



Italian Food Preservation

Tomato Passata, Giardiniera,
Sweet Onion Jam, and More Italian Food
Preservation Methods



Luca Cristello

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Onion Jam, and More Italian Food
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Introduction

Since ancient times, mankind has always needed to preserve food as long as possible to have supplies for the winter or to face times of famine. The Romans kept food in rudimentary iceboxes, caves that had been filled with ice and snow in the winter.

Then, in the 1800s, the French cook Nicolas Appert noticed that foods placed in glass jars with long necks, cooked, and then sealed with cork fixed with iron wires lasted longer. He thus invented canned preservation, a method still widely used today by both industry professionals and at home cooks.

Generally, food can deteriorate in two ways: through biological causes and through chemical-physical causes.

Micro-organisms, parasites (such as bacteria, insects and rodents), and enzymes naturally contained in food are all possible causes of biological deterioration. Chemical-physical deterioration can instead depend on factors such as oxygen, light, temperature, humidity, dehydration and mechanical stress.

In order to avoid health risks, it is necessary to eliminate the potential causes of alteration of the foods we consume, and in this way we prolong their duration.

It's easiest to avoid the development of microorganisms if there are no traces of contamination on food prior to preservation. This result is obtained by means of sterilization or pasteurization, one of the most classic Italian methods of food preservation.

Sterilization happens when we heat food at high temperatures (over 100° C or 212° F for at least 20 minutes) Pasteurization happens by heating food at temperatures below 100° C or 212° for variable time periods.

We can also preserve food by making its environment hostile to mold and bacteria by removing oxygen, enriching it with salt or sugar, or making it very acidic. Preserves in oil, pickled food, salted food, jams and canned syrups are all examples of environments that are hostile to micro-organisms and that Italian cooks use most often.

The simplest and most classic Italian method to preserve food is to extract water from a food or sterilize water in a food, prohibiting mold and bacteria from developing. This is achieved by exposing food to the sun, using a ventilated oven, or freezing.



Le Conserve

Italians call their dishes of preserved food *conserve*. They use several methods of preservation to counteract unwanted contamination. One method of preservation may have its own weaknesses. By using more than one type of defense, food deteriorates less.

Sott'Olio

An Italian example of this multi step preservation is the preservation in oil or *sott'olio*. This widespread preservation technique is designed to isolate food from contact with air.

In this way the proliferation of aerobic bacteria (microorganisms that foods develop from contribution of oxygen) is inhibited.

However, oil alone does not inhibit the development of anaerobic bacteria, including the famous botulinum, a bacterium that produces toxins that are particularly dangerous and poisonous to our body. In addition, the oil, opposed to salt and sugar, has no direct action on the water present in food, where bacteria develops.

Therefore, this technique is always associated with other methods of food preservation.

Foods in oil are often put through a transformation process via cooking or salting, and then sterilized with the high temperatures. Additionally, these techniques are often associated with refrigeration—at home, it is done simply by storing our foods in the refrigerator.

In *sott'olio*, it is extremely important that the food be completely immersed in the oil, to avoid air coming in contact with some part of the food, making the previous antibacterial processes ineffective. Even the air bubbles that can form inside the jars of food *sott'olio* could be harmful. This is why it is unwise to consume products that are found inside unsealed containers.

Preserving foods *sott'olio* is particularly common in Italy as an at-home method to preserve vegetables or fruit for a long time. The food, previously cooked, is immersed in the oil in order to create an oxygen-free

environment. It is necessary to use perfectly clean jars and close them tightly to proceed with the sterilization phase, in which the jars are wrapped in rags and immersed in boiling water.

The great advantage of food *sott'olio* is the ability to have the products available throughout the year. It offers a clear economic advantage because you don't have to buy produce out of season when these foods cost more.

On the other hand, food preserved *sott'olio* has a couple of drawbacks. The food may lose nutrients and vitamins through the preservation process. Being immersed in oil yields a high fat content. In fact, although the product can be drained from its preservation oil, it assimilates and absorbs a lot. For example, vegetables *sott'olio* may have a fat content of about 10 times higher than the fresh products!

Preservation *sott'olio* is typical of vegetables such as artichokes, mushrooms, peas, peppers, eggplants, olives etc; but it is also used for some fish. You likely have some tuna fish *sott'olio* in your pantry right now.

A final note, if you use a good olive oil, the end product will always taste better.

Chemical Preservation

You can preserve food by adding chemicals to the food, essentially killing bacteria or creating anaerobic environments. When we say chemical, we don't necessarily mean artificial preservatives. Chemicals could be natural substances that simply have a chemical effect in preserving food.

Salt, for this purpose, is a chemical substance, as is sugar. Even oil is a chemical substance (a fat), and since it does not mix with water, it prevents bacteria from breathing. *Editor's Note: Again, beware that oil alone does not prevent anaerobic contamination. When preparing foods sott'olio always combine preservation methods.*

Among the chemicals, we have alcohol and vinegar, which completely destroy bacteria. These products alter the taste of food and, in some cases, even the chemical content, but because they are chemical substances that actively destroy bacteria, they are among the best preservation methods. Some natural

substances, such as the acid present in tomatoes or those present in lemon (citric acid), have the same effect. They kill bacteria directly, effectively functioning as disinfectants.

Of course, storage with chemicals also includes a category of additives which are preservatives, generally synthetic (apart from citric acid). These substances do not alter the taste of food, but they have an active effect on the bacteria and they don't alter the substances naturally present in food. Because of these benefits, most food industry professionals producing preserved food use these types of chemical substances.

Fermentation

Finally, fermentation is a preservation method in which bacteria are not killed directly, but they push themselves to self destruction. An example is salami, yogurt, wine and beer.

When it comes to altering the original substance of a food, this is arguably the most invasive method of preservation.

In brief, fuel is offered up to bacteria or fungi in a food. They take advantage of this substance, usually sugar, to create another substance, often lactic acid. In the case of beer or wine, they create alcohol. This reaction continues until the alcohol or the lactic acid completely overwhelms the bacteria or fungi, killing it off.

Pros and Cons of Different Preservation Techniques

So all traditional techniques have a disadvantage: to produce the desired antimicrobial effects they must be used very intensively.

Preserved foods often take on sensory characteristics that are very different from those of fresh, raw foods like being very salty, acidic, oily or dry. This can have negative effects on their nutritional properties. This is why food technologists continue to develop other preservation systems that have less impact on sensory, nutritional, and health characteristics.

Sterilizing Empty Glass Jars

It is always a good idea to sterilize glass jars in order to prevent molds or bacteria growth. In this book, we often direct you to pour food into sterilized, empty glass jars. You can use the method below to sterilize your jars at home.

Boil the glass jars and their stoppers in plenty of water, let them cool down, and, without touching them with your hands, drain and let them dry in the air, upside down on a clean canvas. To help, you can purchase a car of canning tongs, designed to grip glass jars from the boiling water.

Pasteurizing

Ocassionally in the recipes to follow, we ask you to pasteurize your preserved food. Usually this happens at the end of the recipe, after you've put food into sterilized jars and closed them with a lid. The pasteurizing works simply. Just put the closed jars in a pot of water and bring to a boil. If necessary, we'll instruct you to reduce to a simmer and cook for another period of time. This boiling helps to preserve the food and create a vacuum seal for the lid on the jar.

Disclaimer: Preserving foods is a tricky business. In this book, we've given you a recipe for preparing over 15 classic, preserved Italian foods. However, since you're preserving at home, be vigilant! Any number of things can go wrong during the preservation process that can ruin your preservation technique. When it comes time to eat the food, inspect it carefully and, when in doubt, throw it out.



Dried tomatoes in oil

Dried tomatoes in oil are a popular preserve in Calabria and Puglia. The preparation consists of slow drying tomatoes in the sun or in the oven, where they acquire a strong flavor.

Dried tomatoes in oil are prepared at the end of the summer and can be enjoyed throughout the winter. They are an excellent appetizer, like when served with slices of homemade bread, but can also be used to flavor a first course or to enrich entree recipes.

Ingredients

- San Marzano tomatoes 2 kg (about 4.5 pounds)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt
- Sugar

How to prepare dried tomatoes in oil

1. Wash and cut the tomatoes in half lengthwise. Arrange them neatly on a dripping pan covered with baking paper and sprinkle with a little salt, sugar and oil.
2. Leave them in a static oven at 120 C or 250 F for 8-10 hours. A good sized dripping pan can hold approximately 1 kg or 2 pounds of tomatoes. You can bake the two saucepans at the same time taking care to alternate them during the cooking of the tomatoes.
3. Check from time to time and remove from the oven those that will dry out before the others.
4. Once dried, remove them from the oven and let them cool on a wire rack. While the tomatoes are cooling, sanitize the jars and lids.

5. Pour the dried tomatoes into the jars, one layer at a time, adding a little extra-virgin olive oil and giving each layer a firm press. Continue with the layers and finally cover them completely with oil, taking care to leave 2 cm of space from the lid.
6. In case air bubbles are formed inside, move the jar slightly to coax them out. The oil must be distributed evenly in the jar.
7. At this point, boil the jars to pasteurize them. If you use jars with screw caps, screw them tight but do not tighten too much, as they will tighten naturally during the pasteurization.
8. Once the jars have cooled, check to see if the vacuum seal has formed correctly: you can press the center of the lid and, if you do not hear a "click-clack", you should be in the clear. If, after the reboiling, you should notice the formation of small bubbles of air, when the tin is still hot, gently tap it on a surface, so as to make the bubbles rise on the surface and then disappear naturally.

Dried tomatoes in oil can be stored for about 3 months, provided that the vacuum has been done correctly and the jars are stored in a cool and dry place, away from sources of light and heat. It is advisable to wait at least 1 week before consuming the tomatoes. Once each jar is opened, keep it refrigerated and consume within 3-4 days at most, taking care to add extra virgin olive oil after each use to keep the tomatoes covered.

Extra Advice

You can flavor the dried tomatoes in oil by putting them in a jar with some mint the mint or basil.

The traditional preparation of dried tomatoes in oil provides for drying in the sun; if you have time and space you can let them dry in the sun (they will take 7-10 days), turning them occasionally and taking care to cover them with a cloth to keep them away from dust and insects.



Giardiniera in vinegar

Giardiniera is one of the best known and most classic preserves of the Italian gastronomic tradition. This vinegar preparation is very rich and tasty because it takes advantage of the flavors and aromas of the vegetables that grow so well in Italy. There, depending on the season, you can find Giardiniera prepared with different vegetables. The result is always tasty and delicate. One bite will explain the name of the dish, translated to “the gardener” in English. And, the different vegetables in the jar produce a beautiful, spring time color.

Ingredients

- White vinegar 1.5 L
- Carrots 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Fresh spring onion 200 g (7 ounces)
- Red peppers 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Green peppers 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Yellow peppers 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Sugar 30 g (1 ounce)
- Cauliflower florets 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Green beans 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Celery 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Cucumber 300 g (10.5 ounces)
- Water 1.5 L
- Coarse salt 30 g (1 ounce)

- Laurel 3 leaves
- Black peppercorns 10
- Juniper berries 4

How to prepare pickled Giardiniera

1. Put a large pot on the stove with the water and vinegar. Add the bay leaves, salt, sugar, black peppercorns and juniper berries. Bring to a boil.
2. Wash all the vegetables under running fresh water to clean them.
3. Cut the celery into chunks 1 cm thick. Remove the roots of the onions and cut them in half. Clean the beans, removing the ends. Peel the carrots.
4. Cut the carrots and cucumbers in to .5 cm disks. If you have a mandolin, use a serrated mandolin blade for a better effect.
5. Remove the innards and seeds from the peppers. Cut them into 2 cm strips.
6. Remove the outer leaves of the cauliflower with a small knife, cut the core, and detach the buds by cutting them off from the trunk.
7. When the water is boiling, add the carrots and cauliflower, and let them cook for 3 minutes.
8. Next, add the green beans, onion, celery, peppers, and cucumbers. Cook another 4 minutes.
9. Once the vegetables are ready, remove the pan from the heat and drain well, keeping the cooking liquid in a bowl.
10. Let the vegetables cool in a steel pan and, in the meantime, sanitize the jars and lids.
11. When the vegetables have completely cooled, pack them in jars, trying to arrange them neatly.

12. Filter the cooking liquid that you have kept aside and pour it into the jars, covering the vegetables but taking care to stop at 1 cm from the edge of the can. Close the jars.
13. Now, it's time to pasteurize the food in the jars. If you use jars with screw caps, screw them tight but do not tighten too much, as they will tighten naturally during the pasteurization.
14. Once the jars have cooled, check to see if the vacuum seal has formed correctly: you can press the center of the lid and, if you do not hear a "click-clack", you should be in the clear. If, after the reboiling, you should notice the formation of small bubbles of air, when the tin is still hot, gently tap it on a surface, so as to make the bubbles rise on the surface and then disappear naturally.
15. No need to wait. Your Giardiniera is ready to be tasted!



Peppers in oil

Peppers in oil are usually prepared in September along with all the other summer vegetables so you can enjoy them throughout the winter. This is a typical Sicilian recipe, perfect to accompany cheese or meat.

Ingredients

- Fleshy Peppers 1 kg (about 2 pounds)
- 500 ml of white vinegar
- 250 ml of evosal white wine

How to prepare peppers in oil

1. Rinse the peppers, dry them and toast them directly on the flame or in the oven. Remove the charred skin that covers them, remove the core, seeds and filaments then cut into large slices.
2. In a saucepan, add the wine, vinegar and a tablespoon of salt. Bring to a boil. Boil the peppers for about 4 minutes, drain and place them on a cloth so that they dry without overlapping.
3. Place the peppers in new sterilized jars while they're still hot, pressing them well to drain excess boiling liquid.
4. Add the hot oil (60 C or 140 F) to cover them completely, taking care not to leave air bubbles.

5. Wait about 12 hours, and then check to see if the oil level in the jar has gone down. If it has, add some more. It is important that the oil covers the peppers perfectly.
6. Close the jars tightly and make sure the lid forms a vacuum.
7. Place them in a cool and dark place for up to 3 months.



Zucchini in oil

In summer, zucchini abound. One way to introduce their flavor to your table all winter tables is by preserving them in oil. This preservation avoids wasting extra zucchini during the summer.

The preparation is simple, and takes just a few hours.

Ingredients

- Zucchini 1 kg (about two pounds)
- Extra virgin olive oil 750 ml
- Water 500 ml of natural
- White wine vinegar 300 ml
- Coarse salt 2 tablespoons
- Garlic 2 cloves
- peppercorns, fresh mint, salt and a pepper

How to prepare zucchini in oil

1. Wash the zucchini and cut into strips or rounds. Place them in a colander and sprinkle with coarse salt. Place a weighted plate on top of them and let them rest for two or three hours, so they can drain excess water. Then, rinse them and lay them to dry on a clean cotton cloth.

2. In a saucepan, pour the water and vinegar, add a pinch of salt and boil. Soak the zucchini in this liquid for 3 or 4 minutes.
3. Drain them with a skimmer and let them dry and cool, placing them on another dishcloth.
4. Wash the mint leaves and blanch these together with garlic.
5. When the zucchini are dry, layer them in glass jars, seasoning each layer with a little chopped garlic, the pepper and some mint leaves. Leave a finger space between the lid and the top layer of zucchini.
6. Press the zucchini well to avoid air bubbles and pour the oil over it completely covering the contents.
7. Close the jars and place them in the pantry, allowing a few months to pass before reopening them to let the summer smell out again.



Aubergines in oil

Aubergine preparation varies from family to family. Some cut them and grill them, others slice them whole, others prepare them raw, some add oregano. Consequently, the amount of garlic and hot peppers in this recipe will vary according to personal taste. This recipe yields 3 medium jars. Experiment and adjust garlic and pepper to your personal taste.

Ingredients

- Aubergines 2 kg (about 4.5 pounds)
- Vinegar 450 ml
- Water 350 ml
- Garlic 6 cloves
- 3 Hot peppers
- Coarse salt
- Olive oil

How to prepare aubergines in oil

1. Peel and peel the aubergines, then cut into slices about a half cm thick.
2. Overlap the aubergines in a bowl, and add some coarse salt to each layer. Cover with plenty of coarse salt.
3. Place a flat plate on them with a pot filled with water on top to weigh it down.
4. After 2 hours, lift the weight and stir the aubergines, then cover again with the plate and the weight so as to let all the water out. Remove the water from the vegetables and squeeze the aubergines. Boil water and vinegar in a pot.

5. Boil the aubergines in water and vinegar two times for about a minute each time.
6. Drain them in a colander, then put the aubergines to dry on a clean cloth and dab with absorbent paper. Once cooled, cut the aubergines into fillets.
7. Sterilize the glass jars.
8. Chop the garlic and hot peppers.
9. In a jar, place a first layer of aubergine fillets, and then add a few pieces of hot pepper and garlic. Cover with oil.
10. Continue adding the aubergines, alternating them with oil, chilli pepper and garlic pressing to avoid forming air bubbles inside the jar.
11. Add some pieces of garlic and the chilli pepper and cover the aubergines with the oil until everything is well covered.
12. Close the aubergine jars in oil and leave at least a week in the pantry before consuming them.

Once the jar is opened, keep it fresh, taking care to always cover the surface with oil as you eat them.



Olives in oil

Homemade olives in oil are a simple, traditional preserve for the winter. This recipe is still used widely today as one of grandma's classics.

Ingredients

- Fresh, meaty olives 2 kg (or about 4.5 pounds)

For the Rinses:

- water
- salt

For the Conservation:

- Extra Virgin Olive Oil 2L
- 2 Chili Peppers
- 4-5 cloves of garlic
- A few bay leaves
- Oregano
- Salt

How to prepare homemade olives in oil

1. Start by putting the olives on a cutting board and take a firm tap with a meat tenderizer. You will see that the pulp will

come off quite easily from the core. If needed, you can help them along with a small knife.

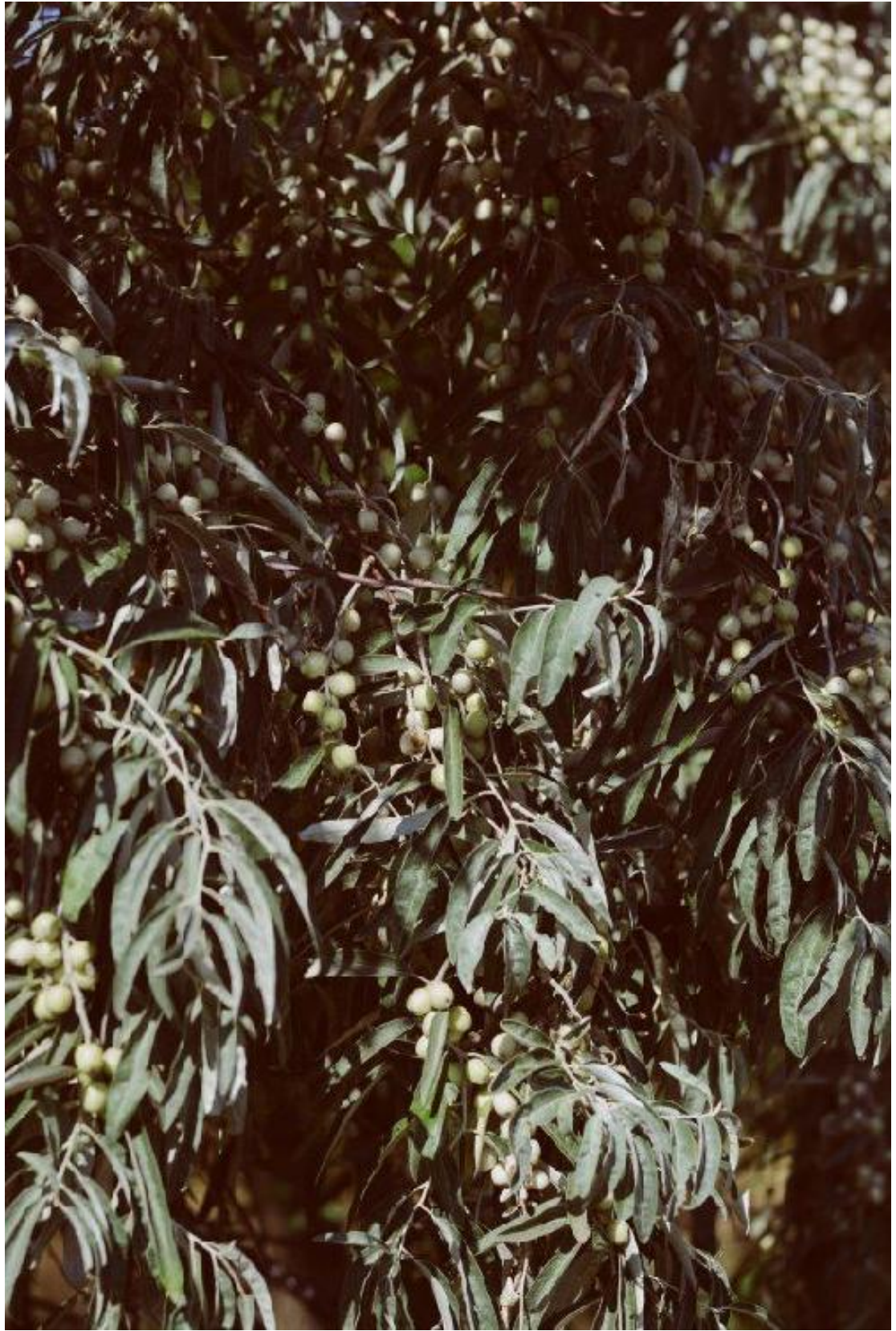
2. Then, fill a bowl of water and salt, using 1 tablespoon of salt per liter of water.

Immerse the olives. If they are not all in the water, you can place a weight so that they are all submerged.

3. Keep the olives in the water and salt, doing 2 rinses with a change of water a day.
4. Keep this up for at least a week, at which point you should taste the olives to verify that they have lost the bitterness and that they are not too salty.
5. Drain the olives well and transfer them to a cloth. Spread them out and let them dry for a day in the sun. If the weather's awful, you can cheat and use a hair dryer.
6. When the olives are dry, you can start filling the jars. Put the olives in sterilized glass jars, add salt and add the flavors you have chosen, such as garlic, chilli pepper or oregano.
7. Fill with oil, trying to let out any air bubbles. Do the same with the other ingredients, continuing to alternate them.
8. Apply light pressure on the olives, being sure to let the air out and finish off the jar about 1cm from the lid. Remember, the oil must completely cover the olives.
9. Close the jars and leave the olives overnight to rest.
10. The next day check if there are still air bubbles. Then, close the jars and sterilize them.
11. Check to make sure the jars have vacuum sealed, let them cool, and store in the pantry away from heat and light.

12. Your olives in oil are ready! Most people prefer to wait yet another week before consuming them.

Once the olive jar has been opened, keep it in the fridge and finish it within 2-3 weeks. The sealed, well-preserved jars keep for 6-7 months.



Homemade pesto sauce

Pesto was born in Genova. Traditionally, it must be prepared using mortar and pestle, but nowadays almost everyone uses more advanced tools like a mixer. Pesto keeps in the refrigerator for several days, if placed in a jar and covered completely with oil.

Ingredients

- Fresh basil leaves 100 g (3.5 ounces)
- Pine nuts 50 g (1.75 ounces)
- Parmesan Cheese 75 g (2.5 ounces)
- Coarse salt
- 2 cloves of garlic
- Grated pecorino 30 g (1 ounce)
- Extra virgin olive oil 200 g (7 ounces)

How to prepare homemade pesto

The modern method

1. Put pine nuts and sliced garlic into the food processor and pulse a 5-10 times.

2. Add the basil, and chop again. Add the cheese. Chop again.
3. As you chop, stop the mixer frequently and scrape the sides to obtain a homogeneous and fairly fine mince.
4. Pour the mixture into a bowl, add salt and olive oil, and stir until a fairly thick sauce is obtained. Do not pour the oil in the blender to facilitate the mincing, as you would get a smoothie and not the pesto.

The traditional method

1. Chop the basil together with the cheese using a mezzaluna
2. Put the pine nuts and the sliced garlic into the mortar and start pounding.
3. Slowly, add the basil leaves and a little coarse salt and continue to pound until you get a homogeneous mixture.
4. Combine this mixture with the cheese in a bowl and add olive oil, stirring until a fairly thick sauce is obtained.
5. When seasoning the pasta, dilute the pesto with a few tablespoons of cooking water and serve with grated Parmesan.



Natural Borlotti beans

Ingredients

- Borlotti beans 1350 g (3 pounds)
- Water
- Coarse salt

How to prepare Borlotti beans

1. Shell the beans, rinse and drain.
2. Put the beans in a large saucepan, cover with water and salt.
You should have about twice as much water as beans.
3. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer until the beans are cooked to be slightly tender or about 40 minutes.
4. Remove beans from heat and drain the cooking water into a bowl.
5. Fill sterilized jars with the beans, leaving a finger space from the lid. Fill the jars with the cooking water (you can filter, but it is not necessary) and close tightly.
6. Pasteurize the jarred beans in boiling water.
7. Let the jars cool in the water. Once cold, remove them from the pot, dry them well and put them in the pantry, in a dark and dry place.
8. Keep for up to six months.

When it's time to eat them, drain the liquid, rinse them quickly and serve as you like.



Peaches in syrup

Summer gives us many colorful and fresh fruits, and there's nothing better than eating your fill. But what to do if you have excess? One idea is to continue the ancient art handed down by generations of preparing preserves, jams and syrups.

Here is a recipe for a syrup with a delicate, summer fruit. We chose the peach, with a yellow pulp, firm and fragrant, ideal for this type of preparation. It pairs wonderfully with ice cream, chocolate creams, some crumbled amaretti, and peach cheesecake!

Ingredients

- Percoche Peaches 1 kg (2 pounds)
- Sugar 200 g (7 ounces)
- Water 500 g

How to prepare peaches in syrup

1. Start by washing the peaches.
2. Take a pan with high sides, fill it with water and bring to a boil.
Blanch the peaches for about 2 minutes: they must be slightly softened but still firm.
3. With the help of a skimmer, transfer them to a colander. Rinse them under running water to cool them.

4. Use a small knife to remove the skin and the inner core. Divide them in half.
5. Store the peaches in previously sterilized glass jars, careful to leave about two centimeters from the top of the jar.
6. For the syrup, pour water and sugar into a high-edged pan. Heat over low heat.
7. Stir with a spatula to completely dissolve the sugar, then boil for 2-3 minutes.
8. Add the syrup to the peaches in the jars until it completely covers the fruit, but stopping at 1 cm from top of the jar.
9. Push down on the peaches gently to make sure there are no air bubbles trapped beneath the syrup.
10. Close the cans and pasteurize.
11. Once the jars have cooled, check to make sure the jars have vacuum sealed.
12. Your peaches in syrup are ready to be tasted!

Peaches in syrup can be kept for up to 3 months, provided the vacuum has been carried out correctly and you have taken care to keep the jars in a cool, dry place away from direct light. After preparing peaches in syrup, we advise waiting 1 month before consuming them so they get a chance to really absorb the flavor. Once opened, each jar must be kept in the refrigerator and consumed within 3-4 days at most.

Advice

For this recipe we used peaches percoche, which are ideal for the production of syrup, but you can also use white-fleshed peaches such as spaccarelle.

The tenderness of peaches in syrup is a matter of personal preference. Note that cooking time may vary according to the variety, size and ripeness. Check with a fork to make sure you have the tenderness you would like.



Fig mustard

Fig mustard is one of the most tasty preserves to make for wintertime. It's a fabulous mustard for cheese, perfect for a nice entrée.

This recipe is of particular worth to anyone who loves sweet and sour foods. Combine with a nice pecorino and enter paradise.

For half a kilo (or one pound) of figs, I find that a nice teaspoon full of mustard is perfect, but experiment to suit your own preferences.

Ingredients

- Figs 500 g (1 pound)
- Sugar 250 g (9 ounces)
- White wine 50 mL
- 1 teaspoon of mustard

How to prepare Fig Mustard

1. Peel the figs and place them in a bowl. Then, add sugar, wine and mustard.
2. Mix the ingredients and transfer everything into a saucepan.
3. Cook for 30 minutes. 5 minutes before the end of cooking, use an immersion blender
4. After blending, cook for a few additional minutes and turn off the heat.
5. Pour the mustard into previously sterilized glass jar. Your fig mustard is ready.





Tomato Passata

Homemade tomato sauce is one of the most widespread and appreciated Italian preserves. *Passata*, as it's called in Italy, serves as the base to many different unique sauces. From pizzas to ragus, consider it the blank canvas of Italian cooking.

Ingredients

- Ripe San Marzano tomatoes 5 kg (11 pounds)
- Fresh Basil

How to prepare passata

1. Wash and sterilize the cans.
2. Remove the petioles from the tomatoes, wash them thoroughly, dry them, and then cut them into quarters, removing the seeds. Chop into cubes.
3. Cook the tomato in a saucepan over low heat for about twenty minutes until they are very soft.
4. Pass them through a vegetable mill into a large bowl.
5. Dump the milled tomatoes back in the saucepan over low heat and reduce to your desired consistency. It should be thick but viscous.
6. With the help of a funnel, pour in the sterilized jars, adding a few leaves of basil. Be sure to leave some space from the lid of the jar.
7. Close the jars, wrap them in cloth, and place them in a large pot of water. Bring to a boil and then simmer for 30 minutes.
8. Let the jars cool completely before removing them from the pot.

Your homemade tomato sauce is ready to be stored in the pantry.



Maraschino Cherries

Cherries in spirits are an old-fashioned preserve. They're forgotten by many, but a truly exquisite treat. With this method, the cherries will be preserved much longer than with a classic jam, allowing you to enjoy the delights of these fruits until the following year! Once ready, the cherries in spirits are excellent eaten alone (they are perfect after dinner for one of those cold winter evenings), or for preparing chocolates or to garnish cakes and desserts. In fact, why not even with a nice cup of ice cream. The preparation is really simple!

Ingredients

- Cherries 1 kg (2 pounds)
- Maraschino 500 mL
- Sugar 200 g (7 ounces)
- Water 350 mL
- 3 cinnamon sticks

How to prepare Maraschino Cherries

1. Prepare a simple syrup by dissolving the sugar in the water over low heat. Let it cool down.
2. Wash the cherries well under running water. Dry them thoroughly.
3. Remove the stem and pit. You can cut them in half you desire.
4. Transfer the cherries into sterilized jars. Add 1 cinnamon stick in each and divide the cold syrup between the 3 jars. Fill all the space left in the jars with Maraschino.

The cherries in spirits are ready. Let them rest in the pantry for at least 3 months before tasting and consume them within 1 year.

Brined Asparagus

Ingredients

- Asparagus 1.5 Kg (3.5 pounds)
- Salt

How to Prepare Brined Asparagus

1. Wash the asparagus with cold running water, then let it soak in a container full of water for about 10 min.
2. Remove the hard, white bottoms, and lightly scrap the stem. Collect the asparagus in two bunches and tie them with string.
3. Bring a pot of water to a boil, add a pinch of salt and arrange the two "standing" bunches, leaving the tips out. Cook for 3 min.
4. Separately, boil one liter of water with 8 g of salt. Drain the asparagus, untie them, place them on a clean cloth and dab them with paper towels.
5. Trim the stems, distribute them standing into sterilized jars and add the mixture of water and salt, covering them completely. Leave 1 cm between the top of the liquid and the lid of the jar.

6. Bring a pan almost full of water to a boil, completely immerse the well-sealed jars and boil for 1 hour. Switch off, remove the jars and let them cool down.



Tropea Onion Jam

Tropea onion jam is an accompaniment for aged cheeses, but also excellent served on croutons for a really tasty finger food. Tropea Onions are an amazing product you should always have in the pantry. They are sweet and perfect to enjoy both cooked, or raw in salads, in tartare or in fish dishes (such as Lobster Catalan). The preparation is simple.

Ingredients

- Tropea onions 600g (1.25 pounds)
- Brown sugar 100g (3.5 ounces)
- 1 Tablespoon of salt
- 1 Bay leaf
- 1 Lemon
- 1 Handful of pine nuts
- 1 Tablespoon of sultanas (or another type of white grape raisin)

How to prepare the Tropea Onion Jam

1. Clean and slice the Tropea onions.

2. Put them in a saucepan with the brown sugar, the tablespoon of salt, the bay leaf, the filtered juice of a lemon, the handful of pine nuts and the tablespoon of sultanas soaked and squeezed.
3. Cook over low heat for about an hour, stirring occasionally to prevent the mixture from sticking.
4. Once cooked, put the jam in sterilized jars. Close the jars tightly, and place them upside down, leaving them there until they have cooled.
5. Once cooled, check to ensure that the lid has vacuum sealed.

Sorrento Lemon Jam

The Sorrento Lemon is a product that distinguishes itself from other lemons because it's particularly well suited for preserving and has a slightly distinct aroma based on where it was grown. These characteristics and the unique cultivation techniques used in the Sorrento Peninsula, in Sicily, have earned it protected recognition by the Italian government. This protection is called a Typical Geographical Indication (I.G.P.) which protects and enhances the exclusive and incomparable Sorrento Lemon I.G.P. That way, if you buy Sorrento Lemons, you know you're getting the real deal.

We should say, this recipe works with any type of lemon, but the Sorrento Lemon is what makes it an Italian classic.

Ingredients

- Sorrento Lemons 1 Kg (about 2 pounds)
- Sugar 1 Kg (about 2 pounds)

How to prepare Sorrento Lemon jam

1. Wash the lemons and cut them into slices without peeling them. Collect the juice that comes out while slicing the best you can, and remove the seeds.
2. Boil the lemon slices and the lemon juice you collected for 20 minutes in half a liter of water. Add the sugar and simmer until the jam starts to become gelatinous.
3. Pour the jam into sterilized jars, close them tightly, and flip them upside down to cool.
4. When they've cooled, check to see if the lids have vacuum sealed.

The jam keeps for 2-3 months but it should be kept in the fridge and consumed quickly once opened.



Artichokes in oil

Ingredients

- 70 small artichokes
- Dry white wine 0.5 L
- White vinegar 0.5 L
- Water 0.5 L
- 2 lemons
- Bay leaves
- Salt
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil

How to prepare artichokes in oil

1. Prepare the artichokes, removing the hardest outer leaves and the tip. Keep the prepared artichokes in a container with 3 liters of water and 2 halved lemons to avoid drying them out or browning them.
2. In a saucepan, combine the water, vinegar, white wine, two bay leaves, and salt. Bring to a boil. Cook the artichokes for 10 minutes, adding the largest artichokes first and then the others.
3. Use a skimmer to pull them out of the pot and cool them head down on paper or cloth.
4. Fill sterilized glass jars with the artichokes, adding a few grains of pepper and some bay leaves in each jar.

5. Pour olive oil in the jars to cover the artichokes. Make sure the oil completely covers the artichokes and leave about 1 cm from the lid.
6. Close and let stand for a day, then go check the oil level again. Add more to cover if necessary.



