten raw. But if you want them cooked, warm them within ash, or over a clean and warm fireplace, turning them around until they are warm.

[1] This is something that is still occasionally eaten as a condiment for pasta. It is very traditional in some regions of Italy. I don't know of an English translation for the name.

Cooking trout like carps

Clean the trouts well and get the entrails out. Poke them all around in many places with your knife, prepare a brine with water and vinegar in the same quantity, adding plenty of salt. Leave the trouts inside the brine for at least half a day. Now move them to a board, and leave them under pressure for 3-4 hours. Fry them with plenty of good oil, until they are well cooked but not burned. And these trouts can be preserved for a month, frying them again if you like as you would do with carps.

Cooking pike or other big fish whole in three ways

Get a big fish, take the entrails out and wash it well. Tie around its head a wet cloth, covering one third of the fish, and this is to cover the area we should boil; then going to the tail, scrape that third of the fish, scraping over the tail from every side, as you do with a fish you want to fry. And start cooking from the tail, frying it carefully as not to ruin the rest. After that, take a small board of the same width and length as the fish, and tie the fish on top to prevent it from falling apart. Now you can boil the section of the head you tied at the beginning, fully tied, boiling it slowly so that the broth won't touch the other parts of the fish. After this part is cooked enough, untie it from the board so it won't fall apart; now place it whole over a grill, preparing below this a small bed of coals. The heat of the fire should not touch anything beside the section in the middle, that is not yet cooked. And to make sure the fire won't ruin the boiled or fried parts, you can take two large square stones, put them below the grill, and place the warming coals between them. While roasting, wet the middle part with the same brine we described in the chapters about roasting fish. When it looks ready, get it out and untie the cloth gently, preparing with your hands the boiled part as I showed for other fish; serve on a plate, using, if you like, three different sauces that are usually paired with boiled, fried and roasted fish.[1]

[1] Lots of work but I bet it looks impressive!

Conclusions

I hope this was an interesting read and helped shed a light into the culinary traditions of centuries ago.

Who knows, maybe the next time you have guests over you can impress them with the oldest recipe in your book!