
UNIT: 01

CUISINE OF CHINA-I

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chinese cuisine is originated from the one of the oldest culture of the today's world. Chinese culture has the known history of over 4000 years and food takes a major part of it. Chinese culinary art has gone through thousands of years of refinement and development, but the Chinese unique way of cooking and preparing food, remains basically unchanged. Archaeological finds of the Bronze Age (around 1850 BC) indicate that the Chinese had utensils such as bronze CLEAVER for cutting up foods into small pieces and cooking them in animal fat, using a bronze pot not dissimilar to the modern wok. There is data to prove that as long as the ZHOU dynasty (12th C BC) the Chinese used soya sauce, vinegar, rice wine, fruit jam and spices as seasonings in the cooking and that elaborate and complicated cooking methods were already being employed. By the time of China's greatest sage CONFUCIUS (551 – 479 BC) who was an acknowledged

gourmet besides, it was recorded that the importance of heat application and blending of different flavors were emphasized in Chinese cooking; and the uses of high, moderate or low heat, the blending of sour, piquant, salty, bitter or sweet flavors were all given their correct application in order to achieve a harmonious whole. This theory of harmony is one of the main characteristics of Chinese cuisine of this day.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit the learner will be able to:

- Define Chinese Cuisine
- Understand the historical background of Chinese Cuisine
- Distinguish between different regions of Chinese Cuisine and Regional Cooking Styles of Chinese food
- Understand the Staple Food with Regional Influences
- Know the Eight Schools of Chinese Cuisine

1.3 INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE CUISINE

Chinese cuisine has uniqueness from other food cultures. Balanced Chinese meals have combination of FAN & CAI. A authentic Chinese meal is consist of carbohydrate source or starch- typically rice, noodles, steamed buns (FAN) and dishes of vegetables, fish, meat or other items(CAI).Combining various ingredients and the lending of different for the preparation of CAI, lies the fine art and skill of Chinese cuisine. Other feature of Chinese cuisine is the harmonious blending of colors, aromas, flavors, shape and texture. The principle of blending is to use contrasting colors and flavors-the different ingredients must not be mixed indiscriminately. The cutting of ingredients is another important element of Chinese cooking in order to achieve balanced effect. Slices are matched with slices, shreds with shreds, cubes with cubes, chunks with chunks .It is done not only for the sake of appearance but also to provide same texture to the dish. A dish may have several textures such as tenderness, crispiness, crunchiness, smoothness and hardness. The selection of different textures in one single dish is an integral part of blending of flavors and colors, it can be achieved by using the right cooking methods. A Chinese food table look very attractive. Tea is a common drink in china from past hundreds of years. Chinese culture is also known as Chinese food culture. From the three world cuisines, Chinese cuisine is one of them. Chinese cuisine has a tremendous range of flavours and styles, spicy or mild. Ginger, chilli and garlic are called the holy trinity of Chinese cooking. Most of the vegetarian and non vegetarian dishes are covered with a layer of corn starch. Dried vegetables like eggplant, turnip, potato are also used. Non vegetarian is also used in the form of dried pork and dried fish in Chinese cooking. Sea food is also used in the form of salmon, squid, shrimp, prawns and turtle are also used.

Mostly Chinese cooking is done on flames. Microwave and ovens are also used in Chinese kitchen. Cooking is mostly done in wok and pans. Most common cooking method in Chinese cooking is stir frying. Many festivals are the part of Chinese culture and few of them are world famous like dragon boat. Almost every festival has its own style. There is

certain food or drink related to that festival, which Chinese people eat or drink on that day, but there are practical reasons behind that. Over the past years, Chinese food has been evolving from the traditional house hold food into more novel and creative food but still retaining the traditional ideas and flavours. Traditional values are being taught to the young one through food.

1.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Among the numerous culture scattered around the world today but china is having the oldest history of over 4000 years and have been through more than 15 dynasties. This is the reason that Chinese cuisine has seen the many changes according to the every dynasty passed. Chinese food has evolved from basic cooking to a very complex part of the Chinese culture. Following are the different dynasty of Chinese cooking culture.

Chinese cuisine in Zhou Dynasty: In Zhou dynasty grain was the main part of the diet like brown rice, barley, beans and millets. They are not well cultivated like modern day agricultural industries. According to their historical background China already had grill and prepare grilled fish and other food items 4000 years ago. In the late zhou dynasty rich people started consuming the white rice / pealed rice considered highly costly at that time. The famous cuisine of that time is called “**Ba Zheng**” (means eight treasures).

Chinese cuisine in Qin Dynasty: Sour flavor was dominated in the cuisine during Qin Dynasty. According the history records bamboo slips found from tombs, plums were another spice used in their cooking's to give sour taste. It was mainly used for removing fishy odd from meat or fish concluded by scholars. Besides, cinnamon, green onion, soybean sauce and vinegar were regularly used in the kitchen during Qin dynasty.

Chinese cuisine in Han Dynasty: by the opening of silk road merchants and exchange had bought many imported eating and cooking materials for people, such as carrots, cucumber ,walnuts, sesame, spinach, celery, lettuce, onion and garlic. Salty flavours were favoured during hang dynasty. In this period Chinese cooking made a big step forward and laid the firm stone for the Chinese cuisine development in later tong and sang dynasty.

Chinese cuisine in Tong Dynasty: Chinese cuisine is already developed to a quality levelby the tang dynasty. During this dynasty people often had many kinds of parties or banquets to enjoy their lives.

Chinese cuisine in Song Dynasty: during the song dynasty the schools of cuisines began to form. In the food menus of Beijing and linan restaurants number of cold dishes, hot dishes, soups and colour dishes are added mad marked with south ,north chuon flavours and vegetarian dishes , which actually represent the school of cuisines.

Chinese cuisine in Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasty: During this period, religious groups believing in Islamism moved to all part of china and halal food found a space in

china & Chinese cuisine. During these dynasties Chinese cuisine has great development.

Manchu style and flavours have been added to the Chinese cuisine as it was the emperor ruled under the machu people. Chilli pepper plants have been imported to china as a fancy flower and soon Chinese people discovered its great value in cooking process. Soon the Hunan and Sichuan regions adopted the spicy flavour and left a profound affect to their cooking style. By the time foreigners started coming to china and Chinese cuisine also introduces some characters of western cuisine.

Establishment of People's Republic of China: Chinese cuisine inheritance and innovation obtained exciting results in china after the establishment of People's Republic of china especially since 1979.ethanic groups and traditional cuisines of various regions came back and appear in the lists of restaurants.

1.5 REGIONS AND REGIONAL COOKING STYLES

Like the country itself, Chinese food comes from thousands upon thousands of years of civilization in East Asia. There might be confusion over the various regions of Chinese cuisine but there are only four major style of Chinese cooking and every region have emerged its own style of cooking because of geographical locations of these regions.

1.5.1 Northern Region / Peaking Style

Northern China experience harsh, cold and dry winters and summers are equally hot in China. A strong flavour is very important in northern Chinese food. Generally northern dishes are oilier and richer in meat. They make ample use of garlic and scallions. They skilfully use the seasonings to add richness to its dishes without covering up the natural flavour of the ingredients. The commonly used seasonings are soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, ginger, leeks star anise, sweet bean sauce, chilli peppers and sesame oil. In north china wheat is a staple crop. Rice is secondary to wheat in northern china. Wheat flour products are used in the form of steamed buns, stuffed buns and pancakes. Dumplings are very popular in north and served with vinegar and hot chilli oil for dipping. Dumplings are made with various, vegetable and hand pulled noodles fillings. Sliced noodles are very common in northern dishes served either stir fried or in soups. Fish mutton, pork, chicken, duck is commonly used in non vegetarian food. Muslim ethnic groups prefer mutton as their main ingredient. Abundant sea food is available in Shandong province.

North Magnolia features dairy products in their food like cheese, butter and yogurt because of their large grassland. Due to the cold weather in north fresh vegetables are less available so people prefer to preserve some vegetable for winters by drying and pickling. People from north are famous for making pickled vegetables (Korean kimchi). Common vegetables used are tomatoes, potatoes, cucumber, egg plant, chives, radish, carrot and Chinese cabbage. Fruits are limited to apple only that too of seasonal varieties. Northwest is famous for their dried fruit and wine. Several regional cuisines are included in the northern region. The best regional cuisine of north china is Beijing, Shandong and inner magnolia. The typical method of cooking is stewing (most popular), roasting stir frying and deep frying. Beijing being the capital of china uses the cuisines of other part of china.

The most famous dish is peaking duck. Shandong province near to the yellow sea and rich in farm products and see food. Inner magnolia mainly features dairy products and hand torn mutton dishes. Whole roast lamb is their important dish during banquets to honour the guest.

Northern people are very hospitable. They drink liquor with big bowls and eat meat in big pieces. Therefore the dishes are served in big portions. Northern region is influenced by Korean and Russian dishes, because many Korean and Russian living there because of their ancestors were from the North Korea and Russia.

1.5.2 Southern Region

The two provinces kwangsi and Kwangtung makes up to the world famous Cantonese cuisine. Cantonese cuisine has a very distinctive taste and flavour of the cooking. This region is very helpful for farmers because of the wild winters and moderate monsoon. This is the second largest rice producing region of china. Cantonese is near to the sea and have large supply of shrimps, fish, crab etc. That's why they include sea food in their every meal. Cantonese cuisine is all about freshness. They cook food on hot wok with garden fresh vegetables and fresh sea food with minimum quantity of oil. Minimum time of cooking is also important for maintain the freshness of ingredients.

The famous styles of cooking are steaming and stir frying which pronounce the freshness of the ingredients. This cuisine is also praised for their perfect presentation. Radish rose is the famous dish for its colourful presentation. Dim sums are also created by Cantonese cuisine. Citrus fruits like oranges and sugarcane are commonly found in southern region. Sea food, beef and pork makes the major part in Cantonese cuisine.

Cantonese food is famous because of their costal location that's why it was the preferred place for travellers. The traders came from different part of the world like Portugal and Arab countries and settled there to trade with china. The big business tycoons visited there and demanded for good food. They are not bothered about their prices. The most expensive dishes are birds nest soup and shark fins soup. Typically a Cantonese dish includes soup, sea food, noodles, dim sums and little rice bowl.

Cantonese cuisine is also known as Guangdong cuisine, Yue cuisine. The condiments and other seasonings used are chives, coriander leaves; anise, black pepper and ginger provide mild tanginess to match the flavour of the food. Mild sugar is a main ingredient of many Cantonese dishes and snacks. They use different types of sauces like Hoisin sauce, oyster sauce and soy sauce.

1.5.3 Eastern Region

Eastern Chinese food mainly features sweet and subtle flavours, using sugar, wine, vinegar and soy sauce. Eastern food features an abundant use of seafood, fish, pork, poultry and vegetables. Yangtze River well irrigates this area that's why fresh fruits and vegetables grow heavily. Both rice and wheat are common staple. Due to the large sea, lakes and rivers tributaries sea food like fish and shell fish are easily available.

The most common cooking methods are stir frying, steaming, braising, simmering, stewing and warming to preserve the original flavour, maintain clarity, freshness and mildness. They prefer oily dishes. Soups and soupy dishes are very popular. Province of eastern china such as Jiangsu, Fujian, Zhejiang and Kiangsi are considered as the major contributor in Chinese cuisine of eastern China and considered the rice bowl of the country. Fujian region is famous for tea in china. Pork meat is popular but in few restaurants. It's easy to find donkeys and deer dishes in some food menus.

1.5.4 Western Region

The food of western region is popularly known as Szechwan cuisine. Szechwan cuisine is renowned for its use of bold flavours like chilli, garlic, Szechwan pepper and therefore used in almost every dish Szechwan pepper is their local product. Szechwan cuisine largely uses freshwater fish and uses others like chicken, duck and pork meats. Shark fins and beer pawn are also used as an ingredient. They prepare food mainly by stir frying, braising or stewing. The most popular dishes of this region include Kung Pao chicken, twice cooked pork and tea smoked duck.

Szechwan province is the birth place of many dishes and it's the wildly served cuisine in china itself. This cuisine is full of flavours hence every dish has its own flavour.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1. Write short notes on historical background of Chinese cuisine?

2. Explain different regional cooking styles of Chinese cuisine.

1.6 STAPLE FOOD WITH REGIONAL INFLUENCES

Northern Region of china: In old times the tribes of northern china are nomadic. They walked around with heard of sheep. The cold weather reduces the growth of rice but because of the yellow river this region is fertile region for wheat, millet, barley and become the staple food of northern china. This region has abundance of wheat flour products in the form of noodles, dumplings, steamed buns, stuffed buns and pancakes. They use steamed buns and stuffed buns with different vegetables, meat & red bean paste filling for breakfast. Pan cakes are eaten with porridge. The little influence of Mongolian cuisine is also seen in the north because this region touches the Mongolian borders. The special Mongolian hot pot cooking also called table top cookery was introduced to keep food warm and hot.

This region is known for peaking style of cooking. Sea food and fresh water fish is common in peaking style of cooking. The most famous dish is peaking duck. Shandong cuisine is also representing the northern china region. The people from this region eat big cakes stuffed with scallions or minced meat. Some of the famous dishes are dezhou stewed chicken, chicken ball in milk soup, braised sea cucumber with onions, braised prawns.

Eastern Region of china: 5 out of 8 regional cuisines are the part of eastern region cuisine of china. The province of eastern china are Kiangsu(Jiangsu),Fukien(Fujian), chekeong(Zhejiang), anhwei(anhui) and kiangsi(Jiangxi). Every region has its own speciality in context of taste, texture and specialities.

- **Anhwei province:** This region is famous for its healthy food with simple and interesting flavours. Special care is taken in the cooking to preserve the nutrients of the food. Some famous dishes are stewed soft shelled turtle in clear soup, bamboo shoots with sausages and dried mushroom with stinky tofu.
- **Fukien province:** The food is only light seasoned and the main flavours are sweet and sour. Some dishes get extra sweetness and texture from peanuts and sugar. Custard and orange juice i soften used to bring a touch of sweetness. Monk jumps over the wall is one of their famous dish.
- **Jiangsu province:** Jiangsu food is known for light and fresh flavours with tender textures. They emphasise on soups. Sugar is used sometimes to round off the flavours. Dishes are carefully arranged to make a visual impact. Some famous dishes include crab shell meat balls, steamed jerky strips.
- **Zhejiang province:** This cuisine is described very salty. Seafood is popular in this region. Almost every dish contains bamboo shoots. Sometimes meat is marinated in mixture of vinegar and sugar. The most famous dishes include dongpo pork and shelled shrimp in congjing tea.

- **Kiangsi province:** this cuisine features crisp quality, fragrance and modest taste. Relishing the various local snacks is an important tourist activity for visitors in Kiangsi region. Their local snacks and pastries cooked in different methods and have different characteristics are widely popular. Some famous dishes are steamed pork with rice flour, three cups of foot fish.

Southern Region of china: there is a famous saying in china that people from south region will eat almost anything that walks, crawls, flies or swims. The cuisine of this region is popularly known as Cantonese cuisine. Typical and traditional dishes of Cantonese cuisine are sweet and sour pork, bite sized wonton and steamed spare ribs with pickled plum and soy bean paste. Cantonese people eat almost all edible meats including offal, chicken feet, ducks tongue, frog legs, snakes and snail. Several sauces play an important role in Cantonese cuisine. The widely served dishes in Cantonese homes are Chinese steamed eggs, Shao noodles, and preserved salted duck. Steamed frog on a lotus leaf and orange cuttle fish.

Western Region of china: the western region comprises of various provinces like Yunnan, Kweichow, Hunan, Hupei, and Szechwan. Yunnan province is famous for its glutinous rice and fermented bean curd. Hunan cuisine is famous for its spiciness, deep colours and fresh aromas. Smoked and cured foods are typical and staple in this part of the country. The famous dishes are chopped pepper fish head, crispy duck, and Spicy frog's leg. Szechwan cuisine is best known for its spiciness. The main ingredient includes chilli, garlic and locally produced Sichuan pepper. The popular dishes are Kung pao chicken, twice cooked pork and tea smoked duck.

1.7 EIGHT SCHOOLS OF CHINESE CUISINE

Chinese cuisine kitchen culture is considered as the one of the top three cuisines of the world. Chinese cuisine has become popular among the gourmets. Chinese people give great value to their gastronomy and a willingness to eat virtually anything edible plant or animal. By the passage of time techniques and ingredients from the cuisine of other culture were integrated into the cuisine of the Chinese people due to imperial expansions and from the trade with nearby regions or countries. This lay to the wide range of ingredients, techniques, dishes, and eating styles is what we called today Chinese cuisine.

China's vast size and its sharp contrasts in climate have given rise to a wide range of regional cuisines. Some people says that there are only four regions of Chinese cooking's. Mainly Cantonese, huaiyang, Shandong and Sichuan cuisine. But some of the destinations is overlapped like Beijing cuisine fall within the category Shandong cuisine and also influenced by some Sichuan and Mongolian influenced specialities. There is so much mix in Chinese cuisine. Due to this sometimes it's difficult to understand the Chinese cuisine. To solve this problem Chinese chefs have identified eight culinary schools of Chinese cuisine .each of these schools has a distinct styles & different strengths. In this topic we are going to discuss about their eight culinary schools of Chinese cooking.

Chinese cuisine is generally divided into eight regional cuisines based on their geographic location, regional cooking style, cooking methods and ingredients.

1. Anhui
2. Fujian
3. Guangdong
4. Hunan
5. Jiangsu
6. Shandong
7. Sichuan
8. Zhejiang

1.7.1 Anhui

The regional cuisine of Anhui in eastern china is considered to be healthy and visually interesting with the different flavours. This cuisine is lesser known cuisine among the eight great cuisines. Anhui is also a poorer province if compared to the other regional cuisines of china. Even the presences of Yangtze River don't lay much emphasis on sea food and more on land and herbs from both the land and sea. The dishes from Anhui cuisine include mainly a very elaborate choice of wild ingredients coming from the mountains and make a very healthy Diet. The region is surrounded by huangshan Mountains. Which helps anhui cuisine in providing fresh herbs and other vegetables.

Anhui cuisine gives stress on preserving the natural and original flavour of the food. Chefs pay more attention on the taste, colour of the dish and the temperature to cook. The mostly used cooking methods are braising, stewing and steaming. Some dishes are sweet from added sugar. Anhui cuisine is typically lighter in flavour compared to some of the other cuisine types. Some of the best known Anhui dishes include stewed soft shelled turtle in a clear soup, Bamboo shoots with sausage and dried mushrooms & stinky tofu.

➤ Recipe Stinky Tofu

Blocks of firm tofu	400 Gms
Stinky Fermented been curd	200 Gms
Minced Green Onions	50 Gms
Red chilli peppers	½ teaspoon
Cornstarch	2 teaspoon
Oyster sauce	2 teaspoon
Sugar	1 teaspoon
Minced garlic	20 gms
Parsley	20 gms
White sprit	1 teaspoon
Fennel powder	1 teaspoon
Vegetable oil	1 teaspoon

Method

- Mix the water, stinky fermented bean curd, and white spirit in a large sealable Container.
- Add the tofu into the fermented bean curd water.

- Seal the lid and put it in the refrigerator for more than 24 hours.
- Take out the refrigerated soaked tofu and drain it. Heat wok with oil, and fry the soaked tofu until it becomes golden. Transfer it on a plate and set aside.



Figure 1 Stinky Tofu

- Heat wok with oil, and stir-fry garlic until fragrant. Add fennel powder, oyster sauce, 1/2 bowl of water and cook until the water boil. Pour the soaked tofu, stir and cook for 1 minute.

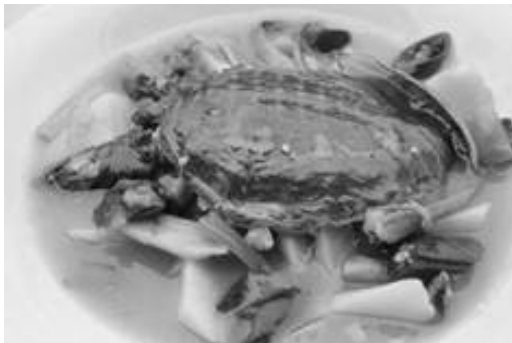


Figure 2 Stewed Soft-shelled Turtle in a Clear Soup

- Sprinkle with water starch and parsley on it. Transfer it on a plate. Serve.



Figure 3 Bamboo Shoots With Sausage and Dried Mushrooms

1.7.2 Fujian

Fujian cuisine: it's a coastal province and more than 60% of the areas are forests. That's why sea food and wild herbs features most of the Fujian dishes. Fijians are famous for applying wide verity of herbs and seasonings to make the food aromatic and interesting. Broths and soups are the major part of the Fujian meal. The meal is not called complete without the soup. Even most of the dishes are served in soup.

Typical Fujian dishes are prepared by first chopping the ingredients finely and then quickly boiling or stir frying them or adding them to soup. They use custard and orange juice for sweetness in the dishes. The cooking style includes stir frying, baking and deep frying, boiling, sautéing & stewing. Some of the famous dishes include the Buddha jump over the wall, stewed chicken with three cup sauce & hot and sour squid.

➤ **Buddha jumps over the wall Recipe**

Sea cucumber (blanched)	200 Grams
Baby abalone	5 no
Dried scallop	85 Grams
Japanese flower mushrooms, soaked	5 no
Chicken leg, cut into small parts and blanched	400 Grams
Wolf berries	3 Grams
Coriander	10 Grams
Chinese wine	35 ML
Long cabbage, blanched	400 Grams
Chicken stock	1 litre
Water	20 ML
Essence chicken	

Instructions

- Soak dried scallop in a bowl with water for 1 hr. set aside for later used. (overnight)
- Soak Japanese flower mushroom in hot water overnight and retained its liquid.(cut stem off)
- Place blanched cabbage into a soup bowl to form a base.
- Add blanched mushroom, sea cucumber, baby abalone, dried scallops and chicken.
- In a smaller pot, prepare the broth by adding chicken essence, water and chicken stock and bring it to boil.
- Place bowl into steamer and pour the broth over.
- Sprinkle with wolfberries, then Chinese wine.
- Double boil for 45 minutes.
- Serve hot.



Buddha jumps over the wall



Stewed chicken with three cup sauce



Hot and Sour Squi

1.7.3 Guangdong

Guangdong cuisine: The cuisine of Guangdong region is known as Cantonese cuisine. As a coast province, sea food is available in ample quantity. Beef, chicken and pork are equally available. Cantonese cuisine is famous for using anything in their cuisine which is edible, such as frogs legs, offal, chicken, and snails. This is the most widely served style of Chinese cuisine in the world. Guangdong cuisine was developed in Guangzhou, Huizhou, Huizhou and chaozhou and on the Hainan Island in south china.

Cantonese cuisine is influenced by both oriental and western cooking traditions. Typical ingredients used different types of meat and vegetables Such as onion, garlic. The main seasoning includes sugar and salt. The most common cooking method includes salt or wine, baking in pan and soft frying, and the favourite condiments includes oyster sauce, fish sauce, clam oil and curry Which give Cantonese cuisine a unique taste. The most

common Cantonese dishes include the dragon and tiger fight, Hong Kong egg custard tarts, wantons and spring rolls.

➤ **Hong Kong Style Egg Custard Tarts Recipe**

Custard Filling

Eggs, beaten	4 No
water	180 ml
sugar	6 tablespoons
salt	pinch
milk	60 ml
vanilla extract, optional	Dash

Pastry Dough

cake flour	300 Grams
unsalted butter	115 Grams
powdered sugar	40 Grams
Egg Beaten	1 No
Salt	Pinch
vanilla extract, optional	Dash

Instructions

- For the pastry, in a large bowl, sift flour, sugar, and salt. Then add softened butter. Bring the mixture together with your hands, careful not to knead the pastry dough too much or you will make the pastry tough.
- Whisk the egg yolks and add the 2 tablespoons of beaten yolk to the flour mixture. Bring together until smooth. If the dough is too sticky, coating your hands with flour will help. Cover with plastic wrap and then refrigerate for 30 minutes, or until the dough is firm.
- To make the custard filling, melt sugar and salt with hot water. Mix until dissolved then let cool.
- Add the rest of the beaten egg yolk. Stir in sugar water and also evaporated milk (if adding vanilla, add now). Stir and combine everything well.
- Strain the filling to ensure no lumps. Chill in the refrigerator.
- Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C.)
- Take the dough out and divide into 16 equal portions. Spray the tart pan with a light coating of oil. Take one portion of your dough and roll it into a ball and place in your tart shell. Press the shell into the pan with your fingers. Try to make the wrapper uniform in thickness and avoid a thick bottom. Repeat to finish all.
- Pour the custard filling into the shells until it is about 80% full. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until the surface becomes golden brown and a toothpick can stand in the egg tart.
- Cool down for several minutes and then take the egg tarts out of the pan. Serve while still warm.



Hong Kong Style Egg Custard Tart Recipe



Dragon and Tiger Fight

1.7.4 Hunan

Hunan cuisine: The geographical location of Hunan region is in southern china. This area has rolling hills and beautiful valleys, which provide a fertile soil for growing a wide range of crops, especially rice. This cuisine is famous for its spiciness, deep colors and fresh aromas. Smoked and cured food are very much part of the diet in this region. People get confused sometimes between Hunan and Sichuan cuisines because the major characteristics of both the cuisines are hot and spicy. The Hunan cuisine is characterized

by its rich, moist, crispy & creamy dishes which always contain a punch of chilly with strong and pungent flavor. Hunan dishes are mostly made with fresh chili peppers including the seeds which contain most of the heat. They use spicy food to clean the palate and to adjust with humid climate. Chili, garlic, pepper and shallots are extensively used. The most common method of cooking includes smoking, stir frying, steaming, sautéing, pickling and fermenting. The most famous Hunan dishes includes dongan chicken, chopped pepper fish head, crispy duck, orange beef and spicy frog legs.

➤ **Chopped Pepper Fish Head Recipe**

Chili pepper	1 tablespoon
Cooking oil	1 tablespoon
Black pepper	1 teaspoon
Salt	1 teaspoon
Ginger	1 teaspoon
Garlic	1 teaspoon
Green onion	1 no

Instructions

- Clean the fish head and cut it into two halves.
- Prepare a bowl and add 1 tablespoon of cooking oil and some salt. (do not add too much since the chopped chili pepper is salty).
- Brush oil on both sides of the fish head and sprinkle some black pepper powder and ginger shreds on the surface. Put aside for about 20 minutes. Put the chopped chili peppers on fish head and leave it for another 10 minutes.
- Put some water in a wok or any pot you can steam, put the fish head to steam for around 15 minutes.
- Sprinkle the chopped green onions on top.
- Heat some oil in wok, add chopped garlic to cook for 1 minute, and then pour the oil heated on the surface of the fish head to help make the flavor going into the meat.
- Serve hot.



Chopped Pepper Fish Head



Dongan Chicken



Crispy Duck



Orange Beef



Spicy Frog Legs

1.7.5 Jiangsu

Jiangsu cuisine: Jiangsu cuisine is very less known cuisine by foreigners and outside china. Jiangsu province is higher in per capita income and has a very cuisine. It is a coasted province which is also a home to the famous Yangtze river delta. That's why a wide variety of sea food are available and eaten. The dishes are cooked with elaborate method and presented in a colourful and artistic way. The food is generally characterized by light and fresh flavours. The wide variety of sea vegetable dishes can be seen in Jiangsu cuisine restaurants. The chefs emphasize bringing out the distinct natural flavours. The common technique of cooking includes stirring, braising and steaming. They don't add much salt, sugar or seasonings like chilli powder so that their meals are highly aromatic. the famous dishes includes jingling salted dry duck, crab shell meat balls, farewell my concubine, Yangzhou steamed jerky strips, pan fried dumplings stuffed with pork.

➤ Crab Shell Meatball (Pork Meatballs) Recipe

Large crabs	4 nos.(2.5 kg approx)
Fresh minced pork belly	1.5 kg
Chinese mushrooms, diced	7 no
Cloves Garlic, minced & fried	4 no
Spring onions, minced	4 no
Egg	1 no
Light soya sauce	1½ Tablespoon
Salt	1 Tablespoon
White pepper	1 Teaspoon
Water	1 Liter
Pork bones	400 Grams
Fish maw (optional)	3 no
Chinese cabbage, chopped	1 no

Oil
Fried minced garlic
Cilantro

1 Tablespoon
To taste
To taste

Instructions

- Wash & prepare crabs, steam for 15 minutes or until cooked. De-shell crab meat from cooked crabs.
- Combine crab & pork. Add the remaining ingredients & seasonings; mix well with your hands (do not over mix). Store meat in small freezer containers.
- Bring a pot of water to boil, blanch pork bones, and add to pot to simmer for 40 minutes. Shape meat mixture into meatballs using a little oil.
- Once stock is ready, remove pork bones, add cabbage to cook till softened, add fish maw. Add meatballs, bring to boil, simmer & cook until they float.



Crab Shell Meat Balls



Jiniling Salted Dry Duck

1.7.6 Shandong

Shandong cuisine: Shandong was one of the first civilized regions in China and an early culture center. Shandong province has a long coast, so fresh river fish and sea food were always the local delicacies. The Shandong province is situated in the northeast of China and has an emphasis on salty and garlicky foods. They prefer soups, noodles and seafood. They prefer to eat bread rather than rice. The corn grown in this region is famous for its chew and starchy texture and grassy aroma. The common ingredients used are scallops, prawns, clams, sea cucumber and squid in sea food and millet, wheat, oat and barley are used to make a variety of dishes. The cooking techniques used are quick fry and deep fry. The most popular dishes include sea cucumber with meat balls, braised shark's fin with shredded chicken and bamboo shoots, sweet and sour carp fish, sweet potato in caramelized sugar.

➤ Sweet and Sour Carp Fish Recipe

Carp fish, filleted	1 No (around 750gr)
Lime	1 No
Garlic's, minced	6 No
Seasoned flour	150 g
Margarine	1 tbsp
Pepper	To Taste
Onion, chopped	1/2 No
Fish sauce	1 tsp
Mushroom stock powder	1 tbsp
Onion leeks, chopped	2 onions
Tomato sauce	5 tbsp
Red chilies	3 no
Ginger	1 no
Carrot (Julian & sliced for garnish)	1 no

Water

200 ml approx

Instructions

1. Marinate fish in a mixture of lime juice, ground pepper and garlic for 10 minutes.
2. Chopped fish into 8 to 10 parts. Roll in flour and deep fry. Put to rest.
3. In a skillet, heat margarine to sauté garlic's and onion until fragrant. Add chilies.
4. Add ground pepper, fish sauce, stock powder, leeks, tomato sauce and ginger. Continue to sauté.
5. Add water and carrots and sauté until soften. You may stir in some dissolved corn flour into the mixture for thicker consistency.
6. Pour sauce on top of your fish. Serve warm.



Sweet and sour carp fish



Sea cucumber with meat balls



Braised shark fin with shredded chicken and bamboo shoots

1.7.7 Sichuan

Sichuan cuisine: Out of all the regional cuisines Sichuan cuisine stands out as very unique and probably the most widely served of all of Chinese regional cuisines. Sichuan cuisine comes from south-western region of Sichuan and renowned for its bold and spicy flavours. Sichuan food is famous for dominance by pepper, chilli flavour and known for being spicy hot. Sichuan cuisine uses a lot fresh water fish, chicken, duck and pork. Some unusual ingredients like shark, bear paws are also used. The other spices and condiments include locally grown Sichuan peppercorn, chillies, crushed garlic, fish sauce, ginger juice and soy sauce. The cooking methods used in Sichuan cuisine are stir frying, steaming, braising, baking and most popular fast frying. The most popular Sichuan dishes include Kung pao chicken, twice cooked pork and tea smoked duck.

➤ Kung pao chicken Recipe

Chicken boneless/skinless cubes (breasts or thighs)	450 grams
Peanut or vegetable oil	1 tablespoon
Chinese dried red chilies	8 no
Sichuan peppercorns	1 teaspoon
Garlic cloves (minced)	4 no
Fresh ginger (minced)	1 tablespoon
Scallion white part green part	3 no
Dry-roasted peanuts (unsalted)	50 grams
Sauce	according to taste

Marinade ingredients:

soy sauce	2 teaspoons
Chinese rice wine	2 teaspoons
Cornstarch	2 teaspoons
Sichuan pepper corns	1 teaspoons

Marinade Recipe:

Add all the ingredients in a bowl and mix well with the help of whisker. Make sure that lump should not be formed in that. This should be of smooth texture. Only pepper corns can be feel.

Sauce ingredients:

Chinese black vinegar	1 tablespoon
Chicken stock/broth	50 ml
Sugar	2-3 tablespoon
Soy sauce	2-3 tablespoon
Cornstarch	2 teaspoons
Sesame oil	½ teaspoon

Sauce Recipe:

Add all the ingredients in a bowl and mix properly. Add the corn starch in last and make sure that corn starch is mix with other ingredients properly.

Instructions:

1. Take a medium sized bowl. Add chicken and massage it with marinade made with soya sauce and other ingredients earlier. Rub it well and rest the chicken for 20 minutes approx to absorb the flavor of the ingredients.
2. Heat the oil in a wok on high heat. When the smokes starts coming just turn off the gas and quick fry with red peppers and pepper corns for 1 minute without burning the ingredients
3. Turn the gas on and put diced chicken in the pan with other ingredients.
4. Once the chicken is cooked from outside add ginger and garlic. Cook for another two minutes and stir occasionally.
5. Add the sauce in Batches make sure that chicken should absorb the flavors properly. Let the chicken absorb the sauce then add the second batch of the sauce.
6. Cook the chicken properly with the sauce properly then add scallions and roasted peanuts and cook for few more minutes.
7. Serve hot in a bowl or pan of choice.



Kung pao chicken



Twice cooked pork



Tea smoked duck

1.7.8 Zhejiang

Zhejiang cuisine: Zhejiang cuisine originated from the popular and rich eastern provinces of Zhejiang on the Pacific. It is located in Yangtze river delta. The food is fresh and slight rather than greasy and usually not spicy. This cuisine is well known for its freshness, tenderness, sophistication, smoothness and mellow fragrance. Most of the dishes served raw or nearly raw with refined and light flavour. Most of the dishes are prepared but stir frying, braising or steaming. The most famous dishes include dong po pork, West Lake braised fish in vinegar and Shelled shrimps cooked in long jing tea.

➤ **Dong po Pork**

Pork Belly	500g
Green onions	40 grams
Ginger	30 grams
Shaoxing wine	150 ml
Sugar	2 tablespoon
Soy sauce	2-3 tablespoon
Monosodium glutamate (msg), salt	to taste
Water	

Instructions:

- Cut pork into squares, approx 4 inches. Put the pork skin down in a wok and heat the wok for dry fry. Wait until the skin becomes slightly brown and off the gas. Slightly cooked from other side also.
- Place the pork in a pot filled with hot water and blanch for 2-3 minutes. Remove any extra blood or particles coming out. Remove them properly.

- Tie the pork pieces with kitchen food safety string gently. So that it may not harm the piece.
- Put little oil in wok and heat up. Stir fry the ginger and scallions until they start giving fragrance. Add little water and boil for another 10 minutes.
- Add soy sauce, Shaoxing wine and water in adequate amount so that it should not go over the pieces. Boil on high heat. After two boils add salt and turn the sides of pork.
- Continuous braise for 1 to 2 hours and change the sides in between. Continuous check for the desired tenderness.
- Serve hot with steamed rice or buns and vegetables.



Dong po Pork



West Lake braised fish in vinegar



Shelled shrimps cooked Inlongjing tea

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-II

1. Write short notes on historical background of Chinese cuisine?

2. Explain different regional cooking styles of Chinese cuisine.

1.8 SUMMARY

Chinese cuisine is originated from the one of the oldest culture of the today's world. Chinese culture has the known history of over 4000 years and food takes a major part of it. Chinese culinary art has gone through thousands of years of refinement and development, but the Chinese unique way of cooking and preparing food, remains basically unchanged. Archaeological finds of the Bronze Age (around 1850 BC) indicate that the Chinese had utensils such as bronze CLEAVER for cutting up foods into small pieces and cooking them in animal fat, using a bronze pot not dissimilar to the modern wok. There is data to prove that as long as the ZHOU dynasty (12th C BC) the Chinese used soya sauce, vinegar, rice wine, fruit jam and spices as seasonings in the cooking and that elaborate and complicated cooking methods were already being employed. By the time of China's greatest sage CONFUCIUS (551 – 479 BC) who was an acknowledged gourmet besides, it was recorded that the importance of heat application and blending of different flavors were emphasized in Chinese cooking; and the uses of high, moderate or low heat,

the blending of sour, piquant, salty, bitter or sweet flavors were all given their correct application in order to achieve a harmonious whole. This theory of harmony is one of the main characteristics of Chinese cuisine of this day.

Like the country itself, Chinese food comes from thousands upon thousands of years of civilization in East Asia. There might be confusion over the various regions of Chinese cuisine but there are only four major style of Chinese cooking and every region have emerged its own style of cooking because of geographical locations of these regions. **Northern China** experience harsh, cold and dry winters and summers are equally hot in China. A strong flavour is very important in northern Chinese food. Generally northern dishes are oilier and richer in meat. They make ample use of garlic and scallions. They skilfully use the seasonings to add richness to its dishes without covering up the natural flavour of the ingredients. The commonly used seasonings are soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, ginger, leeks star anise, sweet bean sauce, chilli peppers and sesame oil. In north china wheat is a staple crop. **Southern China** has two provinces kwangsi and Kwangtung makes up to the world famous Cantonese cuisine. Cantonese cuisine has a very distinctive taste and flavour of the cooking. This region is very helpful for farmers because of the wild winters and moderate monsoon. This is the second largest rice producing region of china. Cantonese is near to the sea and have large supply of shrimps, fish, crab etc. That's why they include sea food in their every meal. **Eastern Chinese** food mainly features sweet and subtle flavours, using sugar, wine, vinegar and soy sauce. Eastern food features an abundant use of seafood, fish, pork, poultry and vegetables. Yangtze River well irrigates this area that's why fresh fruits and vegetables grow heavily. Both rice and wheat are common staple. Due to the large sea, lakes and rivers tributaries sea food like fish and shell fish are easily available. The food of **western** region is popularly known as Szechwan cuisine. Szechwan cuisine is renowned for its use of bold flavours like chilli, garlic, Szechwan pepper and therefore used in almost every dish Szechwan pepper is their local product. Szechwan cuisine largely uses freshwater fish and uses others like chicken, duck and pork meats. Shark fins and beer pawn are also used as an ingredient. They prepare food mainly by stir frying, braising or stewing. The most popular dishes of this region include Kung Pao chicken, twice cooked pork and tea smoked duck.

Chinese cuisine kitchen culture is considered as the one of the top three cuisines of the world. Chinese cuisine has become popular among the gourmets. Chinese people give great value to their gastronomy and a willingness to eat virtually anything edible plant or animal. By the passage of time techniques and ingredients from the cuisine of other culture were integrated into the cuisine of the Chinese people due to imperial expansions and from the trade with nearby regions or countries. This lay to the wide range of ingredients, techniques, dishes, and eating styles is what we called today Chinese cuisine.

1.9 GLOSSARY

Anhui cuisine: the regional cuisine of Anhui in eastern china is considered to be healthy and visually interesting with the different flavours. This cuisine is lesser known cuisine among the eight great cuisines. Anhui is also a poorer province if compared to the other

regional cuisines of china. Even the presences of Yangtze River don't lay much emphasis on sea food and more on land and herbs from both the land and sea. The dishes from Anhui cuisine include mainly a very elaborate choice of wild ingredients coming from the mountains and make a very healthy Diet. The region is surrounded by huangshan Mountains. Which helps anhui cuisine in providing fresh herbs and other vegetables.

Anhwei province: This region is famous for its healthy food with simple and interesting flavours. Special care is taken in the cooking to preserve the nutrients of the food. Some famous dishes are stewed soft shelled turtle in clear soup, bamboo shoots with sausages and dried mushroom with stinky tofu.

Chinese cuisine in Han Dynasty: by the opening of silk road merchants and exchange had bought many imported eating and cooking materials for people, such as carrots, cucumber, walnuts, sesame, spinach, celery, lettuce, onion and garlic. Salty flavours were favoured during han dynasty. In this period Chinese cooking made a big step forward and laid the firm stone for the Chinese cuisine development in later tong and sang dynasty.

Chinese cuisine in Qin Dynasty: Sour flavor was dominated in the cuisine during Qin Dynasty. According the history records bamboo slips found from tombs, plums were another spice used in their cooking's to give sour taste. It was mainly used for removing fishy odd from meat or fish concluded by scholars. Besides, cinnamon, green onion, soybean sauce and vinegar were regularly used in the kitchen during Qin dynasty.

Chinese cuisine in Song Dynasty: during the song dynasty the schools of cuisines began to form. In the food menus of Beijing and linan restaurants number of cold dishes, hot dishes, soups and colour dishes are added mad marked with south ,north chuon flavours and vegetarian dishes , which actually represent the school of cuisines.

Chinese cuisine in Tong Dynasty: Chinese cuisine is already developed to a quality level by the tang dynasty. During this dynasty people often had many kinds of parties or banquets to enjoy their lives.

Chinese cuisine in Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasty: During this period, religious groups believing in Islamism moved to all part of china and halal food found a space in china & Chinese cuisine. During these dynasties Chinese cuisine has great development.

Chinese cuisine in Zhou Dynasty: In Zhou dynasty grain was the main part of the diet like brown rice, barley, beans and millets. They are not well cultivated like modern day agricultural industries. According to their historical background China already had grill and prepare grilled fish and other food items 4000 years ago. In the late zhou dynasty rich people started consuming the white rice / pealed rice considered highly costly at that time. The famous cuisine of that time is called **"Ba Zheng"** (means eight treasures).

Eastern Region: Eastern Chinese food mainly features sweet and subtle flavours, using sugar, wine, vinegar and soy sauce. Eastern food features an abundant use of seafood, fish, pork, poultry and vegetables. Yangtze River well irrigates this area that's why fresh fruits

and vegetables grow heavily. Both rice and wheat are common staple. Due to the large sea, lakes and rivers tributaries sea food like fish and shell fish are easily available.

Establishment of People's Republic of China: Chinese cuisine inheritance and innovation obtained exciting results in china after the establishment of People's Republic of china especially since 1979. ethnic groups and traditional cuisines of various regions came back and appear in the lists of restaurants.

Fujian cuisine: it's a coastal province and more than 60% of the areas are forests. That's why sea food and wild herbs features most of the Fujian dishes. Fijians are famous for applying wide verity of herbs and seasonings to make the food aromatic and interesting. Broths and soups are the major part of the Fujian meal. The meal is not called complete without the soup. Even most of the dishes are served in soup. Typical Fujian dishes are prepared by first chopping the ingredients finely and then quickly boiling or stir frying them or adding them to soup.

Fukien province: The food is only light seasoned and the main flavours are sweet and sour. Some dishes get extra sweetness and texture from peanuts and sugar. Custard and orange juice i soften used to bring a touch of sweetness. Monk jumps over the wall is one of their famous dish.

Guangdong cuisine: The cuisine of Guangdong region is known as Cantonese cuisine. As a coast province, sea food is available in ample quantity. Beef, chicken and pork are equally available. Cantonese cuisine is famous for using anything in their cuisine which is edible, such as frogs legs, offal, chicken, and snails. This is the most widely served style of Chinese cuisine in the world. Guangdong cuisine was developed in Guangzhou, Huizhou, Huizhou and chaozhou and on the Hainan Island in south china.

Hunan cuisine: The geographical location of Hunan region is in southern china. This area has rolling hills and beautiful valleys, which provide a fertile soil for growing a wide range of crops, especially rice. This cuisine is famous for its spiciness, deep colors and fresh aromas. Smoked and cured food are very much part of the diet in this region. People get confused sometimes between Hunan and Sichuan cuisines because the major characteristics of both the cuisines are hot and spicy.

Jiangsu cuisine: Jiangsu cuisine is very less known cuisine by foreigners and outside china. Jiangsu province is higher in per capita income and has a very cuisine. It is a coasted province which is also a home to the famous Yangtze river delta. That's why a wide variety of sea food are available and eaten. The dishes are cooked with elaborate method and presented in a colourful and artistic way.

Jiangsu province: Jiangsu food is known for light and fresh flavours with tender textures. They emphasise on soups. Sugar is used sometimes to roundoff the flavours. Dishes are carefully arranged to make a visual impact. Some famous dishes include crab shell meat balls, steamed jerky strips.

Kiangsi province: this cuisine features crisp quality, fragrance and modest taste. Relishing the various local snacks is an important tourist activity for visitors in Kiangsi region. Their local snacks and pastries cooked in different methods and have different characteristics are widely popular. Some famous dishes are steamed pork with rice flour, three cups of foot fish. Manchu style and flavours have been added to the Chinese cuisine as it was the emperor ruled under the Manchu people. Chilli pepper plants have been imported to China as a fancy flower and soon Chinese people discovered its great value in cooking process. Soon the Hunan and Sichuan regions adopted the spicy flavour and left a profound affect to their cooking style. By the time foreigners started coming to China and Chinese cuisine also introduces some characters of western cuisine.

Northern Region / Peaking Style: Northern China experience harsh, cold and dry winters and summers are equally hot in China. A strong flavour is very important in northern Chinese food. Generally northern dishes are oilier and richer in meat. They make ample use of garlic and scallions. They skilfully use the seasonings to add richness to its dishes without covering up the natural flavour of the ingredients. The commonly used seasonings are soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, ginger, leeks star anise, sweet bean sauce, chilli peppers and sesame oil.

Shandong cuisine: Shandong was the one of the first civilized regions in China and an early culture center. Shandong province has along coast, so fresh river fish and sea food were always the local delicacies. The Shandong province is situated in northeast of China and has emphasis on salty and garlicky foods. They prefer soups, noodles and seafood. They prefer to eat bread rather than rice.

Sichuan cuisine: Out of all the regional cuisines Sichuan cuisine stands out as very unique and probably the most widely served of all of Chinese regional cuisines. Sichuan cuisine comes from south-western region of Sichuan and renowned for its bold and spicy flavours. Sichuan food is famous for dominance by pepper, chilli flavour and known for being spicy hot. Sichuan cuisine uses a lot fresh water fish, chicken, duck and pork. Some unusual ingredients like shark, bear paws are also used.

Southern Region: The two provinces Kwangsi and Kwangtung makes up to the world famous Cantonese cuisine. Cantonese cuisine has a very distinctive taste and flavour of the cooking. This region is very helpful for farmers because of the mild winters and moderate monsoon. This is the second largest rice producing region of China. Cantonese is near to the sea and have large supply of shrimps, fish, crab etc.

Western Region: The food of western region is popularly known as Szechwan cuisine. Szechwan cuisine is renowned for its use of bold flavours like chilli, garlic, Szechwan pepper and therefore used in almost every dish Szechwan pepper is their local product. Szechwan cuisine largely uses freshwater fish and uses others like chicken, duck and pork meats. Shark fins and beer pawns are also used as an ingredient.

Zhejiang cuisine: Zhejiang cuisine originated from the popular and rich eastern provinces of Zhejiang on the Pacific. It is located in Yangtze river delta. The food is fresh and slight

rather than greasy and usually not spicy. This cuisine is well known for its freshness, tenderness, sophistication, smoothness and mellow fragrance. Most of the dishes served raw or nearly raw with refined and light flavour.

Zhejiang province: This cuisine is described very salty. Seafood is popular in this region. Almost every dish contains bamboo shoots. Sometimes meat is marinated in mixture of vinegar and sugar. The most famous dishes include dongpo pork and shelled shrimp in congjing tea.

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- Funchsia Dunlop - The Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook, Ebury Press
- Eileen Yin-Fei Lo – Mastering the Art of Chinese Cooking, Chronicle Books
- Su Huei Huang, Lai Yen-Jen – Chinese Cuisine, Wei-Chuan Publishing
- E N Anderson – The Food of China, Yale University Press
- Parvinder S Bali – International Cuisine & Food Production – Oxford University Press

1.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Nita Mehta – Italian Vegetarian Cookery, Snab Publishers.
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1.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1 Chinese cuisine is divided into various culinary regions. Explain in detail.
- 2 Explain the main characteristics of Chinese cuisine.
- 3 Write short note on “Fujian cuisine”
- 4 Write the recipe and preparation method of Honk Kong style Egg custard tart.
- 5 Chinese cuisine is one of the diverse cuisines of world. Support the statement with regional specialties

UNIT: 02

CUISINE OF CHINA-II

Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Methods of Cooking
 - 2.3.1 Stir frying
 - 2.3.2 Deep frying
 - 2.3.3 Boiling
 - 2.3.4 Sautéing
 - 2.3.5 Simmering
 - 2.3.6 Braising
 - 2.3.7 Steaming
- 2.4 Chinese kitchen equipments and utensils
 - 2.4.1 Wok and Wok Lid
 - 2.4.2 Wok Ring
 - 2.4.3 Metal Wok Spatula
 - 2.4.4 Chinese wire strainer
 - 2.4.5 Cleaver or chopper
 - 2.4.6 Wok Brush
 - 2.4.7 Steam basket
 - 2.4.8 Steamer
 - 2.4.9 Rice Cooker
- 2.5 Ingredients and dishes
 - 2.5.1 Sweet sauces
 - 2.5.2 Sour Sauces
 - 2.5.3 Savory Sauces
 - 2.5.4 Spicy Sauces
- 2.6 Chinese Vegetables
- 2.7 Dry Chinese Spices and Condiments
- 2.8 Chinese Dried and Preserved Ingredients
- 2.9 Chinese Noodles and Wrappers
- 2.10 Chinese Ingredients – Rice and Flours
- 2.11 Tofu and Been Curd
- 2.12 Chinese Dishes
 - 2.12.1 Sweet Corn and Chicken Soup
 - 2.12.2 Chicken Noodle Soup
 - 2.12.3 Hot and Sour Soup
 - 2.12.4 Vegetable Chow Chow
 - 2.12.5 Prawns in Garlic Sauce
 - 2.12.6 Mandarin Fish
 - 2.12.7 Sweet and Sour Pork

2.12.8	Chicken Chili
2.12.9	Hakka Noodles
2.12.10	Chow Mein
2.12.11	Chop Suey
2.12.12	Vegetable Fried Rice
2.12.13	Chinese Fried Rice
2.13	Summary
2.14	Glossary
2.15	References/Bibliography
2.16	Suggested Readings
2.17	Terminal Questions

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mostly Chinese cooking is done on flames. Microwave and ovens are also used in Chinese kitchen. Cooking is mostly done in wok and pans. Most common cooking method in Chinese cooking is stir frying. Many festivals are the part of Chinese culture and few of them are world famous like dragon boat. Almost every festival has its own style. There is certain food or drink related to that festival, which Chinese people eat or drink on that day, but there are practical reasons behind that. Over the past years, Chinese food has been evolving from the traditional house hold food into more novel and creative food but still retaining the traditional ideas and flavours. Traditional values are being taught to the young one through food.

In this unit we will learn about various methods of cooking Chinese food, various equipments and utensils used in Chinese kitchen , various Ingredients used in cooking Chinese dishes, Chinese Vegetables, various Dry Chinese Spices and Condiments, Chinese Dried and Preserved Ingredient, Chinese Noodles and Wrappers, Chinese Ingredients – Rice and Flours, Tofu and Been Curd. We will also learn how to cook several specialty Chinese Dishes

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit the learner will be able to

- Describe various methods of cooking Chinese food
- Identify various equipments and utensils used in Chinese kitchen
- Describe and identify various Ingredients used in cooking Chinese dishes
- Identify Chinese Vegetables
- Describe and identify various Dry Chinese Spices and Condiments, Chinese Dried and Preserved Ingredient, Chinese Noodles and Wrappers, Chinese Ingredients – Rice and Flours
- Identify Tofu and Been Curd
- Describe about several Chinese Dishes

2.3 METHODS OF COOKING

For a successfully made dish, Chinese chefs give emphasis on the colour, aroma and taste. The dozens of cooking methods are used in Chinese kitchen culture some of the methods of Chinese cooking are as follows:

- Stir frying
- Deep frying
- Boiling
- Sautéing
- Simmering
- Braising
- Steaming

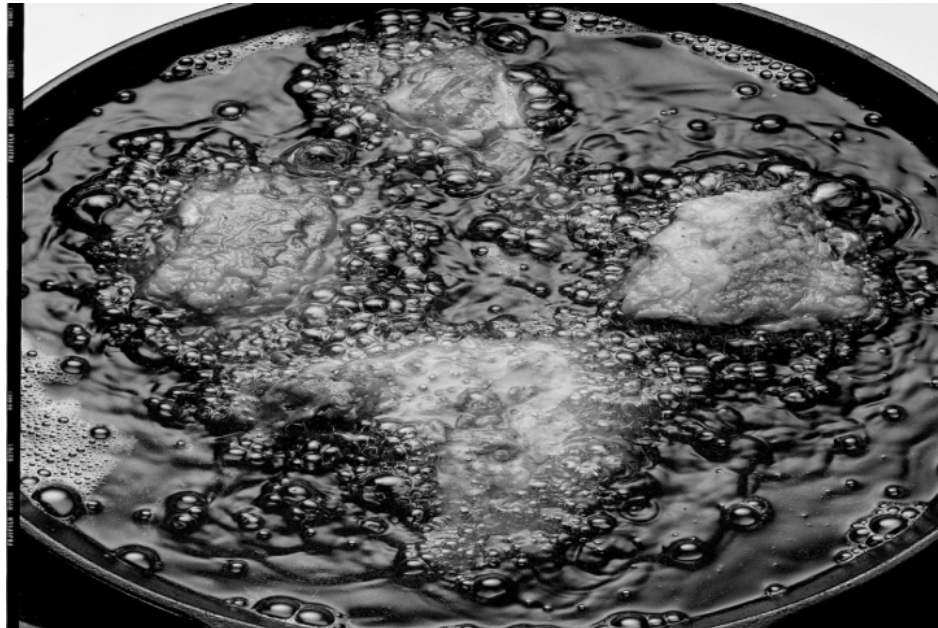
2.3.1 Stir Frying

The most commonly used method is stir frying. In this method of cooking ingredients are processed at high heat for a short period of time .oil is used very less in this type of cooking. Food is cooked at high heat and tossed or turned basically in stir frying food should kept in motion.



2.3.2 Deep Frying

This method is mainly used to fry the ingredients to crisp. It uses more edible oil then stir frying .the ingredients should be fully submerged in oil for crisp textured food. Deep fried recipes are not just used in Chinese cuisine but all kind of cuisines.



2.3.3 Boiling

Boiling could be considered as the simplest and popular among all the Chinese cooking method. In this prepared ingredients are placed in wok along with water and proper seasoning till the surface. The water continuously agitated by the large bubbles. It takes shorter time than braising. This method is used to prepare various stocks and soups.



2.3.4 Sautéing

Sautéing is similar and different both to the stir frying. In this method heat should be lower than stir frying and there is no need to toss and turn the ingredients at all the time. A chef just turn over the ingredients to another side from time to time the famous dishes are sauté dumplings and sautéed fish.



2.3.5 Simmering

Simmering is always used the soups and stocks. In this method lower heat is used to just keep the water boiling but not totally boiling. In this method ingredients should be cooked for long time in order to melt nutrients and make a better flavour.



2.3.6 Braising

Braising, this word comes from French word braiser. It's a technique that uses both dry heat cooking and wet heat cooking. Firstly the food usually seared at a high temperature to brown it and give it a nice crust. Then a small amount of liquid is added and the temperature is turned down low, to cook for a longer amount of time.



2.3.7 Steaming

Steaming method is more popular now days as it keeps flavours and food nutrients due to use of steam temperature. In this process ingredients are placed in a steaming basket normally made of bamboo wood. This is placed over water in steamer pot. The most common steam dishes are steam egg and steamed dumplings.



2.4 CHINESE KITCHEN EQUIPMENTS AND UTENSILS

Cooking utensils and equipments plays a major role in preparation and presentation of a dish. Every cuisine has its own special equipments so as the Chinese cuisine. Tasty Chinese foods have always had close relationships with both chefs' cooking techniques and their cooking utensils. Some of them look little different from the other cuisines. Following are the some common Chinese kitchen equipments and utensils

2.4.1 Wok and Wok Lid

Wok is most important Chinese kitchen cooking tool. Many Chinese dishes are cooked using a wok, which is a wide and somewhat shallow domed pot that gets wickedly hot when you have a good flame going. Woks are a multi-functional piece of cookware. They are used for almost any type of cooking including deep-frying, stir-frying, roasting, steaming, stewing, braising, and even boiling. Most of them are made from carbon steel or iron. There are many types of wok, including round-bottom, flat-bottom, electric, stick, and non-stick types.

A handy wok lid is also required for steaming, boiling, and bringing up the temperature for things that need a bit of a longer cooking time.



2.4.2 Wok Ring

Now days, some ranges come with a big wok burner, which has that bigger flame needed for authentic Chinese cooking. It ensures that your wok won't slide around while you're

cooking. If you have a regular-sized gas or electric stove these aren't strictly necessary, but helpful nevertheless.



2.4.3 Metal Wok Spatula

Chinese cooking requires a good metal spatula for cooking. A chef needs different spatula and hook to prepare different types of dishes. They are again subdivided into two different categories:

- Metal wok spatula
- Metal wok round spoon
- **Metal wok spatula:** for most of the stir fry items like fried rice, glutinous rice cakes, they might stick with the bottom of the pan while cooking.



(Metal wok spatula)

- **Metal wok round spoon:** metal wok round spoon is required to make other gravy or liquidly dishes like soups and dishes made with different types of sauces.



(Metal wok round spoon)

2.4.4 Chinese Wire Strainer

A Chinese wire strainer is used for **straining, skimming, and deep-frying** and seen in every Chinese restaurant around the world. The handle is made of the bamboo wood and head is made up of stainless steel wire. It helps in taking out food items for hot oil while cooking.



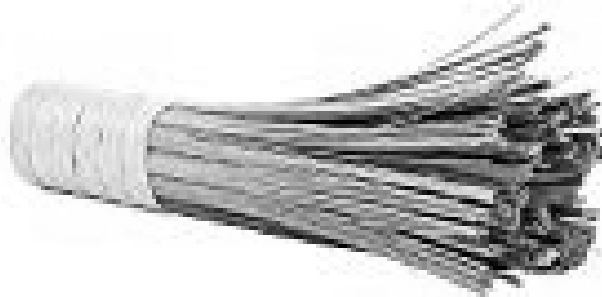
2.4.5 Cleaver or Chopper

Cleaver is used in Chinese's kitchen to do different types of cuttings like chopping, slicing, dicing, mincing etc. it is also used for deboning of meat. It is made of stainless steel with wooden handle.



2.4.6 Wok Brush

A wok brush is very helpful in cleaning of wok. It is made with bamboo. The size of the brush is bigger than the other cleaning brush. This is the essential part of the Chinese kitchen around the world.



2.4.7 Steam Basket

The steam basket is used in Chinese kitchen to steam various types of food items like steamed dim Sims etc. the food is placed in stem baskets and placed in the metal steamer for steaming. The steam baskets come in various sizes and made of bamboo only.



2.4.8 Steamer

Steaming is a very healthy way to cook and the different kinds of steamers are widely used Chinese cooking equipment. Chinese use bamboo or aluminum steamers quite often for steaming dumplings and buns, fish, meats or vegetables. A whole meal can be prepared at one go, each dish stacked up on a separate basket and cooked all at once very efficiently. This is one of the favorite cooking utensils of Chinese kitchen. Now days Steamers are widely used in western kitchens also.



2.4.9 Rice Cooker

Rice cooker is also used widely in Chinese kitchen for pressure boiling, steaming rice and other things. Now day's electronic rice cookers are used in Chinese kitchen. Rice cookers are more heat efficient, as they are well insulated and maintain steam pressure well. They are also safer and more reliable. Food remains hot in this even after cooking process is over for longer time due to the various function installed in it, that to without burning the food.

Sometimes the Chinese kitchen equipments looks little awkward if compared with the normal kitchen equipments but they are very helpful in preparing various types of Chinese dishes. Except these entire special equipments Chinese kitchen uses some other which are used in every kitchen around the world like strainers, cooking chopsticks,



colander, sizzling platters, grade sheet pans, stock pot, chopping knives, rolling pins, ovens, graters, lemon squeeze etc.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1. Write a short note on 'Methods of Cooking used in cooking of Chinese dishes'.

2. List the various equipments that are used especially for preparation and cooking of Chinese cuisine.

2.5 INGREDIENTS AND DISHES

In Chinese cuisine, sauce is one of the most important aspects to determine the taste of the food. In Chinese food culture there are four main sauce flavours: sweet, savoury, sour and spicy. Each regional cuisine in china utilizes the sauces and flavours differently. Here we will discuss about the different sauces used in Chinese kitchen culture.

2.5.1 Sweet Sauces

Sweet Bean Sauce: This sauce is popular in north china basically Beijing region. This sauce has dark brown colour with thick paste consistency. Sweet sauce is made with wheat flour, sugar, salt and fermented yellow soybeans. The fermentation process which includes

glucose makes it taste sweet. Famous dishes include Beijing roast duck, shredded pork, jianbing, zhajiangmain.



(Beijing roast duck)

Hoisin Sauce: This sauce is basically found in dishes special to Southern China, such as Guangdong, it is popular in stir-fries, meat glazing and as a dipping sauce. This sauce is made with soybeans, white distilled vinegar, sugar, salt, garlic, red chili peppers, and wheat. Some famous dishes are Spring Rolls, Mushu Pork, and Char Siu. The Chinese name of this sauce actually means seafood sauce, but it is not solely reserved for seafood, nor does it contain any seafood. In the UK, it's called plum sauce, even though it doesn't contain any plums either.



(Spring Rolls)

2.5.2 Sour Sauces

Black Vinegar: There are many different kinds of vinegar, but the most common found in China is Black Vinegar. Most Chinese restaurants have this sauce on their tables to add flavor to noodles, rice and dumplings. It has an inky black color, malty flavor but very watery consistency. It's more in line with the sharp flavor of Western vinegars than the other Chinese vinegars. This sauce is made with Fermented black glutinous rice, wheat, millet or sorghum. Some famous dishes includes Sweet and Sour Pork, Hot and Sour

Soup, Hot and Sour Shredded Potato, Vinegar Soaked Chinese Cabbage, and dipping for dumplings.



(Black Vinegar)



(Sweet and Sour Pork)

Rice Vinegar: White rice vinegar is similar to black vinegar but is distinct in color, ingredients and taste., white rice vinegar tends to be more acidic but milder in taste than black vinegar. Rice vinegar is made with yellow wine (huangjiu). Some famous dishes includes Cold Noodles with Shredded Chicken, Korean Sushi



(Rice Vinegar)



(Cold Noodles with Shredded Chicken)

2.5.3 Savory Sauces

Soy Sauce: Soy sauce comes from 2nd Century AD China and eventually spread to all parts of East Asia for use in cooking and as a condiment. Soy sauce was historically an

expensive ingredient used to salt food. Today, soy sauce is very common in Chinese cooking, especially in stir-fries. It can either be brewed or blended; resulting in different levels of savory, salty tastes. soy sauce is made with soybeans, wheat & brine. Some famous dishes include- Beef Chow Fun, Soy Sauce Chicken, and Braised Pork Belly.



(Soy Sauce)



(Beef Chow Fun)

Oyster Sauce: Oyster Sauce was invented by Lee Kam Sheung in Guangdong in the late 1800s. The story goes he was making oysters in boiling water, he left them in too long and when he lifted the lid, the soup was brownish and had a fragrant aroma. Unlike soy sauce, oyster sauce has a much thicker consistency and is used in cooking to add savory flavors to a dish. This sauce is made with Oysters essence, sugar, salt, cornstarch. Some famous dishes include Hainan Chicken Rice, Buddha's Delight, Wonton Noodles, Lo Mein.



(Oyster Sauce)



(Buddha's Delight)

Sesame Paste: One of the most popular fragrant flavorings in China, Sesame Paste has a thick consistency similar to peanut butter. Made from roasted sesame seeds, there are two different types of sesame paste: White and Black. Chinese sesame paste is nutty, dark, rich and savory. It goes perfect as a hot pot dipping sauce or on cold noodles and salad. Sesame paste is made with 100% pure sesame seeds. Some famous dishes include Hot Pot Dipping Sauce, Cold Sesame Noodles, Hot Dry Noodles, and Salad.



(Sesame Paste)



(Cold Sesame Noodles)

2.5.4 Spicy Sauces

Sacha Sauce: This sauce is Popular in Guangdong and Taiwan, Sacha sauce has many different uses in Chinese cooking rather than just sauce. It can be used as a base for soups, marinating for meats, seasoning for stir fries, and dipping sauce for hot pot. Sacha sauce is made with Soybean oil, garlic, shallots, chillies, brill's fish, and dried shrimp. Some popular dishes are Beef with Shacha Sauce, Shacha Pork, Shacha Noodles.



(Sacha Sauce)



(Shacha Noodles)

Doubanjiang: If you've been to any local Chinese restaurant, you'll recognize this Spicy Sauce. Most restaurants make their own spicy sauce or provide the most popular Chinese brand of Doubanjiang: Lao Gan Ma. Popular in Sichuan, the spicy version of this sauce

contains peppers as well as soybeans, salt and rice. Just like hot sauce, Chinese people like to put doubanjiang on almost everything. Doubanjiang is made with Chili peppers, soybeans, broad beans, salt, rice and spices. Some popular dishes are Mapo Tofu, Twice Cooked Pork Belly, Fish-Flavor Shredded Pork and Braised Fish.



(Doubanjiang)



(Mapo Tofu)

2.6 CHINESE VEGETABLES

The vegetables are important part of Chinese cuisine. A few of them are discussed below:

- Bok Choy
- Shanghai bok choy
- Dwarf bok choy:
- Chinese Broccoli:
- Chinese Water Spinach
- Chinese Water Spinach
- Chinese Celery
- Bamboo Shoots
- Winter bamboo shoots
- Spring bamboo shoots
- Fava Beans
- Chinese Long Beans
- Chinese Eggplant
- Lotus Root
- Green Garlic
- Garlic Scapes

Bok Choy: Bok choy word comes from Cantonese pronunciation. Bok choy comes in three sizes small, medium & large. Like any leafy green, these are typically pretty sandy. They come in different varieties also white bok choy & green bok choy. This leafy vegetable is one of the favorite vegetable of Chinese people and you will find bok choy in almost every dishes in Chinese kitchen culture. Green bok choy is also called “Shanghai baby bok choy.”



White Bok Choy



Green Bok Choy

Other types of bok choy used in Chinese kitchen culture are Shanghai bok choy and dwarf bok choy.

Shanghai Bok Choy: this type of bok choy is primarily found in most of the Chinese restaurants. They come in two sizes small and large. But most of the chef's prefer small size bok choy as they are most soft and tender. These compact tender bok choy plants not only taste better but they



make for a much nicer presentation and are essential for dishes like the Braised Chinese Mushrooms with Baby Bok Choy.



Dwarf Bok Choy: dwarf bok choy are sometimes called and labeled as *nai you bai cai* which means cream bok choy. Dwarf bok choy look like a miniature version of the classic white bok choy. the dark green leaves of this bok choy are distinctively curly and sweet tasting.

The famous dish made with this green leafy vegetable is beef vegetable stir fry.



Beef Vegetable Stir Fry

Chinese Broccoli:

Chinese broccoli has long green stems and dark, thick leaves. Chinese broccoli is sweeter and much less bitter than broccoli rabe. This Chinese broccoli, *jiè lán* in Mandarin



region or *gai lan* in Cantonese region. This Chinese broccoli is not called fresh if the stalks

are too thick; having yellow leafs and has many open flowers. The **famous dish** includes like chicken with Chinese broccoli.



Chicken with Chinese Broccoli

Chinese Water Spinach: Chinese water spinach is grown in water or damp soil. This is also called by the name of *ong choy* in Cantonese region or *kōng xīn cài* in Mandarin region, which means hollow heart vegetable. It is also known as Kang Kung in Southeast Asia.

Chinese Water Spinach is sold in large bunches at the market. In fact, the stalks can get as long as eighteen inches. When cooking these Chinese vegetables, they



are cut into 3-4 inch lengths and cooked with garlic and fermented bean curd. This Chinese water spinach is considered an invasive and noxious weed in some parts of the country, but, for now, its cultivation and sale is still allowed. The famous dish includes Stir fried Ong Choy with XO Sauce!

Chinese Napa Cabbage: Napa cabbage is large, pale green and very mild in flavor. Cabbage originated near the Beijing region of China. It's called *da bai cai* in mandarin region which means big bok choy. Napa cabbage is used in soups, stir-fries, slaws, and many noodle and dumpling dishes. The water content of this vegetable is quite high, and, when cooked, it has a pleasantly sweet and juicy taste to it. Some famous dishes includes pot stickers or pork buns, Shanghai Style Spring



Rolls or Stir-Fried Rice Cakes (Nian Gao) and also for lo mein noodle dishes.



Chinese Celery: Chinese celery is longer and thinner than regular celery and has a very strong celery flavor. The tenderest bunch of Chinese celery can be a little tough and have lots of fiber and celery flavor. Chinese cooks use this celery mostly for stir-fries, and it does produce a great flavor. The famous dish

includes Jen's Tofu Stir-fry.

Bamboo Shoots: These are the tender shoots of the bamboo plant. Edible bamboo shoots, *zhúsǔn* or simply *sǔn* fall into two broad categories: winter and spring shoots. Spring shoots are larger and a bit tougher than winter shoots. Obviously, it's a very seasonal vegetable, so it is often difficult to find high quality bamboo shoots for the majority of the year.



Winter Bamboo Shoots: Winter bamboo shoots or *dong shun* are usually in season during the late winter months. They are very expensive and cost between \$3 – \$6 per pounds.



They are mostly imported from China. They are tender, sweet tasting and are perfect for any dishes that call for bamboo shoots. The famous dish includes Chicken with Garlic Sauce.

Spring Bamboo Shoots: they are called chūnsūn in Mandarin region. They are seasonal but yet commonly found in China. They are available in late spring months. Yan Du Xian (Shanghainese Salted Pork Soup with Bamboo



Shoots and Tofu), Braised Spring Bamboo Shoots are some of the famous dishes.

Fava Beans: Fava beans, also known as broad beans or candour. They are not very common nor popular in both western and Asian cooking. However, they have their own unique flavour and texture and, when prepared properly, they are very tasty. In Chinese

cooking, fava beans are used for spicy douban sauce and also used to make noodles. Fava Beans with Szechuan Peppercorns are one of the famous dishes.



FAVA BEANS



Fava Beans with Szechuan Peppercorns

Chinese Long Beans: Chinese Long beans, sometimes called snake beans are also called “yardlong beans” because they can grow up to three feet long. Chinese long beans are called jiāngdòu in Chinese, are denser and crunchier than green beans and can be found in different colours, from light and dark green to purple. They are perfect for stir frying with the other vegetables. The darker variety of long beans is generally more dense and tougher yet they are thinner in diameter. The lighter green and slightly thicker long beans and has a similar texture and taste to green beans – tenderer than and not as dense as the dark ones.



CHINESE LONG BEANS



DARK BEANS & LIGHT GREEN BEANS

Chinese Eggplant: These Chinese Eggplants are called *qiézi* in china. The varieties in China of egg plant seem to be a bit thinner and longer than the egg plant found in other parts of the world. Some of favourite eggplant dishes include the classic Chinese Eggplant with Garlic Sauce and Chinese Stuffed Eggplant & Cantonese Eggplant Casserole.



Chinese Eggplant



Cantonese Eggplant Casserole

Lotus Root: This long white, yellowish lotus root or *lián'ou* in china. It has a wheel of holes running through the middle. This is one of the most loved root vegetables in Chinese cooking. Harvesting these long unwieldy roots is an extremely labour intensive process that must be done by hands. It involves carefully digging them out of wet, clay mud. They're quite long when harvested. While selecting these, make sure they are heavy, firm, and have a fresh, clean smell. Each piece must be washed thoroughly, as they have a natural sap that can come off as slimy if prepared improperly. Cut off any dark spots. After it's peeled, it's usually sliced into thin rounds. The famous dish includes Ma La Xiang Guo (Spicy Numbing Stir-fry Pot) or Crispy Stuffed Lotus Root with Pork (Chinese New Year's traditional dish)



Green Garlic: Green garlic is generally called as *suàn* and in Cantonese pronounced as "syun". Green garlic is not that common of an ingredient and many times is mistaken for scallions or leeks but like garlic, it is very pungent in flavor. Green garlic is also used many ways in western cooking for their flavor and color in sauces and soups. In China, there are some signature dishes that use garlic greens; one that comes to mind is a Human dish cooked with preserved pork belly and garlic greens.



Garlic Scapes: Garlic scapes are called dà suàn huā in china which literal means garlic flower. They are the flower bud of garlic. Cantonese people call this garlic scape “syun sum” or “garlic hearts”. These buds and stems are removed from the garlic plant in order for the garlic bud to develop and grow large. Garlic scrapes taste just like garlic and is common in China. They are regularly available in large quantities during the summer months and Chinese love to have them stir-fried with some julienned peppers and chunks of pork.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-II

1. Explain various sauces used in Chinese cuisine?

2. Write short notes on Chinese leafy vegetables.

2.7 DRY CHINESE SPICES AND CONDIMENTS

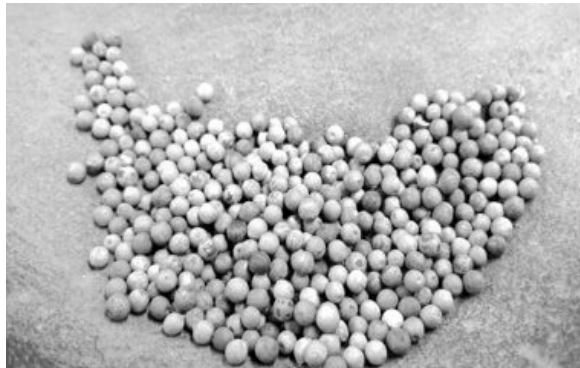
Monosodium

Glutamate (MSG):

MSG is called wèijīng in china. It is a reproduction of naturally occurring glutamates. It intensifies flavor and is used in many processed and restaurant foods. From the older generations of china Monosodium Glutamate is called the taste enhancer.



Adding Monosodium Glutamate is like adding a touch from master chef.



White Pepper: White pepper is called báihújiāo in china. The white peppercorn has a distinctly different taste than the black peppercorn and is always the preferred choice for Chinese cooking. A little-known fact is that white and black pepper both come from the same plant but is processed differently to yield different

flavors. White pepper has a much hotter taste that follows right down to the back of your throat, giving a prominent flavor to soups.

Red Sichuan Peppercorn: the Red Sichuan (Szechuan) peppercorn is called hóng huājiāo in china. It gives Sichuan cuisine its distinctive flavor. It's actually not a peppercorn at all, but a berry from the prickly ash tree. It's used both in whole and ground form. This peppercorn is known for the slight numbing sensation it leaves on the tongue.



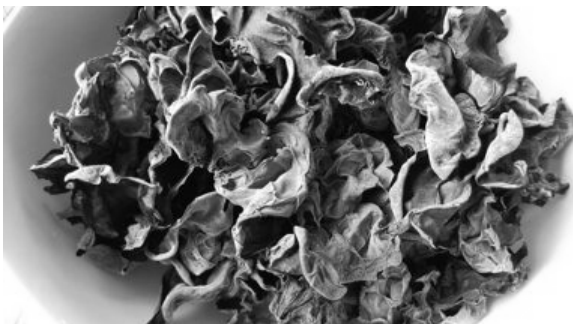
Star Anise: Star anise is called bajiao in china. It plays a key role in slow-cooked dishes. Star Anise is an essential ingredient that provides its distinctive taste in dishes like Chinese Braised Oxtails, Soy Sauce Chicken and Lanzhou Beef Noodle soup.



Five Spice Powder: This famous 5 spice mixture is called wǔxiāngfěn in china. It is usually made from cinnamon, star anise, cloves, Sichuan peppercorns & fennel. The blend combines the five primary flavors of Chinese cuisine: sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, and salty. It is widely used in Chinese cooking and is occasionally set out on the dinner table mixed with salt and pepper for adding flavour to certain chicken dishes. It's usually used for marinades and dry rubs for meats. Sometimes added as a spice in dish like fried rice. Some famous dishes are five spice fried chicken, roast chicken, Chinese ribs, roast pork, roast duck, Roasted Chicken with Sticky Rice, Easy Five-Spice Baked Chicken and Five Spice Fried Chicken.

2.8 CHINESE DRIED AND PRESERVED INGREDIENTS

Chinese Dried Black Mushrooms: In Chinese cooking, dried mushrooms are favored over fresh, as the drying process really enhances their flavor, similar to dried vs. fresh herbs. These mushrooms are used in a range of dishes and usually are an “accompanying” ingredient. The mushrooms really add body and meatiness to vegetarian and vegan dishes like braised tofu with



vegetables. These dried mushrooms have an intense meaty flavor that enhances the flavor of soups, stir-fries, and braised dishes. The many different varieties range in color from light to dark brown and in pattern from smoother to a more flowery pattern.

Wood Ears: Wood ears or black wood ears are called hēi mù'ěr in Mandarin region in china. it is a dark and firm kind of mushroom with a very interesting consistency that's

quite different from normal variety of mushroom. Also called “mook yee” in Cantonese, black wood ears have a slightly crunchy texture when cold and soft and a luxurious texture when cooked in stews and soups. This is one of the favourites of the edible fungi. They are always sold dry and consequently, they also need to be soaked in cold water before cooking. Often used in braised dishes and stir-fry dishes, they pair well with mushrooms or lily flowers. Braised Chicken and Mushrooms and Tilapia and Mixed Vegetable Stir-fry are the famous dishes of wood ear.

Dried Lily Flowers: This Chinese dried specialty ingredient is also referred to as “lily buds,” “golden needles” or jīn zhēn in Mandarin region or “gum zhen” in Cantonese region. Lily buds have a slight fruity, floral scent and are used in a variety of traditional Chinese dishes. The most common pairing of ingredients are with black or wood ear fungus and dried black mushrooms in dishes such hot and sour soup. These lily flower buds must be washed and re-hydrated, and, before using them, the hard stem tip (the base of the lily flower) should be cut off. Soak these twice, squeezing them dry after soaking for the first 5 minutes and changing the water once since lily flowers can have a slightly sour, strong taste if only soaked once. The popular dishes include Steamed Chicken with Mushrooms & Dried Lily Flowers.



Dried lilly flower



Steamed Chicken with Mushrooms & Dried Lily Flowers

Dried Red Dates – Red Jujube: Dried red dates or red jujube are pronounced *hóng zǎo* in Mandarin region and “hong zo” in Cantonese region, are often used in sweet dessert items. They’re usually used for cooking in dried form. Dates are especially popular in northern China and are found in savoury as well as sweet desserts.



Dried Lotus Seeds: Lotus seeds or lotus nuts are the seeds of same plants that produce the lotus root. Grown in water, flowers bloom on the surface and form seeds. Lotus seeds are used for soups, tonics. The famous dishes include Lo Han Jai or Buddhist Delight. These dried lotus seeds are used to make the classic filling for Lotus Moon Cakes.



Dried Lotus Seeds



Lotus Moon Cake

Fox Nut Barley: Fox Nut Barley is a white starchy seed. Fox nut barley is the product of a flowering plant grown in the water and in the water lily family. They are a bit similar to lotus seeds but are more chalky and white on the inside and always used in Chinese soups and tonics. The famous dish includes Ching Po Leung Cantonese Herb Pork Bone Soup.



2.9 CHINESE NOODLES AND WRAPPERS

Fresh Noodles: these freshly-made noodles were everywhere in China. These require boiling, rinsing and draining before use. Frozen and refrigerated fresh noodles are also really good.



Hong Kong Style Egg Noodles: These yellow pan-fried noodles are also known as chow mein noodles. It comes in different varieties and are one of the more popular Chinese noodles.



Rice Vermicelli:

These rice noodles, sometimes called as rice sticks, mei fun or mai fun. They are thin, brittle, and white. They're easy to prepare—just soak them in lukewarm water for ten minutes before using in noodle stir-fries. They come in large rectangular blocks in plastic bags, and, generally half of the packet is used in preparing one portion of dish. They are Stored in a cool & dry place.



Rice Cakes: Rice cakes have a chewy consistency just like a thick noodle. They're mostly used in soups and stir-fry's. They come in different shapes, but the most common ones used in Chinese cooking are the small, oval-shaped ones. The famous dish include: Stir-fried Rice Cakes (Nian Gao), Steak and Scallion Rice Cake Stir-Fry, Shanghai Rice Cakes with Greens and classic Shanghai Rice cake dish.

*Rice Cakes**Shanghai Rice Cake Dish*

Long Life Noodles: Long Life Noodles are called yīmiàn or yimein. It symbolizes longevity and can always be found on the banquet table at Chinese celebrations. Yi Mein noodles are also known as e-fu noodles. This type of long noodle symbolizes longevity. They are a more festive and traditional. Chinese longevity noodles have a spongy chewy texture since they are fried before they are dried. The texture is nice as long as you don't overcook them. Chinese longevity noodles are a bit expensive. The famous dish includes Banquet style Yi Mein Longevity Noodle.



Long Life Noodles



Banquet Style Yi Mein Longevity Noodle

Wonton Wrappers: The round skins are used to make pot-stickers, while the square skins are used for wontons. The wrappers come in both a yellow egg variety and a white variety and vary in thickness. The thinner varieties are for boiling, while the thicker varieties can be boiled or used in pan-fried or deep-fried recipes. The thicker white version is used for most of dumpling recipes.



Dumpling Skins: Pre-made dumpling wrappers come in both yellow and white versions and also vary in thickness. They are always thicker than wonton wrappers. Wonton wrappers are definitely different from dumpling wrappers.



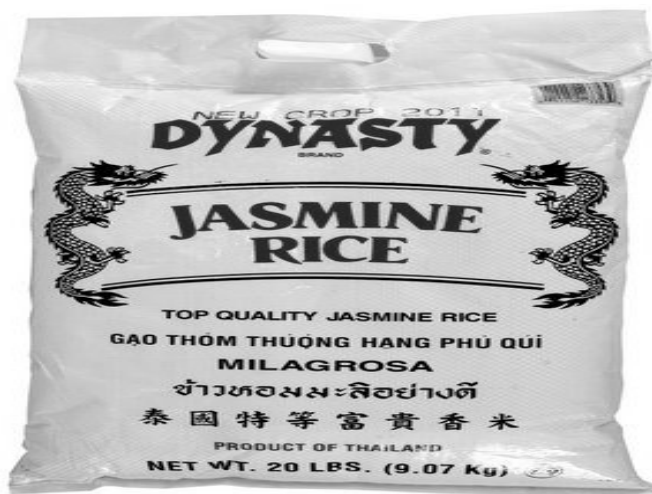
CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-III

1 Write short notes on ‘Chinese Noodles’.

2. Write short notes on ‘Chinese Dried And Preserved Ingredients’.

2.10 CHINESE INGREDIENTS – RICE AND FLOURS

White Rice: Chinese white rice is usually a medium to long grain variety. White rice is available in different quality in different regions of china. Long grain rice has a long kernel, but it's not quite as long as Basmati rice. Most of the local Chinese restaurant uses this white rice in their menu. When cooked, the grains should be relatively separate, light, and fluffy—perfect for making a batch of fried rice.



Jasmine Scented Rice: Jasmine scented rice is a high quality type of long grain rice that usually comes from Thailand. Jasmine rice has a wonderful aroma that smells a little like popcorn when it is cooking. The individual

grains have a nice sheen to them when cooked properly, and the texture and flavour is unequivocally luxurious. This is one of the favourite types of rice of Chinese people. Chinese people prefer those restaurants which use jasmine scented rice in their menu.

Short Grain Rice: Short grain rice has a short and oval shaped kernel. Most people know medium to short grain rice's from Japanese sushi or Arborio rice, which is used to make risotto or rice pudding. When cooked, these grains are soft and clump together more so than long grain rice but not as much as sticky rice.



Chinese Black Rice: Chinese black rice is becoming more popular now days. Still it's difficult to find Chinese black rice easily. This Chinese rice is included by Chinese people in healthy diet that's why they use black rice in a multi-grain porridge to remain fit and healthy. Chinese black rice is high in antioxidants and people from china are trying to fit this rice in their daily meals.



Corn Starch: Corn starch is used extensively for thickening in many Chinese stir-fries and dishes with lots of gravy and almost always mixed with water into slurry before it is used. Most of the Chinese gravies are thickened with the slurry Made with corn starch.



Corn Flour: Corn flour is a finely ground corn meal and it is good as a coating for certain fried foods. Corn starch & corn flour are all different ingredients made from different types of corn using different processes. This is the most easy-to-find ingredient of Chinese kitchen culture. Corn flour is found in most of the Chinese dishes around the world.



2.11 TOFU AND BEEN CURD

Regular/Firm Tofu: This is one of the most common kinds of tofu in china. It has so many different types of uses according to the cooking style. It can be pan fried as a side dish, substitute for meat in stir fries, or put it into soups and braised dishes. In some dishes regular tofu works better and is easier to handle.



Soft Tofu: As the name suggests Soft tofu is very soft but has some body which allowing it to be handled and cut more easily. It holds its shape better when cooked. The soft steamed tofu really goes well with fish. It complements the fish as the fish is also very soft. Some of the famous dishes include Mapo Tofu , Hunan Steamed Fish with Salted Chilies and Tofu and Quick and Easy Braised Tofu.



Soft Tofu



Quick And Easy Braised Tofu

Five Spiced Dried Tofu:

five-spiced tofu is called wu xiang doufu gan in china. It is dark brown from outside and white from inside. It is made in small blocks not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick. It can be thinly sliced and cut into cubes. It can be eaten raw or tossed with some vegetables or stir fried with garden green fresh vegetables. This type of tofu goes well with hot and sour soup.



Tofu “Skin”: This type of tofu is compressed into thin sheets. In some western countries this is often pre-packaged, but in Beijing, people buy it fresh, just a few sheets at a time. There are plenty more creative ways to use these tofu skins. People make “gold bars”

during Chinese New Year, which are tofu skins rolled with a veggie-pork filling, kind of heavily filled spring roll.

Fried Bean Curd – Soy Puffs: They come in various shapes, including triangles, squares, and cubes. Each shape has a slightly different texture. They are also labelled as “soy puffs.”

Some famous dishes include Shanghai-Style Braised Pork Belly (Hong Shao Rou) or Red Cooked Pork (Hong Shao Rou).



Fermented Bean Curds: this is used as a flavoring agent rather than a protein. It comes in many different types and variations, but the most common categories are white and red. They are usually eaten with rice congee at a traditional Chinese breakfast meal. Being a fermented food it's really delicious and lends an amazing flavor to anything you add it to. Fermented bean curds more often used in marinades like Fried Chinese Spareribs and for all types of dishes including vegetable stir fries.



Red Fermented Bean Curd: Red bean curd is a type of preserved bean curd that consists of cubes of bean curd that have been preserved in rice wine, fermented red rice and other seasonings. The red fermented bean curd is more often used in stews and braised meat dishes due to its deep, rich flavor but is also used in vegetarian dishes like Buddha's Delight (Lo Han Jai)

White Fermented Bean Curd: The white fermented bean curd has a more delicate flavor and is most often eaten with rice congee in southern China. It used to be considered a poor man's food, because during tough times, when meat and even vegetables were scarce, people would eat their congee with fermented bean curd as a daily staple. Most of the vegetable dishes are made with this white fermented bean curd. Water spinach stir fry is one of the famous dishes.



White Fermented Bean Curd



Water Spinach Stir Fry

Tofu Knots: These are a thin tofu skin folded and tied into little knots. They're primarily used in braised dishes or soups, as all the flavor of a sauce or soup they're cooked in gets caught into the little folds of each knot. These tofu knot can be easily added to any braised pork dish like Shanghai-Style Braised Pork Belly (Hong Shao Rou). Shanghai Pork Soup with Bamboo & Tofu (Yan Du Xian) is one of the famous dishes.



Tofu knot



shanghai pork soup with bamboo & tofu

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-III

1 Write short notes on 'Tofu'.

2. Write short notes on 'Rice and Flour in Chinese Dishes'.

2.12 CHINESE DISHES

In this section recipe of few representative and popular dishes of Chinese cuisine is given. Some of them are as under:

- Sweet Corn and Chicken Soup
- Chicken Noodle Soup
- Hot and Sour Soup
- Vegetable Chow Chow
- Prawns in Garlic Sauce
- Mandarin Fish
- Sweet and Sour Pork
- Chicken Chili
- Hakka Noodles
- Chow Mein
- Chop Suey
- Vegetable Fried Rice
- Chinese Fried Rice

2.12.1 Sweet Corn and Chicken Soup

Ingredients

i.	Creamed corn	1 tin
ii.	Chicken stock	400 ml
iii.	Corn flour	20 gm
iv.	Celery	15 gm
v.	Garlic	1 flake
vi.	Ginger	small piece
vii.	Bacon fat	1 tsp
viii.	Chicken dice-cooked	60 gm
ix.	Eggs	2 no
x.	Salt and pepper	to taste

Instructions

- i. Chop celery, garlic and ginger fine. Sauté in bacon fat.
- ii. Add chicken stock and cook for about half an hour. Add salt and pepper.
- iii. Mix contents of can well.
- iv. Add strained stock, blended well with corn flour.
- v. Beat egg slightly. Pour over corn soup and stir till set.
- vi. Serve piping hot, with soya sauce and chilies in vinegar.

2.12.2 Chicken Noodle Soup

Ingredients

i.	Noodles	½ pkt
ii.	Carrots	200 gm
iii.	Spring onions	2 Bunches
iv.	Salt and Pepper	To taste
v.	Chicken stock	1.3 liter
vi.	Soya Sauce	a dash
vii.	Chicken shreds	450 gm
viii.	Cabbage	150 gm
ix.	French Beans	125 gm
x.	Ajinomoto	a pinch

Instructions

- i. Boil noodles, drain and keep aside.
- ii. Clean and cut all vegetables into long thin strips.
- iii. Heat chicken stock in pan. Add shredded chicken and all the vegetables.
- iv. Add seasoning and soya sauce.
- v. Put in boiled noodles and serve hot.

2.12.3 Hot and Sour Soup

Ingredients

i.	Chicken stock	750 ml
ii.	Shredded carrots	70 gm
iii.	Shredded capsicums	70 gm
iv.	Shredded spring onions	70 gm
v.	Pepper	2 gm
vi.	Chili oil	10 ml
vii.	Shredded chicken	70 gm
viii.	Salt	5 gm
ix.	Soya sauce	5 ml
x.	Vinegar	10 ml
xi.	Corn flour	20 gm

Instructions:

- i. Bring chicken stock to a boil.
- ii. Add shredded vegetables and cook for 3 minutes.
- iii. Add shredded chicken. Add salt and soya sauce.

- iv. When stock begins boiling, add corn flour dissolved in water.
- v. Pour a few drops of chili oil, vinegar and pepper powder into each soup bowl.
- vi. Pour hot soup over and serve hot, garnished with chopped spring onion leaves.

2.12.4 Vegetable Chow Chow

Ingredients

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------|--------|
| i. | Chicken stock | 750 ml |
| ii. | Shredded carrots | 70 gm |
| iii. | Shredded capsicums | 70 gm |
| iv. | Shredded spring onions | 70 gm |
| v. | Pepper | 2 gm |
| vi. | Chili oil | 10 ml |
| vii. | Shredded chicken | 70 gm |
| viii. | Salt | 5 gm |
| ix. | Soya sauce | 5 ml |
| x. | Vinegar | 10 ml |
| xi. | Corn flour | 20 gm |

Instructions:

- vii. Bring chicken stock to a boil.
- viii. Add shredded vegetables and cook for 3 minutes.
- ix. Add shredded chicken. Add salt and soya sauce.
- x. When stock begins boiling, add corn flour dissolved in water.
- xi. Pour a few drops of chili oil, vinegar and pepper powder into each soup bowl.
- xii. Pour hot soup over and serve hot, garnished with chopped spring onion leaves.

2.12.5 Prawns in Garlic Sauce

Ingredients

- | | | |
|------|------------------|---------------|
| i. | King size prawns | 12 no |
| ii. | Spring onions | 01 |
| iii. | Ginger | 1 small piece |
| iv. | Stock | as desired |
| v. | Corn flour | 50 gm |

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------|----------|
| vi. | Tomato sauce | 100 gm |
| vii. | Salt and Pepper | to taste |
| viii. | Garlic | 7 cloves |
| ix. | Oil | for deep |
| | frying | |

Instructions

- i. Shell and de-vein prawns. Wash well
- ii. Heat oil for deep frying. Add prawns and remove after a minute.
- iii. Heat a little oil in pan. Add finely crushed garlic and ginger and then add prawns and sauté for a minute.
- iv. Add seasoning, tomato sauce and stock. Add diced spring onions and corn flour blended in a little cold water.
- v. Cook till gravy thickens.
- vi. Remove and serve hot.

2.12.6 Mandarin Fish

Ingredients

- | | | |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|
| i. | Pomfret or salmon | 01 |
| ii. | Carrots | 50 gm |
| iii. | French beans | 50 gm |
| iv. | Chicken stock | 50 ml |
| v. | Soya sauce | 2 tsp |
| vi. | Corn flour | 100 gm |
| vii. | Oil | 20 ml |
| viii. | Oil | for deep frying |
| ix. | Green peas | 100 gm |
| x. | Spring onions | 2 bunches |
| xi. | Cabbage | 50 gm |
| xii. | Tomatoes | 50 gm |
| xiii. | Salt and pepper | to taste |
| xiv. | Onions | 100 gm |
| xv. | Ajinomoto | a pinch |

Instructions

- i. Clean fish and coat with seasonal corn flour. Deep fry and set aside.
- ii. Cut all vegetables into thin long strips.
- iii. Heat 20 ml oil in pan and sauté all vegetables.

- iv. Add chicken stock. Add seasoning, salt, pepper, soya sauce and Ajinomoto.
- v. When ingredients are cooked, thicken with little corn flour blended in cold water.
- vi. When ready, remove from fire.
- vii. Pour over fried fish and serve hot.

2.12.7 Sweet and Sour Pork

Ingredients

i.	Lean Pork	500 gm
ii.	Onions	250 gm
iii.	Pineapple	125 gm
iv.	Tomatoes	250 gm
v.	Vinegar	25 ml
vi.	Corn flour	50 gm
vii.	Eggs	2 no
viii.	Celery	125 gm
ix.	Sugar	125 gm
x.	Oil	125 ml
xi.	Salt and pepper	to taste
xii.	Soya sauce	50 ml

Instructions

- i. Boil pork in a little water; season it with salt and pepper, till soft, leave to cool.
- ii. Cut into small cubes.
- iii. Make a thick batter of eggs and corn flour adding a little water if necessary.
- iv. Dip meat into batter and deep fry in oil. Drain and leave aside.
- v. Wash and cut vegetables in thick slices.
- vi. Remove extra oil from pan. Fry finely chopped garlic and ginger. Add tomatoes, onions and pineapple pieces.
- vii. Add chopped celery. Cook well and puree vegetables. Strain through a soup sieve.
- viii. Add soya sauce, sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper.
- ix. Cook till gravy is thick.
- x. Pour over pork.

2.12.8 Chicken Chili

Ingredients

i.	Chicken	1
ii.	Soya sauce	15 ml
iii.	Chilies (shredded without seeds)	200 gm
iv.	Ginger	15 mg
v.	Sugar	10 gm
vi.	Oil	10 ml
vii.	Seasoning	to taste
viii.	Oil	for deep frying

Instructions:

- i. Boil whole chicken with seasoning till cooked.
- ii. Cool chicken and cut into even pieces. Sprinkle with soya sauce, rubbing it well into chicken.
- iii. Heat oil and deep fry chicken. When dark brown remove.
- iv. Heat oil in pan. Add shredded green chilies and ginger. Add fried chicken and sauté. Add a dash of soya sauce and sugar. Remove from fire and serve hot.

2.12.9 Hakka Noodles

Ingredients

i.	Noodles	400 gm
ii.	Cabbage	60 gm
iii.	Carrots	60 gm
iv.	Ham	60 gm
v.	Shredded chicken	60 gm
vi.	Capsicum	60 gm
vii.	Spring onions	½ bunch
viii.	Bean sprouts	60 gm
ix.	Salt	5 mg
x.	Soya sauce	1 tsp
xi.	Ajinomoto	pinch

Instructions

- i. Boil noodles till soft.
- ii. Shred all vegetables.
- iii. Shred chicken and ham.

- iv. Heat oil in a wok and stir fry all vegetables.
- v. Add salt, Ajinomoto and soya sauce.
- vi. Add noodles, mix well and serve immediately.

2.12.10 Chow Mein

Ingredients

i.	Noodles	200 gm
ii.	Chicken or pork (cooked and shredded)	200 gm
iii.	Cabbage shredded	200 gm
iv.	Bamboo shoots	2
v.	Eggs	2
vi.	Chicken stock	½ cup
vii.	Mushrooms	60 gm
viii.	Garlic	1 flake
ix.	Ginger	small piece
x.	Leeks	2 stalks
xi.	Soya sauce	2 tbsp
xii.	Corn flour	2 tsp
xiii.	Salt	to taste
xiv.	Oil	for frying

Instructions

- i. Boil and drain noodles. Heat oil and pour in slightly beaten egg. Cook until set. Remove from pan. Cool and cut into strips.
- ii. Reheat pan. Add oil and fry crushed garlic, sliced leeks, shredded bamboo shoots, cabbage, mushrooms, sliced ginger and shredded meat.
- iii. Add stock and soya sauce blended with corn flour. Simmer until sauce thickens.
- iv. In another pan, fry cooked noodles in deep fat for about 5 minutes. Remove on to a hot dish. Garnish with egg strips and pour meat mixture over noodles.

2.12.11 Chop Suey

Ingredients

i.	Beef, pork, Ham or Bacon	250 gm
ii.	Cabbage	350 gm
iii.	Onions	250 gm
iv.	Carrots	250 gm

Foreign Cuisines (Chinese & Italian)**BHM- 704FT**

v.	Mushrooms	125 gm
vi.	French Beans	125 gm
vii.	Celery	2 sticks
viii.	Bamboo shoots	75 gm
ix.	Tomatoes	2 no
x.	Salt and pepper	to taste
xi.	Oil	for frying

Instructions

- i. Slice meat across the grain and shallow fry in oil.
- ii. Add a little water, cover and cook gently till tender.
- iii. Finely slice cabbage, onions, carrots and also slice mushrooms, bamboo shoots, bean, celery and tomatoes.
- iv. Put some oil into frying pan and fry all vegetables except celery and mushrooms. Season. Add 1 cup water, cover and cook stirring occasionally add more water if necessary, until vegetables are almost tender. Now add mushrooms and celery and when these are cooked, add meat. Serve hot.

2.12.12 Vegetable Fried Rice

Ingredients

i.	Rice (good quality)	400 gm
ii.	Green peas (shelled)	50 gm
iii.	French beans	50 gm
iv.	Carrots	50 gm
v.	Spring onions	1 bunch
vi.	Salt and pepper	to taste
vii.	Soya sauce	15 ml
viii.	Oil	15 ml

Instructions

- i. Prepare boiled rice and chill.
- ii. Dice French beans and carrots. Chop spring onions.
- iii. Parboil French beans and carrots. Boil green peas.
- iv. Heat oil in a pan and sauté green peas, French beans and carrots.
- v. Add cooled boiled rice, breaking up any lumps with the back of spoon.
- vi. Add seasoning and soya sauce.
- vii. Fry rice well. Add chopped spring onions.
- viii. Remove and serve hot.

2.12.13 Chinese Fried Rice

Ingredients

i.	Rice (good quality)	400 gm
ii.	Eggs	2
iii.	Chicken	100 gm
iv.	Shrimps	100 gm
v.	Ham	100 gm
vi.	Soya sauce	15 ml
vii.	Oil	15 ml
viii.	Salt and pepper	to taste
ix.	Spring onions	1 bunch

Instructions:

- i. Prepare boil rice and chill.
- ii. Shred chicken and sauté till almost done.
- iii. Shell and de-vein shrimps.
- iv. Wash well and boil.
- v. Add beaten eggs and make a plain omelet.
- vi. Heat oil in pan.
- vii. Add diced or shredded chicken pieces, whole boiled shrimps and diced ham.
- viii. Add cooled boiled rice and with the back of spoon, break up any lumps. Coat rice with oil. Mix in seasoning and soya sauce. Fry rice well.
- ix. Add chopped spring onions.
- x. Remove and serve hot.

2.13 SUMMARY

In this unit we have studied about Chinese methods of cooking. Chinese chefs give emphasis on the colour, aroma and taste. The dozens of cooking methods are used in Chinese kitchen culture some of the methods of Chinese cooking are as Stir frying, Deep frying, Boiling, Sautéing, Simmering, Braising and Steaming. Cooking utensils and equipments plays a major role in preparation and presentation of a dish. Every cuisine has its own special equipments so as the Chinese cuisine. Tasty Chinese foods have always had close relationships with both chefs' cooking techniques and their cooking utensils. Some of them look little different from the other cuisines. In Chinese cuisine, sauce is one of the most important aspects to determine the taste of the food. In Chinese food culture there are four main sauce flavours: sweet, savoury, sour and spicy. Each regional cuisine in china utilizes the sauces and flavours differently.

2.14 GLOSSARY

Bamboo Shoots: These are the tender shoots of the bamboo plant. Edible bamboo shoots, zhúsǔn or simply sǔn fall into two broad categories: winter and spring shoots. Spring shoots are larger and a bit tougher than winter shoots.

Black Vinegar: There are many different kinds of vinegar, but the most common found in China is Black Vinegar. Most Chinese restaurants have this sauce on their tables to add flavor to noodles, rice and dumplings. It has an inky black color, malty flavor but very watery consistency.

Boiling: boiling could be considered as the simplest and popular among all the Chinese cooking method. In this prepared ingredients are placed in wok along with water and proper seasoning till the surface. The water continuously agitated by the large bubbles. It takes shorter time than braising. This method is used to prepare various stocks and soups.

Bok Choy: Bok choy word comes from Cantonese pronunciation. Bok choy comes in three sizes small, medium & large. Like any leafy green, these are typically pretty sandy.

Braising: this word comes from French word braiser. It's a technique that uses both dry heat cooking and wet heat cooking. Firstly the food usually seared at a high temperature to brown it and give it a nice crust. Then a small amount of liquid is added and the temperature is turned down low, to cook for a longer amount of time.

Chinese Black Rice: Chinese black rice is becoming more popular now days. Still it's difficult to find Chinese black rice easily. This Chinese rice is included by Chinese people in healthy diet that's why they use black rice in a multi-grain porridge to remain fit and healthy.

Chinese Broccoli: Chinese broccoli has long green stems and dark, thick leaves. Chinese broccoli is sweeter and much less bitter than broccoli rabe.

Chinese Celery: Chinese celery is longer and thinner than regular celery and has a very strong celery flavor. The tenderest bunch of Chinese celery can be a little tough and have lots of fiber and celery flavor.

Chinese Dried Black Mushrooms: In Chinese cooking, dried mushrooms are favored over fresh, as the drying process really enhances their flavor, similar to dried vs. fresh herbs. These mushrooms are used in a range of dishes and usually are an "accompanying" ingredient. The mushrooms really add body and meatiness to vegetarian and vegan dishes like braised tofu with vegetables.

Chinese Eggplant: These Chinese Eggplants are called qiézi in china. The varieties in China of egg plant seem to be a bit thinner and longer than the egg plant found in other parts of the world.

Chinese Long Beans: Chinese Long beans, sometimes called snake beans are also called “yardlong beans” because they can grow up to three feet long. CHINESE

Chinese Napa Cabbage: Napa cabbage is large, pale green and very mild in flavor. Cabbage originated near the Beijing region of China.

Chinese Water Spinach: Chinese water spinach is grown in water or damp soil. This is also called by the name of *ong choy* in Cantonese region or *kōng xīn cài* in Mandarin region, which means hollow heart vegetable.

Chinese wire strainer: a Chinese wire strainer is used for **straining, skimming, and deep-frying** and seen in every Chinese restaurant around the world. The handle is made of the bamboo wood and head is made up of stainless steel wire. It helps in taking out food items for hot oil while cooking.

Cleaver or chopper: Cleaver is used in Chinese’s kitchen to do different types of cuttings like chopping, slicing, dicing, mincing etc. it is also used for deboning of meat. It is made of stainless steel with wooden handle.

Corn Flour: Corn flour is a finely ground corn meal and it is good as a coating for certain fried foods. Corn starch & corn flour are all different ingredients made from different types of corn using different processes.

Corn Starch: Corn starch is used extensively for thickening in many Chinese stir-fries and dishes with lots of gravy and almost always mixed with water into slurry before it is used. Most of the Chinese gravies are thickened with the slurry Made with corn starch.

Deep frying: this method is mainly used to fry the ingredients to crisp. It uses more edible oil than stir frying. the ingredients should be fully submerged in oil for crisp textured food. Deep fried recipes are not just used in Chinese cuisine but all kind of cuisines.

Doubanjiang: If you’ve been to any local Chinese restaurant, you’ll recognize this Spicy Sauce. Most restaurants make their own spicy sauce or provide the most popular Chinese brand of Doubanjiang.

Dried Lily Flowers: This Chinese dried specialty ingredient is also referred to as “lily buds,” “golden needles” or *jīn zhēn* in Mandarin region or “gum zhen” in Cantonese region. Lily buds have a slight fruity, floral scent and are used in a variety of traditional Chinese dishes.

Dried Lotus Seeds: Lotus seeds or lotus nuts are the seeds of same plants that produce the lotus root. Grown in water, flowers bloom on the surface and form seeds. Lotus seeds are used for soups, tonics. The famous dishes include Lo Han Jai or Buddhist Delight. These dried lotus seeds are used to make the classic filling for Lotus Moon Cakes.

Dried Red Dates – Red Jujube: Dried red dates or red jujube are pronounced *hóng zǎo* in Mandarin region and “hong zo” in Cantonese region, are often used in sweet dessert items. They’re usually used for cooking in dried form. Dates are especially popular in northern China and are found in savoury as well as sweet desserts.

Dumpling Skins: Pre-made dumpling wrappers come in both yellow and white versions and also vary in thickness. They are always thicker than wonton wrappers. Wonton wrappers are definitely different from dumpling wrappers.

Dwarf Bok Choy: dwarf bok choy are sometimes called and labeled as *nai you bai cai* which means cream bok choy.

Fava Beans: Fava beans, also known as broad beans or candour. They are not very common nor popular in both western and Asian cooking..

Fermented Bean Curds: this is used as a flavoring agent rather than a protein. It comes in many different types and variations, but the most common categories are white and red. .

Five Spiced Dried Tofu: five-spiced tofu is called *wu xiang doufu gan* in china. It is dark brown from outside and white from inside. It is made in small blocks not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick. It can be thinly sliced and cut into cubes.

Five Spice Powder: This famous 5 spice mixture is called *wǔxiāngfěn* in china. It is usually made from cinnamon, star anise, cloves, Sichuan peppercorns & fennel. The blend combines the five primary flavors of Chinese cuisine: sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, and salty. It is widely used in Chinese cooking and is occasionally set out on the dinner table mixed with salt and pepper for adding flavour to certain chicken dishes.

Fox Nut Barley: Fox Nut Barley is a white starchy seed. Fox nut barley is the product of a flowering plant grown in the water and in the water lily family. They are a bit similar to lotus seeds but are more chalky and white on the inside and always used in Chinese soups and tonics.

Fresh Noodles: these freshly-made noodles were everywhere in China. These require boiling, rinsing and draining before use. Frozen and refrigerated fresh noodles are also really good.

Fried Bean Curd – Soy Puffs: They come in various shapes, including triangles, squares, and cubes. Each shape has a slightly different texture.

Garlic Scapes: Garlic scapes are called *dà suàn huā* in china which literal means garlic flower. They are the flower bud of garlic. Cantonese people call this garlic scape “syun sum” or “garlic hearts”.

Green Garlic: Green garlic is generally called as suàn and in Cantonese pronounced as “syun”. Green garlic is not that common of an ingredient and many times is mistaken for scallions or leeks but like garlic, it is very pungent in flavor.

Hoisin Sauce: this sauce is basically found in dishes special to Southern China, such as Guangdong, it is popular in stir-fries, meat glazing and as a dipping sauce. This sauce is **made with** soybeans, white distilled vinegar, sugar, salt, garlic, red chili peppers, and wheat.

Hong Kong Style Egg Noodles: These yellow pan-fried noodles are also known as chow mein noodles. It comes in different varieties and are one of the more popular Chinese noodles.

Jasmine Scented Rice: Jasmine scented rice is a high quality type of long grain rice that usually comes from Thailand. Jasmine rice has a wonderful aroma that smells a little like popcorn when it is cooking. The individual grains have a nice sheen to them when cooked properly, and the texture and flavour is unequivocally luxurious.

Long Life Noodles: Long Life Noodles are called yīmiàn or yimein. It symbolizes longevity and can always be found on the banquet table at Chinese celebrations. Yi Mein noodles are also known as e-fu noodles.

Lotus Root: This long white, yellowish lotus root or lián'ǒu in china. It has a wheel of holes running through the middle. This is one of the most loved root vegetables in Chinese cooking.

Metal Wok Round Spoon: metal wok round spoon is required to make other gravy or liquidly dishes like soups and dishes made with different types of sauces.

Metal Wok Spatula: for most of the stir fry items like fried rice, glutinous rice cakes, they might stick with the bottom of the pan while cooking.

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG): MSG is called wèijīng in china. It is a reproduction of naturally occurring glutamates. It intensifies flavor and is used in many processed and restaurant foods.

Oyster Sauce: Oyster Sauce was invented by Lee Kam Sheung in Guangdong in the late 1800s. The story goes he was making oysters in boiling water, he left them in too long and when he lifted the lid, the soup was brownish and had a fragrant aroma

Red Fermented Bean Curd: Red bean curd is a type of preserved bean curd that consists of cubes of bean curd that have been preserved in rice wine, fermented red rice and other seasonings.

Red Sichuan Peppercorn: the Red Sichuan (Szechuan) peppercorn is called hóng huājiāo in china. It gives Sichuan cuisine its distinctive flavor. It's actually not a peppercorn at all,

but a berry from the prickly ash tree. It's used both in whole and ground form. This peppercorn is known for the slight numbing sensation it leaves on the tongue.

Regular/Firm Tofu: This is one of the most common kinds of tofu in china. It has so many different types of uses according to the cooking style. It can be pan fried as a side dish, substitute for meat in stir fries, or put it into soups and braised dishes. In some dishes regular tofu works better and is easier to handle.

Rice Cakes: Rice cakes have a chewy consistency just like a thick noodle. They're mostly used in soups and stir-fry's. They come in different shapes, but the most common ones used in Chinese cooking are the small, oval-shaped ones.

Rice Cooker: Rice cooker is also used widely in Chinese kitchen for pressure boiling, steaming rice and other things. Now day's electronic rice cookers are used in Chinese kitchen.

Rice Vermicelli: These rice noodles, sometimes called as rice sticks, mei fun or mai fun. They are thin, brittle, and white. They're easy to prepare—just soak them in lukewarm water for ten minutes before using in noodle stir-fries. \

Rice Vinegar: White rice vinegar is similar to black vinegar but is distinct in color, ingredients and taste., white rice vinegar tends to be more acidic but milder in taste than black vinegar

Sacha Sauce: This sauce is Popular in Guangdong and Taiwan, Sacha sauce has many different uses in Chinese cooking rather than just sauce.

Sautéing: sautéing is similar and different both to the stir frying. In this method heat should be lower than stir frying and there is no need to toss and turn the ingredients at all the time. A chef just turn over the ingredients to another side from time to time the famous dishes are sauté dumplings and sautéed fish.

Sesame Paste: One of the most popular fragrant flavorings in China, Sesame Paste has a thick consistency similar to peanut butter. Made from roasted sesame seeds, there are two different types of sesame paste: White and Black.

Shanghai Bok Choy: this type of bok choy is primarily found in most of the Chinese restaurants. They come in two sizes small and large. But most of the chef's prefer small size bok shoy as they are most soft and tender.

Short Grain Rice: Short grain rice has a short and oval shaped kernel. Most people know medium to short grain rice's from Japanese sushi or Arborio rice, which is used to make risotto or rice pudding. When cooked, these grains are soft and clump together more so than long grain rice but not as much as sticky rice.

Simmering: simmer is always used the soups and stocks. In this method lower heat is used to just keep the water boiling but not totally boiling. In this method ingredients should be cooked for long time in order to melt nutrients and make a better flavour.

Soft Tofu: As the name suggests Soft tofu is very soft but has some body which allowing it to be handled and cut more easily. It holds its shape better when cooked. The soft steamed tofu really goes well with fish.

Soy Sauce: Soy sauce comes from 2nd Century AD China and eventually spread to all parts of East Asia for use in cooking and as a condiment. Soy sauce was historically an expensive ingredient used to salt food.

Spring Bamboo Shoots: they are called chūnsūn in Mandarin region. They are seasonal but yet commonly found in china. They are available in late spring months. Yan Du Xian (Shanghainese Salted Pork Soup with Bamboo Shoots and Tofu), Braised Spring Bamboo Shoots are some of the famous dishes.

Star Anise: Star anise is called bajiao in china. It plays a key role in slow-cooked dishes. Star Anise is an essential ingredient that provides its distinctive taste in dishes like Chinese Braised Oxtails, Soy Sauce Chicken and Lanzhou Beef Noodle soup.

Steam basket: The steam basket is used in Chinese kitchen to steam various types of food items like steamed dim Sims etc. the food is placed in steam baskets and placed in the metal steamer for steaming. The steam baskets come in various sizes and made of bamboo only.

Steamer: Steaming is a very healthy way to cook and the different kinds of steamers are widely used Chinese cooking equipment. Chinese use bamboo or aluminum steamers quite often for steaming dumplings and buns, fish, meats or vegetables.

Steaming: this method is more popular now days as it keeps flavours and food nutrients due to use of steam temperature. In this process ingredients are placed in a steaming basket normally made of bamboo wood. This is placed over water in steamer pot. The most common steam dishes are steam egg and steamed dumplings.

Stir frying: the most commonly used method is stir frying. In this method of cooking ingredients are processed at high heat for a short period of time .oil is used very less in this type of cooking. Food is cooked at high heat and tossed or turned basically in stir frying food should kept in motion.

Sweet Bean Sauce: this sauce is popular in north china basically Beijing region. This sauce has dark brown colour with thick paste consistency. Sweet sauce is made with wheat flour, sugar, salt and fermented yellow soybeans.

Tofu “Skin”: This type of tofu is compressed into thin sheets. In some western countries this is often pre-packaged, but in Beijing, people buy it fresh, just a few sheets at a time. There are plenty more creative ways to use these tofu skins.

Tofu Knots: These are a thin tofu skin folded and tied into little knots. They're primarily used in braised dishes or soups, as all the flavor of a sauce or soup they're cooked in gets caught into the little folds of each knot.

White Fermented Bean Curd: The white fermented bean curd has a more delicate flavor and is most often eaten with rice congee in southern China. It used to be considered a poor man's food, because during tough times, when meat and even vegetables were scarce, people would eat their congee with fermented bean curd as a daily staple.

White Pepper: White pepper is called báihújiāo in china. The white peppercorn has a distinctly different taste than the black peppercorn and is always the preferred choice for Chinese cooking.

White Rice: Chinese white rice is usually a medium to long grain variety. White rice is available in different quality in different regions of china. Long grain rice has a long kernel, but it's not quite as long as Basmati rice.

Winter Bamboo Shoots: Winter bamboo shoots or dong shun are usually in season during the late winter months. They are very expensive and cost between \$3 – \$6 per pounds. They are mostly imported from China. They are tender, sweet tasting and are perfect for any dishes that call for bamboo shoots. The famous dish includes Chicken with Garlic Sauce.

Wok and Wok Lid: Wok is most important Chinese kitchen cooking tool. Many Chinese dishes are cooked using a wok, which is a wide and somewhat shallow domed pot that gets wickedly hot when you have a good flame going.

Wok Brush: A wok brush is very helpful in cleaning of wok. It is made with bamboo. The size of the brush is bigger than the other cleaning brush. This is the essential part of the Chinese kitchen around the world.

Wok Ring: Now days, some ranges come with a big wok burner, which has that bigger flame needed for authentic Chinese cooking. It ensures that your wok won't slide around while you're cooking. If you have a regular-sized gas or electric stove these aren't strictly necessary, but helpful nevertheless.

Wonton Wrappers: The round skins are used to make pot-stickers, while the square skins are used for wontons. The wrappers come in both a yellow egg variety and a white variety and vary in thickness.

Wood Ears: Wood ears or black wood ears are called hēi mù'ěr in Mandarin region in china. it is a dark and firm kind of mushroom with a very interesting consistency that's quite different from normal variety of mushroom. Also called "mook yee" in Cantonese, black wood ears have a slightly crunchy texture when cold and soft and a luxurious texture when cooked in stews and soups.

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- Funchsia Dunlop - The Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook, Ebury Press
- Eileen Yin-Fei Lo – Mastering the Art of Chinese Cooking, Chronicle Books
- Su Huei Huang, Lai Yen-Jen – Chinese Cuisine, Wei-Chuan Publishing
- E N Anderson – The Food of China, Yale University Press
- Parvinder S Bali – International Cuisine & Food Production – Oxford University Press

2.16 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Nita Mehta – Italian Vegetarian Cookery, Snab Publishers.
- Alberto Capatti - Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History, Columbia University Press
- Italian Cooking by Sanjeev Kapoor
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2.17 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1 Illustrate the importance of spices and condiments in Chinese cuisine.
- 2 Describe in detail about the various sauces used in Chinese cuisine.
- 3 Describe the different vegetables used in Chinese cuisine.
- 4 Write the recipe and preparation of any two Chinese soups.
- 5 List the specialty equipments used in Chinese cuisine.

UNIT: 03

CUISINE OF ITALY - I

Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Italian Cuisine
- 3.4 History of Italian Cuisine
- 3.5 Regions of Italian Cuisines
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Glossary
- 3.8 References/Bibliography
- 3.9 Suggested Readings
- 3.10 Terminal Questions

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Italy is located in southern Europe and little larger than the states of Arizona. The most area of Italy is mountainous and is also the home to the only active volcano on the European land. This is the PO River which provides fertility to the valley; PO River is also the largest river in Italy. Italian cuisine prides itself on simple delicious combinations of the freshest available ingredients and use basic cooking techniques to simply enhance the natural flavour of the food. In all must all authentic restaurants in Italy. Menu change on the monthly or daily basis depending on which vegetables are in season or what fish was caught that day. Freshly made pasta is also a pride of the Italian people. Many different varieties of plants grow in the rich soil of Italy. Italy is surrounded by the water from the three sides, which provides ample supply of sea food and coastal vegetables. Climate depends on elevation and region. The northwest region is colder due to the mountain range, particularly the high peaks of Alps. The temperature is warmer in PO river valley especially socially and Sardinia.

Italian cuisine is so regional that each part of the country cooks something different which is not cooked in the other parts of the Italy. This is because of different crops grown in different region. The Italian region differentiate them self's by types of cooking fat used like the butter was used in the northern part , pork fat in centre of Italy and olive oil is used in the south Italy. Italians are known for their herbs in cooking especially basil, thyme, parsley, sage, oregano and rosemary. Cheese also plays a important role in Italian cuisine. There are more than 400 verities of cheese made in Italy and parmesan & mozzarella are best known worldwide. The Italian cuisine is also famous for pizza, polenta and tomato sauce throughout the world. Pizza has been eaten in Italy for centuries and nobody knows

how this dish came out but still it is a everyday meal in rural parts of Italy. Another famous thing of Italian cuisine is pasta and its variants such as spaghetti, cannelloni, linguini and penne pasta or in a form of noodles and traditionally served with gravy or sauce. Either cream sauce made with cheese or tomato based sauce. Italian cuisine also uses the rice and their famous rice dish is risotto. It is basically rice boiled until soft and become like a stew. It can also be cooked with variety of ingredients like poultry, beef, sea food, vegetables, cheese and mushrooms. Most of the home made recipes of risotto uses whatever that is fresh and seasoned but short grain rice is main ingredient.

Italian generally eats three meals a day. A breakfast consists of caffellatte or cappuccino with bread, butter and jams or cake. Lunch and dinner are almost similar meals. They generally consist of an appetizer based on cold meats, pasta or rice dish, meat, fish, salad, cheese and fruits are also used. Except meals Italians also have two traditional snacks time mid morning snacks and mid afternoon snacks.

Usually serve a type of bread dough with toppings like brochette, focaccio and crostini. The Italians are said to be the masters of delicacies and producing dishes with simplicity and great nutritional value and natural taste.

Italians are said to be very health conscious and believe in natural herbal food, that's why a great dominance of medicinal herbs such as rosemary, thyme, celery etc are used prominently in almost all the dishes. There is much more to Italian cuisine than just pasta and pizza but the actually Italian cuisine is little different and much more diverse. In other words we can say that Italian food is a cuisine of diversity.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

After learning this unit the learner will be able to:

- Define Italian Cuisine
- Describe Italian Cuisine
- Know the salient features of Italian Cuisine
- Explain the various regions of Italian Cuisine
- Describe the historical origin of Italian Cuisine

3.3 ITALIAN CUISINE

Italian cuisine is so regional that each part of the country cooks something different which is not cooked in the other parts of the Italy. This is because of different crops grown in different region. The Italian region differentiate them self's by types of cooking fat used like the butter was used in the northern part , pork fat in centre of Italy and olive oil is used in the south Italy. Italians are known for their herbs in cooking especially basil, thyme, parsley, sage, oregano and rosemary. Cheese also plays a important role in Italian cuisine. There are more than 400 varieties of cheese made in Italy and parmesan & mozzarella are

best known worldwide. The Italian cuisine is also famous for pizza, polenta and tomato sauce throughout the world.

3.4 HISTORY OF ITALIAN CUISINE

Italian cuisine is widely known and popular around the world. Its characteristics are simplicity, focusing on two or four main ingredients. Simple in preparation, the flavours and quality of ingredients play into its popularity. The country's ancient inhabitants, the Etruscans, originally subsisted on a diet of meat, soups and variations of cereal. They invented olive oil and a long line of other staples in traditional Italian cuisine. The history of Italian cuisine is as old and interesting as the country itself. Its origins laying deep into the ancestral history of Rome- its people and its political, cultural and social power. Italian cuisine has evolved and changed following the evolution and the changes of Italy itself throughout centuries of wars, cultural mutations and contacts: it's a history as rich, colorful and fascinating as the most amazing of recipes. It is easy to group all the Italian food in



one category, however many factors have played a role in the origin of Italian cuisine. Italy is a young country. The official kingdom of Italy is formed in 1861 by merging existing city/states. In 1871 the capital moved officially from Florence to Rome and finally it became Italy. Each state has developed their own culinary style influenced by various geographical, social and political factors. External factors and availability of ingredients often plays a role in dish creation. Further introduction of ingredients from the new world also added variety of dishes and style of cooking.

- **The Romans and barbarians:** Ancient Romans loved their food, of course. But not all of them eat the same things. If their diet was largely based on the Mediterranean triad - olive oil, grains and wine - common to all the people of the Mediterranean basin, there were evident differences between your common Roman and the aristocrats: your next door Roman neighbor would have eaten large quantities of pulses and vegetables, accompanied by cheeses and dressed in olive oil. Bread was made with spelt and oats, popular also to make delicious soups. Honey was added to wine and breads and meat appeared on the table only once in a while.

Move to the Bel Air of imperial Rome and things changed quite a bit: gone was the simplicity of fresh pulses and earthy soups and breads, replaced by a fusion of flavors and ingredients. Wealthy Romans loved exotic meats like ostrich and game, served with rich sauces, baked fish, Fresh fruits and of course loads of wine. Mind, though: they would mix it with water and honey, so they were not likely to get as tipsy as we do today, if we get one glass too many.

When the rugged, bearded Barbarians of central Europe got to Rome, they introduced to the kitchens of Italy two great things: butter and beer. If you think, however, that they did not appreciate the luscious flavors of Italy's cuisine, you would be mistaken: as it happened in other aspects of their lives, these people were profoundly influenced by Roman habits and culture and turned, in the end, a bit Roman themselves.

- **Sicily and the influences of Christianity:** In the early Middle Ages, Italy was ready to open up even more to foreign cuisine: with the coming of the Moors to Sicily, ingredients like dried fruit and spices were introduced on the island's tables, their most famous inheritance? Pastas from the ports of Sicily, this easily preserved food made it onto Naples and Genoa and, from there, to the rest of the country. Among the other quintessentially Italian foods graciously granted to us by the Arabs are ice cream, ricotta and honey desserts, like cannoli, cassata and marzipan.

In the same period, Christianity began influencing more and more people's everyday's habits, including the way they ate: it was a time of fasts and food restrictions, with limited amounts of meats allowed, such a long cry from the excesses of Roman banquets. However, Charlemagne struck a balance when decreeing fasts were to be followed only in specific days. Shortly after, somewhere in the gloriously rough, yet gentle to the eye lands of Liguria, pesto was born.

- **The Renaissance:** In the Renaissance, the people of Italy got again a penchant for the flamboyant, with its lords transforming their banquets into bona fide theatrical shows filled with roasted, feather decorated birds and full piglets served on large silver platters.

The Papal court was known as outrageously over the top when it came to food, with grandiose banquets organized for all the rich and powerful coming to honor the Pope in Rome, but the rest of the country did not sit in silence munching on brown bread: the lords of Venice, the Estes of Ferrara and the Sforzas of Milan all made of -metaphorically- pyrotechnic food displays a staple of their entertainment routine. A special mention to Florence's most famous family, the Medicis: in a time of excesses, simplicity was paramount on their table. For this reason, they are today seen as early precursors of that "cucina povera" revival we have been experiencing a bit everywhere in the country for the past 30 years.

The Renaissance was an essential moment for the development of Italy's wine making tradition, especially in Tuscany, where famous reds like Montepulciano and Montalcino began being produced. These were also the years characterised by the introduction on our tables of a series of ingredients (potatoes, sweetcorn, and turkey) coming from the Americas. Above them all, of course, stands the beautiful tomato.



- **The 17th, 18th and 19th centuries:** over time, religious austerity gave way to more moderate celebrations that combined both fasting and excess. As the city became more prosperous and wealthy, food once again became a symbol of wealth. Traditions of the past were rediscovered in culinary preparation and consumption. In the 16th century, the heavenly marriage of tomato and pasta took place. Apparently it was the longshoremen of Trapani who came out with the idea of chopping tomatoes on top of noodles but, needless to say, Naples remains the beloved, beautiful mother of the most Italian of all Italian dishes. Potatoes, cabbage, sugar beets and peppers became the new staples along with meat and fish. While lemon, oranges, sugar cane and almonds became the part of

southern cooking, while new wealthy class people from north saw food as status symbol and demanded new creations and verities in food.



Even if culinary historians tend to say that the 17th and the 18th centuries were not as exciting as those that preceded them when it came to the kitchen-action, some incredible dishes originated then: once above all, tiramisu. And what a history it has, but that may be best left for another moment.

These centuries also witnessed the birth of culinary literature, with the first recipe book published in Italy in 1634: Giovan Battista Crisci's *La Lucerna de' Corteggiani*, a publication mostly focusing on Southern cuisine. Italy, though, will have to wait for its unification, in the second half of the 19th century, to see a book dedicated to Italian cuisine as whole. The *Manuale dell'Artusi: la Scienza in Cucina e l'Arte di Mangiar Bene* was published in 1891 and remains one of Italy most sold and known cooking books. The *Manuale* did not simply help Italians understand how to eat healthily (Artusi stressed the importance of ingredients and balance), but made them all aware of the immense culinary wealth of the country, making it a reason of pride for each and every Italy, from North to South.



First recipe book of Italy published in 1634

- **The Invasion:** Once the Roman Empire reached the verge of collapse, imperialists from northern Europe traveled down the Italian peninsula, hoping to gain a larger portion of land. They brought along smoked meats, smoked fish, salted cod (baccala) and variations of casseroles. Arabs in the southern portion of Italy introduced coffee, artichokes, a wide range of spices and rice at the same time. Arabic coffee is an excellent representation of Italian espresso: strong, dark and prepared in a highly nuanced manner.

The French, Spanish and Austrians also had a considerable influence on Italian food. As an example, Spanish invaders introduced the tomato. This vegetable soon served as the foundation of Italy's delicious cuisine. The Austrians introduced locals to Spritz, an aperitif that spread like wildfire throughout Italy. The Arabs introduced Sicilians to the dish that later evolved into marzipan. This tasty creation quickly became an uber-popular dessert. It is also thought that the Arabs introduced cassata as well. Cassata is a cake made

with sugar, royal paste, sheep ricotta and candied fruit. The Arabs also introduced Sicilians to sugar cane, oranges, lemon and an array of other foods.



Cassata

- **The Pizza Queen:** Ask anyone about Italian food and most will quickly reference pizza. The original version of this scrumptious food was quite simple compared to today's elaborate concoctions. Pizza's origins date all the way back to 1889 when King Umberto I and Queen Margherita traveled to Naples. The country's best pizzaiolo was asked to create pizza for these royal visitors. His best creation was rather basic, consisting of dough, mozzarella cheese, tomato and basil. He created this style of pizza in honor of Italy's national colors. Queen Margherita enjoyed the pizza to the point that she wrote a letter of gratitude to the pizzaiolo, inspiring him to call the pie "pizza margherita". This simple but delicious version of pizza is still consumed across the globe today and will likely continue to be cherished by the masses for years to come.



Pizza Margherita



Queen Margherita

- **Italian food today:** After the two World Wars forced Italy to be frugal, and the economic boom of the 1970s and 1980s brought to its tables dishes drenched in cream, jelly and mayonnaise, Italy has finally rediscovered its roots. Today, the country happily embraces the most authentic spirit of its cuisine, made of simplicity, tradition and fresh ingredients.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1. Write a short note on 'History of Italian Cuisine'.

3.5 REGIONS OF ITALIAN CUISINES

Regions and regional cooking styles: Italy is a small country (less than half the size of Texas), but it is one with a long and venerable history. From the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 to 1861, when it was finally unified under one kingdom, Italy was made up of independent city states, republics, and regions that spent much of their time fighting off encroaching neighbors and outside intruders. This, along with the fact that the large-scale exchange of culinary traditions among Italians is a recent phenomenon (linked to modern roads, technology, and an improved post-war economy), explains how Italy managed to maintain its varied cuisines into the twenty-first century.

Italy is made up of twenty regions with distinct characteristics. Every town, every village, makes the same dish in vastly different ways, and every town and village has its proudest specialty. These cooking traditions define people's identities just as much as their dialects and their traditional costumes. Local cooking preferences and customs are shaped by geographic, historical, and climactic differences: some regions are landlocked and mountainous, others hug the sea and are hilly; some regions have absorbed Arab or Greek influences, others have been marked by the French or Austrians; some regions live under the dazzling Mediterranean sun most of the year, others have cold winters, snow, fog, and harsh winds.

There are twenty regions of Italian cuisine, they are as under:

1. Abruzzo
2. Basilicata
3. Calabria
4. Campania
5. Emilia-Romagna
6. Friuli-Venezia Giulia
7. Lazio

8. Liguria
9. Lombardia / Lombardy
10. Marche/Marches
11. Molise
12. Piemonte/Piedmont
13. Puglia
14. Sardinia/Sardegna
15. Sicily/Sicilia
16. Trentino-Alto Adige
17. Toscana/Tuscany
18. Umbria
19. Valle D Aosta
20. Veneto

Regions of Italian cuisines

1. **Abruzzo:** Abruzzo is one of Italy's little-known treasures: a tranquil mingling of mountains and coastline, it is sparsely populated and rarely visited by tourists. Home to one of Italy's highest peaks (the Gran Sasso, at an altitude of over 9,500 feet) and a busy port (Pescara, the most populous city in the region), it boasts a rich repertoire of robust mountain dishes and an abundance of seafood specialties. The regional capital is L'Aquila, a charming city with a view of the Gran Sasso that was founded by Frederick II of Swabia in 1254; today, L'Aquila is home to 70,000 people. Near L'Aquila is the Parco Nazionale dell'Abruzzo, an enormous natural reserve (about 200 square miles) where hundreds of rare animal species roam free. Other important Abruzzese cities are Teramo (whose first-century A.D. Roman theater is still used to host shows), Chieti (an ancient Roman settlement), and, from a culinary standpoint, the village of Villa Santa Maria (where some of Italy's finest chefs honed the art of Italian cuisine).

Abruzzi food is a mixture of different traditional taste and is also based on a number of dishes that unite them. Even today, its variety mirrors its background from a large number of Abruzzo cooking customs from years of uninterrupted traditions – it's where the cuisine from both the sea and mountains that come alive in Abruzzo food. Like most peasant cuisines, it's quite simple and wholesome, especially in more modern interpretations that allow the use of some meat or oil – back in peasant days. After lamb and mutton, pork was the meat of choice inland, with many people raising animals in a semi-wild state, allowing them to forage what they could find in the forests and butchering them in the fall. Along the coast, fish also plays a major part in the diet.

Abruzzo food mainly consists principally of meat when inland or fish on the coast. Roast lamb, a tasty rustic dish, has several variations such as “**arrosticini**”, thin wooden skewers with pieces of lamb, cooked over an open fire and often served with bruschetta – which is roasted bread rubbed with garlic and topped with extra-

virgin olive oil, salt and pepper and can also have toppings to include chopped fresh tomatoes and many other variations. The origins of the Abruzzo food meat dishes derive from the shepherds, thus they often have a wild touch to them to include wild boar – animals from the courtyard, fried or roasted rabbits or chickens with garden vegetables flavorings and a never-ending variety of tastes. Some Abruzzo cuisine dishes are more refined such as the “**canzanese**” from the Teramano area, which is a cold Abruzzo dish made with 1011avor101. The variety of fish from the Adriatic has resulted in 3 basic “brodetti” (broth) variations with the centers of Abruzzo sea food from Pescara, Giulianova and Vasto. Excellent sauces come cooked in an earthen ware cookery pot with fresh Abruzzo tomatoes and various Abruzzo spices, rich with the smells of the sea, with a final touch of spicy pepper. Of course, also popular are dishes cooked with clams or mussels. The spreadable sausage from Teramano, flavoured with nutmeg, the liver sausage from the mountains is also renowned Abruzzo food. Ewe’s-milk cheeses and mozzarella cover the valleys and hills, from the famous ones of Atri and Rivindoli to the great numbers of lesser known ones, fresh or seasoned. Abruzzo sweets are famous throughout the world – which include the sugar coated almonds (confetti) from Sulmona and the Terrone (Nurzia), soft chocolate nougat from L’Aquila and the “Parrozzo” from Pescara made from the wonderful mixture of crushed almonds. There are two Abruzzo liqueurs that must be an ancient recipe with a high alcohol content, used as a digestive, produced with herbs that grow on the Maiella; and the L’Aurum di Pescara, and exquisite sweet orange liqueur to be tasted only with macarons or ice-creams.

2. **Basilicata:** Basilicata has its own ingrained culinary delights, many stemming from the region’s humble roots, the “*cucina povera*” that led to creativity in the kitchen using simple ingredients to create delectable dishes. The products from here are 1011avor101, for the most part made like they’ve been for centuries. It’s a great region for vegetarians, because many dishes utilize legumes and the season’s vegetables, but carnivores won’t go hungry, either. A cow’s milk cheese made from the mountain-grazing *podolico* breed of cattle, *caciocavallo podolico* from Basilicata is one of Italy’s most prized (and priciest) cheeses. Bearing aromas and flavors of the forest herbs and nuts they graze on, this cheese isn’t used in cooking but is savored. It’s especially delicious when drizzled with local chestnut honey. But the most favorite way to enjoy it is at the local festivals when the saddlebag-shaped cheese is suspended over hot coals and the melted creaminess is slathered on toasted bruschetta. Its tastes like Heaven on bread.

The pasta here is made without eggs, and the preferred shape is *cavatelli*. Hand-shaped by dragging little pasta nubs across the pastry board with three fingers, it retains little pockets that hold the savory sauces. Whether it’s an everyday tomato ragu, a vegetable sauce with chickpeas, or with cooked rapini greens, the shape holds up well to the vast variety of toppings. *Orecchiette* (little ears) and wider, flatter *strascinati* (literally, “dragged”) are also popular pasta shapes here. Found only in Basilicata, 1011avor101101101 *cruschi* are long, thin sweet peppers that are dried in the sun then fried in olive oil, they’re eaten whole or crumbled on top of

cavatelli pasta. They are often combined with *mollica di pane* (course bread crumbs) that are seasoned and fried in olive oil, the combination sprinkled over pasta, a poor-man's cheese substitute. But I warn you, *102 lavor 102 102 102 cruschi* are very addictive. Horse meat is favorite in southern Italy. Specialized butchers raise and sell the meat in their shops, which turn into wood-fired grills in the evening. You select the meat you want and they cook it to perfection while you wait. Some offer a smattering of side dishes, along with local red wine to accompany the grilled meat.

3. **Calabria:** Surrounded by the Tyrrhenian and the Ionian Seas, Calabria boasts 500 miles of coastline (the longest of any Italian region) yet it also boasts some of Italy's highest and wildest mountains, where boars, wolves, and other animals freely roam. Over the centuries, Greek, Arab, and Albanian influences have shaped the Calabrese kitchen: characteristic dishes are laced with chili pepper, sweet-and-sour notes mingle in savory preparations, and desserts are often deep-fried and drenched in honey.

Calabrians are the hardworking people. They all seem to make the most of what little vegetation can grow in the little mountainous terrain. Although this is the region of sheepherders. They consume more pork than lamb. Pork is used to make prosciutto, a sausage flavored with sweet and spicy peppers. Many of the regional cheese are made with sheep's milk like *giuncata*. Cow's milk cheese is also famous for making various aged cheese. Bread is the fundamental part of this regional cuisine. Pita is Italian favorite stuffed and seasoned with peppers, tomatoes and herbs. Fish and sea food is common in regional dishes. Sword fish is used more than tuna.

4. **Campania:** Despite rich arable soils and access to ports for fresh seafood, Campania's claim to fame is the wide selection of street food, which may be baked, fried, grilled or even frozen. These treats are generally hand held and are available at shops or along most streets. Campania cuisine is made from inexpensive, fresh ingredients like vegetables and grains. Pizza and pasta, cooked from the local wheat, make Campania recipes famous throughout the world.

Vegetables play such a large part in the Campania cuisine that the locals are often called *mangiafoglie*, or leaf eaters. The fertile soil provides bountiful amounts of food including salad greens, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, garlic and herbs. A typical cold salad might include raw or cooked vegetables tossed with herbs and cheese. Other popular dishes are **cianfotta**, a stewed dish of eggplants, peppers, zucchini and onions with basil and olive oil that is served cold. **Peperoni imbottiti** stuffs red and yellow bell peppers with breadcrumbs seasoned with black olives, capers, garlic and anchovies. Of course, Campania cooking is famous for **parmigiana di melanzane**, or eggplant parmigiana. Slices of eggplant are deep fried and then layered with onions, tomatoes, basil and mozzarella before being topped with more cheese and baked. Stone fruits, melons, citrus, figs and grapes grown here are lush and picked at the peak of ripeness. Olives from Campania

make richly flavored green extra virgin olive oil. Chestnuts, walnuts and hazelnuts grow well in this region also and are used extensively in Campania recipes.

Campania cuisine has plenty of shapes of pasta. Most are familiar, such as spaghetti, maccheroni, fusilli and ziti. Perciatelli is a less well known noodle, long but hollow. The preferred sauce in Campania cooking made from the incomparable San Marzano tomato grown near Mount Vesuvius. Meat consumption tends to be low in the Campania cities, but country folk enjoy both fresh and preserved meat in their food. Salame and prosciutto are popular among the hill dwellers. Lamb, pork, veal, rabbit and poultry are often used as well. Many of the dishes braise meat slowly until tender. **Coniglio all'ischitana** simmers tomatoes and rabbit with basil, rosemary, and white wine. Beef, chicken liver and sausage are cooked with tomatoes, peas, mushrooms and cheese before being placed in an ornate mold to create **sartù**.

Campania cuisine heavily relies on seafood. Fresh seafood is eaten in antipasto, or in a fried assortment called **fritto di pesce**, and can also be found in soups, stews and pasta. A wide selection of fishes available locally is often fried, stewed, grilled or even baked wrapped up in paper, or **al cartoccio**. Salt cured cod is cooked with tomatoes, olives, raisins and pine nuts and seasoned with capers and garlic in **baccalà alla napoletana**.

Water buffalo milk is said to produce the best quality **mozzarella**. It is not used in cooking, but instead eaten as a simple room temperature or cold food. Other local cheeses include Scamorza Irpina, Pecorino cheese, Provola, and Fior di Latte. Campania is famous for its desserts. **Gelato** can contain locally grown, ripe fruits and nuts. **Granita**, another form of frozen dessert, is often flavored with espresso or lemon. Cold mousses, such as **coviglie al caffè** and **coviglie al cioccolato** are topped with whipped cream, toasted coffee beans or candied cherries.

5. **Emilia-Romagna:** Tucked away neatly between the Alps and Apennine Mountains, Emilia-Romagna owes much of its gastronomy to simple geography. The Po River runs straight through the middle of this fertile belt, acting as a vein through the heart of agricultural Italy. Known as the Pianura Padana valley – or sometimes dubbed ‘the food valley’ – this was once marshland, but now makes perfect soil for fruit, vegetables, livestock and other cereal crops. Follow the river east and you’ll eventually reach the Po Delta and the shallows of the Adriatic Sea, which provides the region with outstanding fish and seafood.

Emilia-Romagna is widely regarded as the home of the finest food traditions found in all of Europe, let alone Italy. Scanning a list of regional food products and dishes reveals a ‘who’s who’ of Italian food – Parmigiano Reggiano, balsamic vinegar from Modena and Prosciutto di Parma all originated in Emilia-Romagna and legally can only be made in their respective areas. The infamous spaghetti Bolognese originates in the region capital of Bologna, though it would never be served with spaghetti in Italy. The incredible pasture land of the Pianura Padana

means cattle are extremely well fed here, and that results in exceptional milk and butter. The most obvious example of this lies in the excellence of Parmigiano Reggiano. Known worldwide for its firm yet delicate taste, Parmigiano Reggiano (or Parmesan) is a combination of outstanding natural produce and expert cheesemakers, with centuries of knowledge and experience behind them. Grana Padano – another hard cheese with a slightly milkier flavor – is also produced in the area, as is Provolone Valpadana (a semi-hard cow's milk cheese) and Ravaggiolo, which is protected by a Slow Food Presidium. There are many other cheeses made in Emilia-Romagna, but Parmigiano Reggiano is by far the most famous.

Alongside a wedge of Parmesan, no table in Emilia-Romagna is complete without a tray of *salumi*. The best known, of course, is *Prosciutto di Parma* – the famous Parma ham that introduced many of us to the sweet, savoury joys of cured pork. Mortadella di Bologna, Coppa Piacentina and the very special Culatello di Zibello, a rare salumi that is highly prized for its delicate flavor and texture. Pasta is a king of Emilia-Romagna because of local cultivation of wheat. Fresh egg pasta is rolled and cut into lasagna, tortellini capelletti stuffed with various ingredients like beef, poultry, cheese, eggs and herbs. Breads can also be found in different shapes and sizes, from the classic piadina, a soft flat bread of Romagna. Coppia ferrarese DOP and tigelle are other popular breads.

6. **Friuli-Venezia Giulia:** The region Friuli Venezia Giulia is the smallest Italian region, but yet rich in taste due to its location. Surrounded by sea and mountains, Austria and Slovenia, gives Friuli Venezia Giulia unique tastes. Many Italians describe Friuli Venezia Giulia as a non Italian area because of its foreign influence on food and daily life. Friuli Venezia Giulia is the sixth smallest Italian region by population, its residents numbering roughly half those of Rome. The population is mostly of Italian origin but there is a sizeable Slovenian community in the east. The complicated name reflects the unusual make-up of the region. Friuli derives from the Latin *Forum Iulii*, a city founded by Julius Caesar and known today as Cividale del Friuli, sitting right on the Slovenian border. Venezia Giulia is the eastern part of the region, so called because it's bordered by the Julian Alps. Friuli Venezia Giulia is currently divided into four provinces, two large, and two small. The large – Pordenone and Udine – sit roughly in the area known as Friuli, while the small – Gorizia and Trieste – are in Venezia Giulia.

Food in Friuli-Venezia Giulia reflects its cultural eclecticism, with the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian era always present. The food tends to be hearty and uncomplicated, from thick soups to warming stews, such as the ubiquitous goulash. Pasta and gnocchi come with a Friulian twist, sweet and salty flavours combined; *cialzons*, a pasta filled with spinach, chocolate, raisins and nutmeg. *Jota* is the local soup, a bean and sauerkraut combination with the possible addition of pork or sausage, good on a cold day. Friuli's signature dish is **frico**, a type of potato cake; potato and Montasio cheese grated together, fried until golden

brown and served up with polenta. Another speciality is *brovada*, made from wine-fermented turnips and served with sausage. Desserts tend towards cakes and pastries, usually filled with nuts, dried fruit and alcohol – look out for *presnitz*, *strukliji* and *gubana*. The Austrian influence makes itself felt in the form of *strudel*, filled with fruit or ricotta cheese.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia is Italy's third most important quality **wine** region, after Piedmont and Tuscany, and has long been acclaimed for its fragrant, elegant whites. The two premium regions are the Collio and the Colli Orientali del Friuli, hilly zones sharing a border with Slovenia. Tocai (now known as Friulano) or Sauvignon Vert is the most widely planted grape variety – pale in colour, it is usually drunk young and makes a perfect aperitif. Top reds include Cabernet Franc, Refosco or Terrano as it called around Trieste, and best of all, the obscure Schioppettino. Last but not least is the cult dessert wine Picolit, produced in very small quantities and commanding high prices.

7. **Lazio:** The cuisine of Lazio, in contrast to other regional culinary traditions, has maintained its characteristics over time, with only some slight influence of the Jewish community. Specialties such as “spaghetti alla carbonara”, or the oxtail or even “gnocchi alla romana” are known throughout the world. The cuisine of Lazio is characterized by the simplicity of the traditional dishes and the use of very poor ingredients, sometimes misunderstood in all those restaurants that try to imitate this cuisine: this is the case of the “gnocchi alla romana” which are made of semolina and not of potatoes.

Among the cheeses there's the buffalo mozzarella, the Pecorino Romano DOP, a very tasty cheese that should be eaten with fava beans, fior di latte, a fresh cheese with a soft consistency, and Roman ricotta, which is used to prepare the typical Easter cakes. Meat here is particularly tasty: the “coppiette” are obtained from horse meat, the “guanciale” is much sought to prepare the famous carbonara or bucatini Amatriciana; the “mortadella of Amatrice” is similar to that of Campotosto in Abruzzo; the “sausage Monte San Biagio” is seasoned with red pepper. Finally, the “Porchetta” is obtained by cooking a pig, and the most famous one is prepared according to the recipe of Ariccia.

Even the vegetables of Lazio offer really tasty dishes: the Roman artichoke or the giant green, black and white olives are considered very inviting. Lazio is also important for its fruit, such as the kiwi, the chestnuts of Vallerano, larger and heavier than normal chestnuts; the strawberries of Nemi, typical wild strawberries.

The production of oil is also to be mentioned: there is extra virgin olive oil “Canino” Dop, with its green color and fresh taste, and the extra virgin olive oil “Sabina” Dop. The remarkable variety of wines offered by Lazio region, which counts over 25 DOC wines, few of them are the dry Frascati, the white dry Marino, the white dry Colli Albani (which can be also sparkling) and the Aprilia, a garnet red wine.

8. **Liguria:** The coastal region of Liguria forms a long narrow crescent along the Ligurian Sea towards the northern part of Italy. Four provinces – Imperia, Savona, Genoa and La Spezia – are arranged in a linear fashion along the crescent, each with similar lengths of coastline. A wide swath of mountains protects the area from severe weather, lending to the region's year-round mild temperatures and plenty of rainfall.

Liguria shares its western border with France, and the Italian regions of Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany fan out along the northern and eastern borders, influencing but not overpowering Liguria's strong local food culture. The capital port city of Genoa claims Christopher Columbus as one of its most famous natives, and pesto as one of its most famous recipes.

Geographically, Liguria holds little meadowlands, with most of its terrain rising from tropical coastline sharply up to mountainous areas. The forested hills grow wild with pine trees, providing the fresh tang of pine nuts for Ligurian dishes. Mushrooms and chestnuts abound in the hills, as do rabbits and other wild game, making the region ideal for producing hearty and rustic country flavors. The warm Mediterranean air helps create good conditions for growing olives (producing exceptionally light flavored oil), wine grapes, corn, herbs (particularly basil), garlic, chickpeas, zucchini (especially the blossoms, which cooks stuff), potatoes, onions and artichokes. Because of its wide coastline, fish and shellfish are the predominant proteins used in Ligurian cooking, though the region shares its love of pork and pork products with both its Italian and French neighbors.

Though little wheat is grown in the area, pasta is important to the region's cuisine. It is said that a form of small lasagna noodle originated there, formed from chestnut flour, which is still popular today. The innovative Ligurians are skilled making do with locally grown ingredients, like chestnut and chickpea, to product alternate products to use in their pastas, polentas and breads, though wheat is fairly easy to import to the region and therefore the primary ingredient in pastas and breads now. *Pesto* sauce is popular as a topping for pastas and is widely consumed since basil and pine nuts are so readily available. *Fidelini* is a local favorite pasta cut, long and thin and the perfect base for light sauces. *Trenette* is a form of flat, thin pasta similar to *linguine*, and hearty *gnocchi* can be found on almost every menu.

High on the list of the profusion of Ligurian specialty dishes is the bread known as *Focaccia*. This unleavened flatbread is not meant to be stored for any length of time, but rather is best eaten straight from the oven. Though usually baked plain, the region's abundance of fragrant herbs are often combined and sprinkled on top. Cheeses, meats and fresh vegetables are other delightful additions to *Focaccias*, and though there is some tendency in non-Italians to think of heavily adorned *Focaccias* as pizza-like, the differences in taste and texture are very distinct. *Focaccias* are, again, unleavened and have a dense texture perfect for sopping up rich sauces or simply a great olive oil.

9. **Lombardia / Lombardy:** Italy's leading industrial region, as well as its most populous, Lombardy is home to three distinct landscapes: fertile flatlands, verdant foothills, and snowy mountains. Rice and corn thrive in the northern climate, resulting in a rich repertoire of risottos and polentas. Veal, beef, butter, and cow's milk cheeses appear at nearly every meal, and Sweetwater fish caught in Lombardy's many lakes (including Italy's largest, Lago di Garda, and its most opulent, Lago di Como) round out the diet.

Located in northern Italy, with the fashion and business powerhouse Milan at its centre, the landlocked region of Lombardy might not have the sea lapping at its feet, but what it lacks in coastline it makes up for in culinary kudos. With a wealth of agricultural land set between the fertile rivers, as well as mountainous areas, Lombardy is an ideal zone for the cultivation of fruit and livestock, as well as the making of traditional cheeses and charcuterie. The terrain lends itself to a wealth of local and regional food delicacies, from the world famous Bitto and Bagoss cheeses though to Bresaola and Mantova pumpkins.

Being a rich, wealthy region of Italy, meat features much more prominently in Lombard cuisine than in the traditionally poorer areas in the south of the country. Veal, beef and pork are what you'll usually find on restaurant menus, often turned into rich, hearty stews with the prime cuts reserved for more luxurious dishes. There are also lots of chicken and goose dishes, and the famous bresaola originates here. The lowlands around the River Po are perfect for rearing dairy cattle, which is why Lombardy is one of Italy's most prolific cheesemaking regions and so famous for its butter. In total there are thirteen PDO-protected cheeses from Lombardy, including the likes of Gorgonzola and Taleggio, and Grana Padano even originated in the area before spreading into others. Lesser-known cheeses are fiercely protected by the local government, and while most are made from cow's milk, there is the occasional goat's milk cheese to be found too.

Lombardy is a landlocked region, but thanks to Lake Garda, Lake Como and Lake Maggiore, there are plenty of freshwater fish to be had. Perch, tench and pike are often simply grilled, or used to top risottos. More unusual species include agoni, a sort of freshwater sardine, and carpione, a salmon-like fish that's endemic to Lake Garda. Huge swathes of Lombardy are covered by rice paddies in the Po Valley, which is why its risottos and other rice dishes are so famous. Polenta is another common side dish, often served creamy and soft with plenty of butter and cream to enrich it. Buckwheat is popular the further north you go in Lombardy, although it's mostly used to make pizzoccheri pasta, but rice is certainly the most popular carbohydrate.

As a northern Italian region, Lombardy relies on rice and polenta much more than pasta as a daily staple. However, it is still prevalent, often coming in the form of tortelli or stuffed pastas which are rich with egg, butter and cheese or served in meaty broths. In the northernmost parts of the area you'll find pasta made from buckwheat, too, which has an earthy, nutty flavor. Meat, cheese and other rich ingredients seem to take precedence over vegetable dishes in Lombardy, but that's

not to say they don't exist. The fertile soils around the rivers and lakes in the region are perfect for growing crops, which is why so much rice and corn comes from the area, but don't expect tomatoes and basil to appear everywhere like they do further south. Pumpkins from Mantova are nationally renowned, as are Breme onions from Pavia. Lombard fruits tend to be more popular, with apples from Valtellina and Mantova's pears both IGP-protected and lemons grown around Lake Garda particularly prized. Lombardy is most famous for its red wines made from Nebbioli grapes and the sparkling wine Franciacorta, which is tipped to become the next Prosecco. Despite being a northern region, the lowlands create a Mediterranean climate which is ideal for growing both grapes and olives, so you can find decent whites, reds and rosés along with the more famous varieties.

- 10. Marche/Marches:** In the Italian region of Marche, time seems to stand still. Still a largely isolated region, Marche is a wealth of architecture and recipes dating back to medieval times and beyond. Despite the challenging terrain, the area has been fought over for centuries by invading countries and warring Italian noble families, all seeking to control its central coastline between the Adriatic Sea and the Appenine mountains.

The hills of Marche are littered with Medieval buildings and walls, and unlike many oft-invaded areas, historical architecture has been greatly preserved and simply adapted as necessary to modern uses. It is no wonder, then, that Marche provides a wealth of food tradition for those willing to make the culinary journey.

Marche (meaning literally "march" and referring to the March of Ancona) is surrounded by the better-known and easier-reached regions of Abruzzo, Lazio, Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna. Marche is comprised for the most part of the Appenine mountains with a narrow section of Adriatic coastline along the east. It is along the coast that the region's capital city of Ancona sits and lays claim to the Church of St. Ciriaco, a truly grand example of religious architecture from the 1200s. Additionally, the city is home to the Arch of Trajan (1st century) and the Episcopal Palace (built in the 1400s). The rich history of Marche is celebrated in the town of Ascoli Piceno each year on the first Sunday of August with the Tourneo della Quintana, a Medieval-themed festival and knight's tournament where costumes, games and foods of the 15th century are highlighted.

The food culture of Marche has been greatly influenced by other regions and invading peoples throughout its long history, but many farmers cling to local tradition, governing their crops by ancient lunar methods. In the same way that early farmers in the United States relied on a farmer's almanac for timing their work, legend and myth still play a large role in determining which days are auspicious for Marche farmers for planting, harvesting, making wine, making cheese and curing meats.

On the coast, fish and seafood dishes abound. In the hills, chicken and pork are the primary proteins. Creamy sauces made from chicken giblets are used liberally in

Marche cooking. Pork recipes rely on generous chunks instead of the traditional thin prosciutto style servings. Since pork is so readily available, there are many type of sausages made in Marche. A hearty favorite local smoked sausage is *ciauscolo*, crafted with half pork and half pork fat, and well seasoned with salt, pepper, orange peel and fennel seed. Olives grow well in Marche, and are served both on their own and stuffed with savory meat fillings. Grapes, grains, mushrooms and a wide variety of vegetables are found throughout the region, and the tables are graced with simple country Italian cooking at its best.

Cheese-wise, Marche holds its own in the steep competition for great Italian dairy products. *Casciotta d'Urbino* is a sheep and cow milks hand-pressed into rounds that are then salted and cured in a moist environment, producing a velvety texture. *Ambra di Talamello* is made from goat, sheep or cow milk and is cured in a pit lined with straw, resulting in an earthy flavor. *Cacio La Forma di Limone* is a sheep milk cheese made with lemons, then formed into small balls (that look a bit like lemons). It is rubbed with a salt and lemon mixture to cure, and has a refreshingly light lemon tang. Some great pecorino cheeses can be found in the region as well.

Pasta in the Marche region is rich with eggs, with wide noodles like *lasagna* and *pappardelle* in the forefront. The region's signature dish *vincisgrassi* (a pasta casserole with meat sauce) showcases flat pastas and savory meats to their best and most delightful advantage. Other pastas like *spaghetti alla chitarra*, *spaghettini*, *tagliatelle* and *maccheroncini* have also found their way into Marche dishes. Combined with the freshest local ingredients, pasta is always a welcome addition to Italian country tables. The results are nothing less than a delicious display of cooking marked by confidences handed down from generation to generation.

11. **Molise:** In 1970, Abruzzi and Molise split apart, creating Italy's newest region. Formerly ruled by Sicily, Molise cuisine strongly reflects this influence. As with many other Italian regions, a history of poverty created an emphasis on simple dishes made with fresh local ingredients. Like Abruzzi, Molise recipes often contain hot peppers affectionately referred to as *diavolino*, or "little devil". Many of the local families migrated annually in order to move their grazing animals to fresh grasslands, so most traditional Molise food is quickly prepared. In the spring, early nettle sprouts are gently cooked in soup with bacon and tomatoes to make **zuppa di ortiche**. Cheese and vegetables are staple dishes in Molise cooking, since most of the herds were reserved for sale. Eating meat was a sign of affluence, with most of the population serving meat only for special occasions. Fresh or preserved tomatoes, beans, artichokes and giant white celery are in many meals.

When meat dishes are eaten, mutton, lamb and kid are the favorite choices of food for Molise recipes. **Pezatta** is a dish of stewed mutton with tomatoes and onions flavored with rosemary and hot peppers. **Abbuoti**, or envelopes, are made of chopped lamb liver and sweetbreads mixed with hard cooked eggs and stuffed into

intestine and baked. Pork is also used in Molise cuisine for making sausages and preserved meats. Prosciutto is generally a salt cured food, as smoking is unusual in Italy. **Sopressata** and **salame** may be cured and stored in terracotta containers with the local olive oil. **Ventricina** is a local pork sausage flavored with fennel seeds and peperoncino. Pork skin is also used in pasta sauces. Other meats eaten in Molise include rabbit. **Lepre a ciffe e ciaffe** marinates hare in herb flavored wine and vinegar before cooking.

Cheeses eaten in Molise are mostly made from sheep's milk. They include the famous Caciocavallo Silano and other well-known cheeses such as Provolone, Pecorino and Scamorza. Cheese and seafood are often combined in regional dishes, as in the beloved broiled stuffed mussels. The local ports offers a variety of fresh seafood including anchovies, shellfish and sea snails. **Baccalà alla cantalupese** is salt cured cod with olives, grapes and peppers seasoned with capers and garlic. Traditional homes still make their pasta by hand. Molise cuisine often features pasta with sauces made from lamb or pork, freshly ground pecorino and chili peppers. It may be in the form of *sagne*, *laganelle*, *crejoli* or *recchietelle*. **Calcioni di ricotta rustici** fills round dumplings of pasta dough with prosciutto, provolone and ricotta before frying them in olive oil. This food is often served as part of an assorted platter of fried appetizers called a **fritto misto** in Molise cooking. *Cavatelli*, the most famous local semolina pasta, is usually served with mushrooms or broccoli with a hearty meat sauce.

Molise cooking often features a cornmeal known as polenta. It may be cooked into a mush or used as flour for baking with. The mush is chilled, then sliced and fried with garlic. These slices of polenta can be layered with beans and peppers before baking. **P'lenta d'iragn** is a white polenta made with potatoes and wheat, served topped with tomato sauce. Another popular use of polenta is to bake the corn flour into flat bread and top it with wild greens to make **pizza con le foglie**. The leftover pizza is enjoyed crumbled into pork broth to make **pizza e minestra**. Molise desserts often feature the local, aromatic olive oil as a unique flavoring. They offer both familiar pastries, such as **picatelli**, filled with honey, grapes and nuts, and less well known desserts made from corn flour. **Panettoncino** is a springy chocolate cake made with polenta. The most unusual dessert is made with blood sausage, chocolate and pignolis.

12. **Piemonte/Piedmont:** The typical recipes of Piedmont cuisine can be divided into two categories: those belonging to the noble tradition of the court of Savoy, and those born from popular traditions. In the first case we are talking about very rich dishes that were served in the sumptuous court banquets such as chocolate, eggnog, boiled and fried mixed Piedmont meat. The recipes of the rural tradition instead were made with simple ingredients such as panissa, and "Bagna cauda", a warm dip which is served and consumed in a manner similar to fondue, and made with garlic, anchovies, olive oil, butter, and (in some parts of the region) cream.

The two souls of this land, the rich court of Savoy and the poor peasants, have contributed both to the wide variety of recipes of Piedmont. It's almost impossible to speak of traditional recipes not mentioning the territories that make up this region. A gastronomic journey in Piedmont cuisine brings us through the rolling hills of the Langhe, home of hazelnuts, truffles and great wines; across the vast plains of Vercelli, Biella and Novara there is the realm of rice, the main ingredient of risotto, "panissa" and "paniscia". If we touch then the slopes of the Alps, we find a place where local minorities of the Vaudois or Walser gave the Piedmontese cuisine traditional recipes of great value such as the soup of the Waldenses, the "cagliette", the "pirrubangada" and many more.

The recipes of Piedmont cuisine are best known for their strong flavors such as the garlic and the anchovies of Bagna cauda or the pungent scent of white truffles of the Langhe accompanying "tjarin" pasta. These strong flavors blend well with robust red wines such as Barbera d'Asti or aged wines like Barolo. Many historical recipes were born in Turin and then spread throughout Italy and even in the world, such as the recipe for bread sticks "grissini", or that of "amaretti di Mombaruzzo".

- 13. Puglia:** Puglia is a flat, fertile, sun soaked region in southern Italy which, together with its iron rich soil makes it one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country. It is famous for its olive oil and produces between 250,000 and 300,000 tonnes each year. Italy is the second biggest producer, after Spain, and Puglia provides around 40 percent of the country's extra virgin olive oil.

Durum wheat grows in abundance and is used for making pasta and bread. The pasta from Puglia is made without eggs as they were once considered to be a luxury. The most famous pasta made in Puglia is 'oricchiette' (meaning little ears) which is still made daily by the elder women in most of the small villages. The bread in Puglia, which accompanies all meals, is more diverse than many other regions in Italy and comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. It is cooked in traditional wood burning bread ovens and some of the villages still have a communal bread oven where the locals go to bake their bread every day.

Vegetables obviously grow well in the warm climate and are used in abundance, always fresh and always seasonal. Tomatoes are used for making sauces to go with the local pasta and aubergines, peppers and courgettes are roasted and grilled as an accompaniment to meat. The interior of Puglia is rocky and here there are many sheep and goats which are bred for their meat as well as their milk which is used for a variety of cheeses. Lamb is the most popular meat, followed by pork and horsemeat with beef, although now becoming more popular, being used very little.

Puglia has many delicious local cheeses, perhaps the most famous being Burrata which is made from mozzarella and cream. Others include Cacioricotta – a seasonal Ricotta cheese made from flavoured ewes' milk, Canestrato – a hard cheese which is a mixture of sheep and goat's milk, Fallone di Gravina and Caciofiore. Fish plays a large part in the cuisine of Puglia and the long coastline

offers a large array of fresh fish on a daily basis. Sea bass, red mullet, anchovies, mussels and cuttlefish are among the favourites but there are many other types on offer in restaurants.

In spite of this excess of food, the daily cuisine in Puglia, as in the other southern regions of Italy, tends to be simple, fresh and wholesome with most locals growing, rearing and making enough for their individual needs.

- 14. Sardinia/Sardegna:** Sardinian cuisine is extremely varied, enriched through the centuries by the exchanges and influences from other populations of the Mediterranean basin: Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs and Spanish. Each area has its specialties; pasta, bread, cheeses, meat, seafood, and natural herbs are the basis for a range of tasty dishes to discover on a trip to this beautiful region.

Sardinia is an island; it is therefore inevitable that seafood plays an important role in the region's cuisine. In coastal towns, and especially Cagliari, Carloforte, Oristano, Alghero, Castelsardo, Santa Teresa di Gallura, Olbia, seafood and shellfish-based dishes abound. Some typical dishes of Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia, include: fregula (a type of pasta from Sardinia) with clams, spaghetti with clams and fish eggs (bottarga), spaghetti with sea urchins, sometimes served with artichokes or wild asparagus, cassola, a seafood soup. In the south-western portion of the island, in the area known as Sulcis, are some of the oldest tonnare (tuna fishing nets) in the Mediterranean. The cuisine reflects a strong Genoese influence and revolves around tuna and other products related to the fishing of tuna.

Malloreddus (gnocchetti sardi in Italian) are made of semolina flour and are similar to gnocchi; they are traditionally flavored with saffron. They are typically prepared with a tomato and sausage sauce, called alla campidanese; other recipes include casu furriau, melted cheese and saffron. Culurgiones are dumplings stuffed with ricotta and mint, or with a potato-based filling, fresh cheese and mint. Fregula is hand-made dry pasta made from durum wheat semolina, worked in small lumps and used for dishes such as fregula with clams or fregula al sugo. It is also used to make soups. Fregula is where the North African influence is more obvious, being similar to cous cous, but with larger grains.

The classic dish of the Sardinian pastoral tradition is porceddu, suckling pig spit-roasted for hours on an open fire made from aromatic woods, and flavored with myrtle, rosemary or bay leaves. The arrosto di agnello da latte (roasted suckling lamb), obtained from lambs of a maximum of 7 kg, whose white meat is soft and with an intense flavor, is one of the oldest culinary traditions of the island, a land of shepherds who often ate this dish. Lamb is also the basis for several typical panadas. The roasted suckling goat is another popular dish, where the meat is cooked slowly on a spit and flavored with myrtle or rosemary.

Due to its ancient pastoral tradition, cheese is a specialty of Sardinia, which currently boasts the largest production of pecorino cheese in Europe, exported and

appreciated in many countries, especially North America. Sardinians were not only warriors, but also farmers and consequently cheese producers. In Roman times, Sardinian cheeses were coveted by the wealthy. In Sardinia, there are approximately 3 million sheep. You can guess which type of milk is the most used to produce the region's cheese. Sardinian sheep cheeses are produced from milk of a native breed of sheep whose origins are ancient: the Sardinian breed (*razza sarda*). Pecorino sardo has a long tradition; Pecorino Sardo DOP is made with pasteurized Sardinian sheep's milk, rennet, salt, lactic ferments and sold in two versions: fresh and aged. Fiore Sardo is another specialty and a Slow Food presidium.

The list of Sardinian sweets (*pipitos*) is endless, every town and villages boast its own specialties. Here are some of them: *Seadas* or *sebadas* are thin dough discs filled with fresh, slightly sour, pecorino cheese, melted with cow's milk or semolina, flavored with lemon; the discs are fried and covered with melted honey, preferably bitter. *Formagelle* or *casadinas* are pies typical of Barbagia stuffed with a thin layer of fresh cheese flavored with lemon. A common variation employs ricotta cheese, in this case they are called *regottinas* or *ricottelle*. The *pabassinas* are common throughout Sardinia and are prepared with flour, walnuts, raisins, almonds or hazelnuts.

15. **Sicily/Sicilia:** In Italy we always look after number one, but putting pride aside, there is little doubt that **Sicilian cuisine** represents **Italian Gastronomy at its best**. Not surprisingly, the symbol of Italian cuisine, pasta, was created here, long before the Venetian sailor Marco Polo discovered flavour during his travels in China.

Starters in Sicily are so rich and tasty that they can be easily used as main courses. *Caponata*, a traditional eggplant based dish, is a typical example. Vegetables of all kinds, combined in various ways, are vastly used to enhance the flavor of the main ingredients. **Main courses** are authentic masterpieces, a triumph of seafood and meat. Some of the most important Italian dishes are actually Sicilian, like the Pasta alla Norma or Pasta con le sarde. Among fish, the most used are tuna, swordfish and sardinies. **Desserts** are definitely the **highlight of Sicilian tradition**: *cannoli*, *cassata*, marzipan fruit and *flavour* are unmatched specialties.

Fried food, dried fruit, sweet-and-sour sauces, fish and olive oil are the **main ingredients of the Sicilian cuisine**. But there is a component that is always there, and this is variety. There are in fact dozens of versions of the same dishes, according to the geographical area and to the occasion. The **extraordinary richness of Sicilian cuisine** is a tribute to the Mediterranean Sea. It is a clear reflection of the cultural layers that have occurred over thousands of years of **history of the island**. This amazing combination of flavors and colours gave birth to one the most balanced cuisines in the world: the **Mediterranean diet**, included by UNESCO in the list of **intangible cultural heritage**.

From appetizers to dessert, the **Sicilian dishes** are real jewels of complexity that require a long preparation. The house is a temple where ancient rituals take place. **Cooking is a ritual**, and so is consuming the meals. Families seat together at the table, often accompanied by neighbors, friends and relatives. **Sicilian culinary art** expresses its best not only at the dinner table, but also in the streets. Via del Plebiscito, in Catania is also known as “the meat road”. In Siracuse, along with *cannoli* and *cassatayou* can buy a *cuccia*, a sweet made with ricotta cheese and sweet corn. Right after the Oriental metropolies, **Palermo** is the 5th most important city in the world for its **street food culture**. *Arancini*, *panelle*, fried pizza, *pani ca meusa* are just a few of the many specialties that fill the carts of the street vendors.

- 16. Trentino-Alto Adige:** Trentino Alto Adige cooking draws as heavily from its Germanic roots as it does from its Italian heritage. Most of the dishes are hearty and come from the peasants of the region. Over many years, the residents of this autonomous region in Italy have created a unique blend of the two cuisines. Goulash is served with cornmeal polenta. Pizza and pasta is as likely to be on the menu as sauerkraut. Polenta is staple food in Trentino Alto Adige cuisine, but it may contain potatoes or buckwheat instead of or in addition to cornmeal. It is often served with wild game or mushrooms and liberally flavored with butter and cheese. In addition to polenta being eaten hot as a grain or sliced and fried, these grains can be made into a cake known as smacafam. It is also made into trisa, a hot soup of cornmeal and wheat flour cooked with butter and milk Canederli, a bread dumpling, is one of the famous regional dishes. Trentino Alto Adige cooking offers these with meat, in soup or even filled with fruit for dessert. Another well-known food is broth with leberknödelsuppe, another kind of dumpling made from bread, calves liver and herbs.

Filling soups are very popular in this northeastern region of Italy. Trentino Alto Adige recipes for soup include minestra di trippa, a bread thickened soup with tomato sauce, vegetables and tripe. Saursuppe, another tripe soup, is flavored with herbs, onion, nutmeg and white wine. Barley soup, known as orzetto or Gerstensuppe, is made with vegetables, onion, garlic and a local smoked pork called speck. Speck is also served as an appetizer or snack with hearty rye bread or crackers. Trentino Alto Adige recipes make many kinds of sausages, including hauswurst, from pork. This sausage is enjoyed served with horseradish, pickles and sauerkraut. Blood is used with walnuts, pine nuts and chestnuts to make biroldi con crauti. These nutmeg, cinnamon and clove flavored sausages are also accompanied by sauerkraut.

Beef is marinated in brine with juniper berries, herbs and pepper to make carne salata. When sautéed in butter, it is served with polenta or beans. It can also be sliced and eaten raw. Dried cod is also eaten in Trentino Alto Adige cuisine. Beef is also enjoyed braised slowly in flavorful sauces. Rindsgulasch, or beef goulash, is a hearty beef stew. Sauerbraten is a stewed beef roast flavored with onions, vinegar and wine. Food from this region features many different kinds of meat. Pork and

poultry are raised at home and hunters bring home rabbit, venison, mountain goat and the chamois. This unusual game animal is served with salt pork in an herb flavored vinegar and sour cream sauce. Fresh water fishing provides brook trout. This fish is served with melted butter after cooking in vinegar, lemon, bay leaf, and clove flavored white wine.

Trentino Alto Adige recipes are well known for their flavorful apple desserts. Apfelkuchel is a cake full of pieces of apple. Rolling delicate pastry for apple strudel requires many years of practice. Other well-known desserts include a jam filled fried or baked pastry called krapfen. A sweet variation of smacafam are also made with nuts, raisins and aniseed flavoring. A Christmas specialty is zelten, a rye cake with provincial variations. It is often made with nuts, candied fruit, honey, cinnamon and liqueur.

17. **Toscana/Tuscany:** Tuscan food is based on the Italian idea of cucina povera or “poor cooking.” A concept that started very literally, it’s about simple meals that are inexpensive and could easily be made in large amounts. Today it remains largely the same – but by choice instead of economy. Tuscan cooking doesn’t use complicated seasonings or elaborate creations because they’re not needed. Instead it’s made using fresh, high-quality ingredients that bring out the natural flavors in each dish, simple or not. The region’s gentle hills are the perfect source and locally grown produce, titled “nostrale” or “ours,” is abundant. In fact, the cuisine is traditionally hearty and made with simple ingredients – ones easily found in the countryside – with bread beans and roasted meats serving as the base of most traditional Tuscan meals.

The most dominant influence on Tuscan cooking is in fact the peasant tradition. **Simple, rustic dishes made from seasonal ingredients.** **Extra virgin olive oil** is one of the most important ingredients that come into almost every dish. Olive picking starts around November, before the olives are completely ripe; from the first pressing is produced the extra vergine, the purest and less acid olive oil. **Bread is essential to Tuscan cooking!** There’s no lunch or dinner without bread on the table. Tuscan bread comes in all possible forms and flavors! Focaccia o schiacciata, croutons, bread with rosemary, bread with raisins and sugar...Particularly appreciated is the bread from Altopascio and the bread from Montegemoli. The bread of Altopascio, near Lucca, follows a long tradition; it is simply super! Maybe it is the best Tuscan bread.

Pasta, better if **hand-made**, is another staple! It can be dressed with all possible and imaginable types of sauce. The beloved **lasagne with ragu** sauce (with meat and tomato), though having their origin from the region of Emilia, are also a popular dish in Tuscany and of course the whole of Italy. The original recipe for the 115lavor115 or lasagna is made with **homemade pasta**, 115lavor115115 sauce, parmesan, and ragu, but there are countless ways to make lasagna.

A typical Tuscan meal usually starts with a great variety of salami and cured meats, like prosciutto, salame, finocchiona, and with the savory crostini croutons with chicken livers. Then follow 116 flavor 116 or pasta; then it's the turn of fish or meat with side dishes, then fruit, and finally a cake or dessert, usually homemade. Many of the best Tuscan dishes also come from the sea; **fresh seafood** is cooked in an excellent way! Some of the most delicious dishes include **cacciucco** stew from Livorno, **bottarga** (fish eggs), triglie alla livornese, mullets with tomato. **Wild chestnuts** and chestnut flour are also at the base of many Tuscan specialties, including the wonderful **castagnaccio**, made with chestnut flour, pine nuts, raisins and rosemary. Among the most popular **Tuscan cheeses**, the **pecorino** cheese from Pienza, made from sheep's milk, and the marzolino cheese of the Chianti area, together with a huge quantity of all kinds of tasty cheese. Tuscan cooking is also full of incredibly tasty homemade cakes and desserts like cantuccini, zuccotto, torta della nonna, buccellato, pane con l'uva. There are a lot of other delicious typical cakes from Tuscany, like schiacciata fiorentina, bomboloni, brigidini di Lamporecchio, castagnaccio, torta coi bischeri, necci.

18. **Umbria:** It's small, the only Italian region without a coastline or international border and covered in dense forest and hilly terrain. But Umbria, the 'green heart' of Italy, is home to more culinary treasures than many of its larger, well-travelled neighbors. The region, which borders Tuscany, Marche and Lazio, is divided into two provinces; Perugia in the north (which is also the name of the region's capital city) and Terni in the south. There are mountains to the east but the majority of Umbria is made up of hills thanks to the Tiber Valley (Val Tiberina) and the Umbria Valley (Valle Umbra). Lake Trasimeno, in Perugia, is one of Italy's largest lakes, and is surrounded by vineyards, olive groves and farmland thanks to the fertile soil. This combination of Apennine foothills, beautiful medieval hill towns and vast swathes of woodland make Umbria one of the most beautiful regions of central Italy. Umbria is still overshadowed by nearby Tuscany and Lazio when it comes to international attention. But there are a growing number of food-obsessed tourists visiting the region for its incredible cuisine. Towns and villages like Norcia, Orvieto, Montefalco and Trevi are renowned for producing some of Italy's best foods, olive oils and wines, and they're starting to attract intrepid foodies from far and wide.

Umbria has a reputation for producing some incredible cured meats, made from **pork** and wild boar. Its forests are also home to an incredible number of **truffles**, which are grated with aplomb over everything. But as with any region of Italy, the local food culture is rich with all sorts of other products and flavours. Here are the most iconic ingredients found in Umbria. Umbria's vast oak forests means there are plenty of acorns for snaffling pigs to feast on, which flavours the meat and makes it some of the best in the country. The small town of **Norcia**, near the Marche border, is famous for its *norcinos*, artisanal butchers of impeccable skill that cut and cures pork better than anyone else in Italy. Wild boars also roam free in the more remote parts of the region, and hare, roe deer and game birds are highly prized amongst both chefs and home cooks. Sheep farmers exist in the area too, but

beef reared in Perugia province is particularly famous and boasts PGI protection. While Umbria has no coastline, the vast Lake Trasimeno provides plenty of freshwater fish. Perch, eel, carp, pike, tench and smelt are caught and simply cooked over fire or turned into stews.

Umbria produces more black truffles than any other part of Italy; they can be found year-round but are at their best and most prolific in the summer months. Particularly lucky truffle hunters can also find white truffles in the winter, which can fetch a very high price. The vast Umbrian woodland is also home to plenty of wild mushrooms, and many locals will venture into the forests with a basket to find different varieties, of which the porcini is the most coveted. To the east of Norcia, the Castelluccio valley is home to what many chefs regard as the best lentils in the world – Castelluccio di Norcia. They are tiny and have such thin skins they don't need to be soaked before cooking. Pulses in general tend to be more popular than pasta in Umbria; 117lav finds its way into soups and stews, while the ancient Fagiolina del Trasimeno bean is cultivated in the land around Umbria's magnificent lake by a few small producers.

Vegetables of all kinds are grown in the fertile soil around Lake Trasimeno, but the black celery of Trevi has to be one of the most interesting. It has much darker leaves than normal celery and a more pronounced 117lavor. Red Cannara onions are also highly prized; grown on small farms, the producers are known as *cipollari* and pass down their cultivation techniques through the generations. Both black celery and Cannara onions have their own festivals during harvest time in Umbria.

Umbria only produces around two percent of Italy's olive oil, but it is held in high regard (the region boasts five separate DOP-protected oils). The climate means the olives grow slowly and oil producers pick the olives when they just start to ripen – which is when they're at their fruitiest. This comes through in the 117lavor of the oil, which is often quite peppery and bright green in colour, too. The olive groves around Trevi are said to be the best.

19. **Valle D Aosta:** Valle dAosta cooking is based on warming soups, heavy rye bread, polenta, rice, potatoes and gnocchi. **Minestra di castagne e riso** simmers rice and chestnuts in milk until it becomes a thick, comforting porridge. Corn meal mush is chilled and sliced. These slices are then layered with a thick beef and sausage ragout and Fontina cheese in **polenta alla rascard**. Fontina cheese is also used with butter, toma and Parmigiano Reggiano cheeses and rice to make the creamy **risotto alla valdostana**. This traditional dish only contains simple ingredients, but requires close attention at the stove top in order to achieve the classic texture — creamy with a toothsome bite. Hot soups are often served in Aosta Valley cuisine. These distinctive dishes often include fresh or dried mushrooms, chestnuts and almonds. **Seupa de gri** is a barley soup made with seasonal vegetables and potatoes, seasoned with onions and salt pork. Savoy

cabbage, Fontina, ham and rye bread are simmered in beef broth with salt pork, spices and herbs to make **seupa à la valpellinentze**.

Valle d'Aosta recipes are known for their sweet butter and cheeses, especially Fontina and Valle d'Aosta Fromadzo. The cheeses are used for eating out of hand and **fondue**, but also for flavoring polenta, risotto, soups and other dishes. The herds of cattle provide meat for the small community. Beef stew, or **carbonade**, is made with salt preserved beef, onions and red wine and served with polenta. Veal cutlets are breaded and fried, topped with thinly shaved white truffles and Parmigiano Reggiano and a cream sauce in the traditional **costoletta alla valdostana**. Even the cow's udder is served after salt curing with herbs, pressing and slicing thinly. This unusual dish, known as **tetouns**, has been compared to ham. Valle d'Aosta cooking is supplemented with wild hare, venison and game birds. Venison and vegetables are stewed in an herb flavored cream and grappa sauce for **capriolo alla valdostana**. Herds of free range pigs are used for the famous prosciutto known as Jambon de Bosses and for making salt pork. Aosta Valley recipes waste nothing from these pigs, either. **Boudins**, spicy sausages made from pork blood, and **salame** are preserved in rendered pork fat. While seafood is not typically part of Valle d'Aosta cuisine, mountain stream grown trout is considered a special treat. Typical Aosta Valley recipes for fish might stuff trout fillets with ham and top with fontina, then poach in white wine.

Fruit from the Alps is very sweet and many desserts are prepared with the locally grown apples and pears. These fruits are often cooked with red wine. The flavorful local honey is used to bake **tegole**, a cookie named after the roof tiles that they resemble. **Torcetti**, or ring shaped cookies, are also flavored with honey before being dusted with powdered sugar. Even though this region is Italy's smallest, the hearty soups and other filling dishes satisfy the most demanding appetite.

20. **Veneto:** As a trading power in the eastern Mediterranean, Venice came in contact with many cultures and influences. **Veneto** was the **first European region to use spices, rice, corn** and many other fruits and vegetables. The marshes of the Po Valley were ideal for rice cultivation, so a large number of different **rice dishes** were created, which are still an **integral part of Venetian cuisine**. Rice with peas (risi e bisi), risotto with shrimp (risotto con scampi), tripe with rice (riso e trippa) and rice with black calamari sauce (risotto al neri di seppi) are just some of these numerous dishes. A second integral part of the **Venetian cuisine is polenta**. The yellow corn cake is served with many Venetian dishes as a garnish. You should definitely try this typical Venetian dish: Veal liver with onions and roasted polenta (fegato alla veneziana). We can also recommend Pasta e fasoi, a thick noodle soup with red beans, Venetian guinea fowl (faraona), or around Lake Garda the popular Tortellini di zucca – pasta filled with sweet pumpkin mash.

Besides the well-known radicchio salad from the Veneto region, the asparagus grown around Bibione is very popular. You can get a good impression of the region's former trade power if you look at the spices Venetians use for their dishes

– many of them seem to be very oriental. Visitors with a sweet tooth will discover some excellent desserts too. Because of the Habsburg occupation, Venetian desserts are primarily influenced by Austrian cuisine. You should definitely try the sweet pastry slices (sfoglie e frittelle) and a Pan d'oro – a light vanilla-flavoured pastry made in Verona. **World-famous** but often a surprise to visitors to the region are the **Venetian wines**. In the hills between Verona and Treviso grow some of the best wines of Italy. In the Valpolicella area, north of Verona, the **famous Valpolicella wine** grows and prospers. Excellent Valpolicella wines are the “Amore” and “Recioto” – they are not cheap, but both of these are definitely worth their price. On the east bank of Lake Garda, north of Verona, grows the **Bardolino wine** – a light red wine that is very popular with the tourists, especially in summer. The last two wines to mention are **Soave**, a mild white wine that grows between Verona and Vicenza, and the sparkling wine “Prosecco” from the **Prosecco** region near Treviso – one of the most famous sparkling wines in Europe.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

1. Write a short note on ‘20 Regions of Italian Cuisine’.

3.6 SUMMARY

Italian generally eats three meals a day. A breakfast consists of caffelatte or cappuccino with bread, butter and jams or cake. Lunch and dinner are almost similar meals. They generally consist of an appetizer based on cold meats, pasta or rice dish, meat, fish, salad, cheese and fruits are also used. Except meals Italians also have two traditional snacks time mid morning snacks and mid afternoon snacks. Usually serve a type of bread dough with toppings like brochette, focaccio and crostini. The Italians are said to be the masters of delicacies and producing dishes with simplicity and great nutritional value and natural taste.

Italian cuisine is so regional that each part of the country cooks something different which is not cooked in the other parts of the Italy. This is because of different crops grown in different region. The Italian region differentiate them self's by types of cooking fat used like the butter was used in the northern part , pork fat in centre of Italy and olive oil is used

in the south Italy. Italians are known for their herbs in cooking especially basil, thyme, parsley, sage, oregano and rosemary. Cheese also plays a important role in Italian cuisine. There are more than 400 varieties of cheese made in Italy and parmesan & mozzarella are best known worldwide. The Italian cuisine is also famous for pizza, polenta and tomato sauce throughout the world.

Italy is made up of twenty regions with distinct characteristics. Every town, every village, makes the same dish in vastly different ways, and every town and village has its proudest specialty. These cooking traditions define people's identities just as much as their dialects and their traditional costumes. Local cooking preferences and customs are shaped by geographic, historical, and climactic differences: some regions are landlocked and mountainous, others hug the sea and are hilly; some regions have absorbed Arab or Greek influences, others have been marked by the French or Austrians; some regions live under the dazzling Mediterranean sun most of the year, others have cold winters, snow, fog, and harsh winds.

3.7 GLOSSARY

Abruzzo: Abruzzo is one of Italy's little-known treasures: a tranquil mingling of mountains and coastline, it is sparsely populated and rarely visited by tourists. Home to one of Italy's highest peaks (the Gran Sasso, at an altitude of over 9,500 feet) and a busy port (Pescara, the most populous city in the region), it boasts a rich repertoire of robust mountain dishes and an abundance of seafood specialties. The regional capital is L'Aquila, a charming city with a view of the Gran Sasso that was founded by Frederick II of Swabia in 1254; today, L'Aquila is home to 70,000 people. Near L'Aquila is the Parco Nazionale dell'Abruzzo, an enormous natural reserve (about 200 square miles) where hundreds of rare animal species roam free.

Basilicata: Basilicata has its own ingrained culinary delights, many stemming from the region's humble roots, the "*cucina povera*" that led to creativity in the kitchen using simple ingredients to create delectable dishes. The products from here are *120labor120*, for the most part made like they've been for centuries. It's a great region for vegetarians, because many dishes utilize legumes and the season's vegetables, but carnivores won't go hungry, either. A cow's milk cheese made from the mountain-grazing *podolico* breed of cattle, *caciocavallo podolico* from Basilicata is one of Italy's most prized (and priciest) cheeses.

Calabria: Surrounded by the Tyrrhenian and the Ionian Seas, Calabria boasts 500 miles of coastline (the longest of any Italian region) yet it also boasts some of Italy's highest and wildest mountains, where boars, wolves, and other animals freely roam. Over the centuries, Greek, Arab, and Albanian influences have shaped the Calabrese kitchen: characteristic dishes are laced with chili pepper, sweet-and-sour notes mingle in savory preparations, and desserts are often deep-fried and drenched in honey.

Campania: Despite rich arable soils and access to ports for fresh seafood, Campania's claim to fame is the wide selection of street food, which may be baked, fried, grilled or even frozen. These treats are generally hand held and are available at shops or along most streets. Campania cuisine is made from inexpensive, fresh ingredients like vegetables and grains. Pizza and pasta, cooked from the local wheat, make Campania recipes famous throughout the world.

Emilia-Romagna: Tucked away neatly between the Alps and Apennine Mountains, Emilia-Romagna owes much of its gastronomy to simple geography. The Po River runs straight through the middle of this fertile belt, acting as a vein through the heart of agricultural Italy. Known as the Pianura Padana valley – or sometimes dubbed ‘the food valley’ – this was once marshland, but now makes perfect soil for fruit, vegetables, livestock and other cereal crops. Follow the river east and you'll eventually reach the Po Delta and the shallows of the Adriatic Sea, which provides the region with outstanding fish and seafood.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia: The region Friuli Venezia Giulia is the smallest Italian region, but yet rich in taste due to its location. Surrounded by sea and mountains, Austria and Slovenia, gives Friuli Venezia Giulia unique tastes. Many Italians describe Friuli Venezia Giulia as a non Italian area because of its foreign influence on food and daily life. Friuli Venezia Giulia is the sixth smallest Italian region by population, its residents numbering roughly half those of Rome. The population is mostly of Italian origin but there is a sizeable Slovenian community in the east. The complicated name reflects the unusual make-up of the region. Friuli derives from the Latin *Forum Iulii*, a city founded by Julius Caesar and known today as Cividale del Friuli, sitting right on the Slovenian border. Venezia Giulia is the eastern part of the region, so called because it's bordered by the Julian Alps. Friuli Venezia Giulia is currently divided into four provinces, two large, and two small. The large – Pordenone and Udine – sit roughly in the area known as Friuli, while the small – Gorizia and Trieste – are in Venezia Giulia.

Italian food today: After the two World Wars forced Italy to be frugal, and the economic boom of the 1970s and 1980s brought to its tables dishes drenched in cream, jelly and mayonnaise, Italy has finally rediscovered its roots. Today, the country happily embraces the most authentic spirit of its cuisine, made of simplicity, tradition and fresh ingredients.

Lazio: The cuisine of Lazio, in contrast to other regional culinary traditions, has maintained its characteristics over time, with only some slight influence of the Jewish community. Specialties such as “spaghetti alla carbonara”, or the oxtail or even “gnocchi alla romana” are known throughout the world. The cuisine of Lazio is characterized by the simplicity of the traditional dishes and the use of very poor ingredients, sometimes misunderstood in all those restaurants that try to imitate this cuisine: this is the case of the “gnocchi alla romana” which are made of semolina and not of potatoes.

Liguria: The coastal region of Liguria forms a long narrow crescent along the Ligurian Sea towards the northern part of Italy. Four provinces – Imperia, Savona, Genoa and La Spezia – are arranged in a linear fashion along the crescent, each with similar lengths of

coastline. A wide swath of mountains protects the area from severe weather, lending to the region's year-round mild temperatures and plenty of rainfall.

Lombardia / Lombardy: Italy's leading industrial region, as well as its most populous, Lombardy is home to three distinct landscapes: fertile flatlands, verdant foothills, and snowy mountains. Rice and corn thrive in the northern climate, resulting in a rich repertoire of risottos and polentas. Veal, beef, butter, and cow's milk cheeses appear at nearly every meal, and Sweetwater fish caught in Lombardy's many lakes (including Italy's largest, Lago di Garda, and its most opulent, Lago di Como) round out the diet.

Marche/Marches: In the Italian region of Marche, time seems to stand still. Still a largely isolated region, Marche is a wealth of architecture and recipes dating back to medieval times and beyond. Despite the challenging terrain, the area has been fought over for centuries by invading countries and warring Italian noble families, all seeking to control its central coastline between the Adriatic Sea and the Appenine mountains.

Molise: In 1970, Abruzzi and Molise split apart, creating Italy's newest region. Formerly ruled by Sicily, Molise cuisine strongly reflects this influence. As with many other Italian regions, a history of poverty created an emphasis on simple dishes made with fresh local ingredients. Like Abruzzi, Molise recipes often contain hot peppers affectionately referred to as *diavolino*, or "little devil". Many of the local families migrated annually in order to move their grazing animals to fresh grasslands, so most traditional Molise food is quickly prepared. In the spring, early nettle sprouts are gently cooked in soup with bacon and tomatoes to make zuppa di ortiche. Cheese and vegetables are staple dishes in Molise cooking, since most of the herds were reserved for sale. Eating meat was a sign of affluence, with most of the population serving meat only for special occasions. Fresh or preserved tomatoes, beans, artichokes and giant white celery are in many meals.

Piemonte/Piedmont: The typical recipes of Piedmont cuisine can be divided into two categories: those belonging to the noble tradition of the court of Savoy, and those born from popular traditions. In the first case we are talking about very rich dishes that were served in the sumptuous court banquets such as chocolate, eggnog, boiled and fried mixed Piedmont meat. The recipes of the rural tradition instead were made with simple ingredients such as panissa, and "Bagna cauda", a warm dip which is served and consumed in a manner similar to fondue, and made with garlic, anchovies, olive oil, butter, and (in some parts of the region) cream.

Puglia: Puglia is a flat, fertile, sun soaked region in southern Italy which, together with its iron rich soil makes it one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country. It is famous for its olive oil and produces between 250,000 and 300,000 tonnes each year. Italy is the second biggest producer, after Spain, and Puglia provides around 40 percent of the country's extra virgin olive oil.

Sardinia/Sardegna: Sardinian cuisine is extremely varied, enriched through the centuries by the exchanges and influences from other populations of the Mediterranean basin: Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs and Spanish. Each area has its specialties;

pasta, bread, cheeses, meat, seafood, and natural herbs are the basis for a range of tasty dishes to discover on a trip to this beautiful region.

Sicily/Sicilia: In Italy we always look after number one, but putting pride aside, there is little doubt that Sicilian cuisine represents Italian Gastronomy at its best. Not surprisingly, the symbol of Italian cuisine, pasta, was created here, long before the Venetian sailor Marco Polo discovered flavour during his travels in China.

The Pizza Queen: Ask anyone about Italian food and most will quickly reference pizza. The original version of this scrumptious food was quite simple compared to today's elaborate concoctions. Pizza's origins date all the way back to 1889 when King Umberto I and Queen Margherita traveled to Naples.

Toscana/Tuscany: Tuscan food is based on the Italian idea of cucina povera or "poor cooking." A concept that started very literally, it's about simple meals that are inexpensive and could easily be made in large amounts. Today it remains largely the same – but by choice instead of economy. Tuscan cooking doesn't use complicated seasonings or elaborate creations because they're not needed. Instead it's made using fresh, high-quality ingredients that bring out the natural flavors in each dish, simple or not. The region's gentle hills are the perfect source and locally grown produce, titled "nostrale" or "ours," is abundant. In fact, the cuisine is traditionally hearty and made with simple ingredients – ones easily found in the countryside – with bread beans and roasted meats serving as the base of most traditional Tuscan meals.

Trentino-Alto Adige: Trentino Alto Adige cooking draws as heavily from its Germanic roots as it does from its Italian heritage. Most of the dishes are hearty and come from the peasants of the region. Over many years, the residents of this autonomous region in Italy have created a unique blend of the two cuisines. Goulash is served with cornmeal polenta. Pizza and pasta is as likely to be on the menu as sauerkraut. Polenta is staple food in Trentino Alto Adige cuisine, but it may contain potatoes or buckwheat instead of or in addition to cornmeal. It is often served with wild game or mushrooms and liberally flavored with butter and cheese. In addition to polenta being eaten hot as a grain or sliced and fried, these grains can be made into a cake known as smacafam. It is also made into trisa, a hot soup of cornmeal and wheat flour cooked with butter and milk Canederli, a bread dumpling, is one of the famous regional dishes. Trentino Alto Adige cooking offers these with meat, in soup or even filled with fruit for dessert. Another well-known food is broth with leberknödelsuppe, another kind of dumpling made from bread, calves liver and herbs.

Umbria: It's small, the only Italian region without a coastline or international border and covered in dense forest and hilly terrain. But Umbria, the 'green heart' of Italy, is home to more culinary treasures than many of its larger, well-travelled neighbors. The region, which borders Tuscany, Marche and Lazio, is divided into two provinces; Perugia in the north (which is also the name of the region's capital city) and Terni in the south. There are mountains to the east but the majority of Umbria is made up of hills thanks to the Tiber Valley (Val Tiberina) and the Umbria Valley (Valle Umbra). Lake Trasimeno, in Perugia,

is one of Italy's largest lakes, and is surrounded by vineyards, olive groves and farmland thanks to the fertile soil..

Valle D Aosta: Valle d'Aosta cooking is based on warming soups, heavy rye bread, polenta, rice, potatoes and gnocchi. Minestra di castagne e riso simmers rice and chestnuts in milk until it becomes a thick, comforting porridge. Corn meal mush is chilled and sliced. These slices are then layered with a thick beef and sausage ragout and Fontina cheese in polenta alla rascarda. Fontina cheese is also used with butter, toma and Parmigiano Reggiano cheeses and rice to make the creamy risotto alla valdostana. This traditional dish only contains simple ingredients, but requires close attention at the stove top in order to achieve the classic texture — creamy with a toothsome bite. Hot soups are often served in Aosta Valley cuisine. These distinctive dishes often include fresh or dried mushrooms, chestnuts and almonds. Seupa de gri is a barley soup made with seasonal vegetables and potatoes, seasoned with onions and salt pork. Savoy cabbage, Fontina, ham and rye bread are simmered in beef broth with salt pork, spices and herbs to make seupa à la valpellinentze.

Veneto: As a trading power in the eastern Mediterranean, Venice came in contact with many cultures and influences. Veneto was the first European region to use spices, rice, corn and many other fruits and vegetables. The marshes of the Po Valley were ideal for rice cultivation, so a large number of different **rice dishes** were created, which are still an integral part of Venetian cuisine. Rice with peas (risi e bisi), risotto with shrimp (risotto con scampi), tripe with rice (riso e trippa) and rice with black calamari sauce (risotto al neri di seppi) are just some of these numerous dishes. A second integral part of the Venetian cuisine is polenta. The yellow corn cake is served with many Venetian dishes as a garnish. You should definitely try this typical Venetian dish: Veal liver with onions and roasted polenta (fegato alla veneziana). We can also recommend Pasta e fasoi, a thick noodle soup with red beans, Venetian guinea fowl (faraona), or around Lake Garda the popular Tortellini di zucca – pasta filled with sweet pumpkin mash.

3.8 REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Nita Mehta – Italian Vegetarian Cookery, Snab Publishers.
- Alberto Capatti - Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History, Columbia University Press
- Italian Cooking by Sanjeev Kapoor
- Ken Hom – Chinese Cookery, BBC Books
- Funchsia Dunlop - The Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook, Ebury Press
- Eileen Yin-Fei Lo – Mastering the Art of Chinese Cooking, Chronicle Books
- Su Huei Huang, Lai Yen-Jen – Chinese Cuisine, Wei-Chuan Publishing
- E N Anderson – The Food of China, Yale University Press
- Parvinder S Bali – International Cuisine & Food Production – Oxford University Press

3.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

- Nita Mehta – Italian Vegetarian Cookery, Snab Publishers.
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3.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain different regional cooking styles of Italian cuisine?
2. Write short note on historical background of Italian cuisine?
3. Discuss in detail about Italian cuisine, and also write the specialties of Italian cuisine.
4. Write short note on the “history of Italian cuisine”.
5. Illustrate the regional styles of Italian cuisine.
6. Explain the specialties of Tuscany and Vento region of Italy.
7. Write short note on “Pizza cuisine”.

UNIT: 04

CUISINE OF ITALY-II

Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Methods of Cooking In Italian Cuisine
- 4.4 Equipment and Utensils Used In Italian Cooking
- 4.5 Ingredients Used In Italian Cuisine
 - 4.5.1 Pasta
 - 4.5.2 Cheese
 - 4.5.3 Olive Oil
 - 4.5.4 Coffee
 - 4.5.5 Chocolate
- 4.6 Representative Dishes from Italian Cuisine
 - 4.6.1 Mealtime Customs
 - 4.6.2 Italian Dessert
 - 4.6.3 Italian Dishes According to Their Tradition
- 4.7 Summary
- 4.8 Glossary
- 4.9 References/Bibliography
- 4.10 Suggested Readings
- 4.11 Terminal Questions

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have learnt about the historical origin and development of Italian cuisine. We have also learnt about the regional influence on cuisine of Italy. There is wide variance in methods of cooking, serving and eating in Italian cuisine, and we have learnt about twenty regions of Italian cuisine.

In this unit we will be learning about the meal time customs, cooking methods and equipments used in Italian cuisine. Further we will be learning about various ingredients like pasta, chocolate, coffee, cheese, olive oil etc. used in Italian Cuisine. We will also learn about various desserts and representative dishes of Italian cuisine in this unit.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit the learner will be able to:

- Describe about various methods of cooking used in cooking Italian Cuisine

- Identify various equipments used in cooking Italian dishes
- Identify various ingredients used in Italian cuisine
- Differentiate between various cheese used in cooking Italian dishes
- Differentiate between various types of olive oil
- Demonstrate how to cook few dishes of Italian cuisine using recipe provided in this unit

4.3 METHODS OF COOKING IN ITALIAN CUISINE

There are several methods used in cooking Italian dishes, some of them are as under:

- Alla Bolognese
- Al Dente
- Risotto Most
- Polenta
- Al Forno
- Alla Caprese
- Alla Mattone
- Alla Genovese (Pesto)
- Battuto
- Crudo
- Cartoccio
- Stufare
- Brasare
- Bagnomaria
- Piastra

Alla Bolognese: This refers to the way in which a meat-based tomato and vegetable sauce that is cooked for several hours over low heat. The traditional ingredients added are onion, celery and carrot with some minced meat. Red wine is added and cream or milk seals the sauce's unique flavor. Originating in the Bolognese region, this sauce is usually served with flat pasta shapes such as tagliatelle or fettuccine.

Al Dente: 'To the teeth' is the literal meaning of al dente which refers to a way of cooking pasta. Perhaps undercooking is a better word! If a pasta dish is going to be cooked once again, the pasta is usually cooked al dente the first time. This means when you bite it, it feels firm to the teeth and not soft. It is sometimes also used to refer to the way in which vegetables are cooked.

Risotto Most: Italians cook their rice in this way. If you want to make a risotto, all you have to do is sauté some short-grain rice in olive oil, and add a meat stock to the rice to cook it. The rice is usually cooked without a lid, and each time the stock is absorbed, the rice is stirred and more stock is added. It is usually garnished with cheese or butter and eaten with meat. Sometimes pasta can be cooked in this way too.

Polenta: What the Romans enjoyed as porridge is now enjoyed by Italian food lovers as a versatile dish. This refers to the method of cooking a cereal such as cornmeal, buckwheat, or semolina in water for about an hour. Chickpeas can also be used. Once it is ready, it can be served as is with an accompaniment, or it can be baked, fried or grilled. Side dishes and additions to this preparation vary: everything from fresh herbs, roasted garlic to fish sauce and sausages.

Al Forno: Italians love to cook their pastas and pizzas ‘al forno’ which means ‘in the oven.’ Although this term applies to any oven nowadays, the traditional wood-burning oven or open flame grill was and is sometimes still used to cook dishes al forno.

Alla Caprese: Mozzarella, olive oil, basil and tomato are staples at the heart of this cooking method which originated in Capri. These ingredients combined together are served as antipasto or a starter. These versatile ingredients are also combined to prepare a variety of pastas and dishes such as fusilli alla caprese and spaghetti alla caprese.

Alla Mattone: Mattone literally means a heavy brick or tile, and this cooking method gets its name from the brick that’s used to apply pressure to anything being cooked, especially for grilling or sautéing. Chicken or any other meat is a typical example of an ingredient that’s cooked in this manner.

Alla Genovese (Pesto): Pesto is synonymous with alla Genovese which refers to the method of pounding or crushing olive oil, basil, pine nuts and garlic to make a sauce. The method originated in Genoa and a mortar and pestle are used to crush or pound the ingredients. There are other variations of this, for example pesto rosso uses tomato and almonds.

Battuto: In Italian, battuto means to ‘beat’ or ‘strike’ and refers to the method of finely chopping onions, celery, carrots, parsley and some meat like bacon which are then cooked in fat, usually olive oil or lard. It forms the flavour base of many Italian pastas, risottos and soups.

Crudo: Meaning ‘raw’ in Italian, the method refers to slicing seafood, usually fish, very thinly and topping it with olive oil, salt and citrus juice. You’ll find this served in Italian fishing towns. It can also refer to a mixture of raw herbs and vegetables chopped together and added to a cooked dish just before it is served

Cartoccio: This technique involves baking food in parchment or aluminium foil. The paper or foil, wrapped almost like a tent around the food, keeps the meat's juices locked in close to it so there is no additional liquid needed.

Stufare: This technique is very much like the American method of stewing. The item being cooked is completely covered in liquid and then simmered slowly.

Brasare: The popular Italian dish osso bucco is a classic brasare, or braise. In Italy, the most common liquid used in brasare dishes is wine.

Bagnomaria: This cooking technique requires the use of a double boiler, and is mainly used to prepare deserts such as custard and pudding and traditional Italian zabaglione.

Piastra: In Italy, flatbreads and seafood are sometimes placed on a griddle stone and roasted over an open fire. Known as alla piastra, it is a classic Italian cooking technique.

4.4 EQUIPMENT AND UTENSILS USED IN ITALIAN COOKING

Equipment and utensils used in Italian cooking are as under:

- Pasta Pot
- Chef's knife
- Colanders
- Garlic press
- Cheese grater
- Wooden spoon
- Ladle
- Baking pan
- Mezzaluna
- Pasta Machine

Pasta Pot: Italian cooking is incomplete without its delicious pasta dishes. Cooking pasta requires a lot of water, so you will need at least 5-gallon pot; and 8-gallon pot, if you cook for a larger group.

Chef's knife: A sharp 6-inch chef's knife is ideal for Italian cooking. Look for a knife that is made of carbon or stainless steel. Make sure it is comfortable to hold and has a textured knob to prevent slipping.

Colanders: Colanders are used to drain pasta and vegetables. Make sure you buy a colander that is big enough to accommodate the volume of pasta and vegetables you'll be using.

Garlic Press: Garlic is an essential ingredient in Italian cooking. A garlic press can help you squash various sizes of garlic cloves.

Cheese Grater: Cheese is another great aspect of Italian cooking. Buy a high-quality cheese grater that you find comfortable and easy to use.

Wooden Spoon: Wooden spoons are considered best for making sauces and soups in Italian cooking. Buy wooden spoons of different sizes for your kitchen.

Ladle: Ladles are used for better pouring of pasta sauces and soups. Make sure you buy a ladle with a long handle and sufficient capacity.

A black and white photograph of a curved knife, possibly a bread knife, resting on a wooden surface. Fresh basil leaves are scattered around the base of the knife. The image is in focus, showing the texture of the wood and the leaves.

A stainless steel, hand-cranked pasta machine helps cooks churn out homemade pastas. These are clamped to the edge of a table or counter, and a variety of sizes

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-I

[illegible]

2. Write short notes on Italian kitchen equipments and utensils.

4.5 INGREDIENTS USED IN ITALIAN CUISINE

Ingredients used in Italian cuisine are as under:

Arborio rice: Risotto is traditionally made with this Italian rice, although other rice's can be used. Risotto is Arborio rice that is browned first in margarine, butter, or oil, and then cooked in broth. The finished rice has a creamy consistency and a tender, but slightly firm, texture.

Artichokes: Look for firm, compact globes that are heavy for their size. They should yield slightly to pressure and have large, tightly closed leaves. (Sometimes leaf edges darken because the plant got too cold. This darkening, called "winter kiss," does not affect the quality.) To store, place fresh artichokes in a plastic bag and refrigerate for up to a week. To prepare an artichoke, cut off the bottom stem so it sits flat. Cut off about 1 inch from the top. Remove loose outer leaves. With kitchen shears, snip 1/2 inch from tips of leaves. Brush cut surfaces with lemon juice to prevent browning. You can remove the fuzzy choke with a grapefruit knife or spoon.

Balsamic vinegar: This sweet, dark brown vinegar is made from the boiled-down juice of a white grape. According to Italian law, balsamic vinegars labeled as "aceto balsamico tradizionale" cannot contain any wine vinegar and must be aged at least 12 years. These vinegars can sell for \$40 to \$350 for 4 ounces. Less expensive balsamics blend wine vinegar with the grape juice.

Basil: The aroma and flavor of this herb range from peppery and robust to sweet and spicy. Its leaves can be various shades of green or purple. Use the leaves of this herb in dried or fresh form.

Ricotta: Ricotta is generally made from cow's milk, although it can be made from sheep's milk, which has more flavor. It's not readily available in the United States. Ricotta is characteristically a bit grainy in texture with a mildly sweet flavor. It can be found in

lower-fat versions at the supermarket. Depending on whether the milk used in making the ricotta was whole or skim, the fat content of 1/2 cup (4 ounces) ranges from 0 to 15 grams.

Mozzarella: Best known as a pizza topper, mozzarella is made either from cow's milk or, in Italy, from water buffalo's milk. It is mild in flavor and can be found in lower-fat varieties. Fresh mozzarella, a real treat, is made from whole milk and has a softer texture and sweeter, more delicate flavor than regular, factory-made mozzarella. It contains from 4 to 7 grams of fat per ounce, depending on the fat content of the milk used to make it.

Pecorino: Made from sheep's milk, the flavor of pecorino will depend on the area where it is made in Italy. It ranges from a firm, sharp, salty cheese to a milder, semi-firm variety. It has 8 grams of fat per ounce.

Parmesan cheese: Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, an aged hard cheese made from cow's milk, is strictly regulated in Italy to control its quality. In the United States, this cheese often is limited, but the results are different from the Italian cheese. Older, aged varieties of Italy have a stronger flavor and are drier. Stick to freshly grated aged varieties for the most flavor. You'll be able to use less due to its more intense flavor. It contains 7 grams of fat per ounce.

Asiago cheese: Made from cow's milk, Asiago is a semi-hard to hard cheese. Full of many tiny holes, the cheese has a rich flavor and creamy texture when it hasn't been aged for very long. As it ages, the cheese becomes firmer and can be grated easily. It is similar in fat content to Parmesan cheese.

Fontina: This delicate, sweet, semi-soft cheese has a nutty flavor. Made from cow's milk, fontina melts easily and smoothly. The more aged the cheese, the richer the flavor. One ounce has about 9 grams of fat.

Gorgonzola: This blue-veined cheese is made from cow's milk and possesses a creamy texture with a slightly pungent, rich flavor. When aged for more than six months, the flavor can become very strong. It's a great accompaniment to fruit, such as apples or pears. It also can be melted into sauces or crumbled over salads. For a milder variety, look for torta di Gorgonzola, which layers Gorgonzola with sweet mascarpone. Gorgonzola cheese has 8 grams of fat per ounce.

Mascarpone: Super-rich mascarpone tastes like a cross between whipped butter and cream cheese. It is often used in desserts, but it's also great as a spread for delicate crackers or fresh fruit, such as strawberries and pear slices. It is a soft cheese made from cow's milk and has about 13 grams of fat per ounce -- use sparingly.

Provolone: Made from cow's milk, this cheese is delicate and creamy when aged for up to two months. When aged longer, it begins to take on a spicy, sharp flavor. Although it's great as a table cheese, provolone is also an excellent cooking cheese. Aged provolone can be used for grating. One ounce has about 8 grams of fat.

Pecorino: Cheese made from sheep's milk is known as pecorino (Pechora means sheep in Italian). If it is aged can be used instead of Parmesan on pasta dishes and is sometimes preferable if a sharper taste is desired. I use it often on plain fresh Tomato pasta - Costco offers some good grated Pecorino at an economical price. The best known is the Pecorino Romano other popular pecorinos are from Tuscany Sardinia and Sicily.

Provolone: This mildly smoky cheese is made from cow's milk. For provolone, enhanced colour and flavor come with age although the cheese may be aged for as few as a month or two, or up to one year. The more yellow the colour, the more ripe and flavourful. With a firm and slightly elastic texture, provolone is an excellent cheese for melting, or on sandwiches.



Ricotta: Used almost exclusively in classic Italian dishes such as lasagna and manicotti, ricotta (Italian for re-cooked) is actually not cheese, but a by-product of other Italian cheeses. The whey from these other cheeses are combined and re-cooked to create ricotta cheese. It has a grainy texture, but is very smooth when used in either savory or sweet dishes. Ricotta cheese is also used in classic Italian cheesecakes.

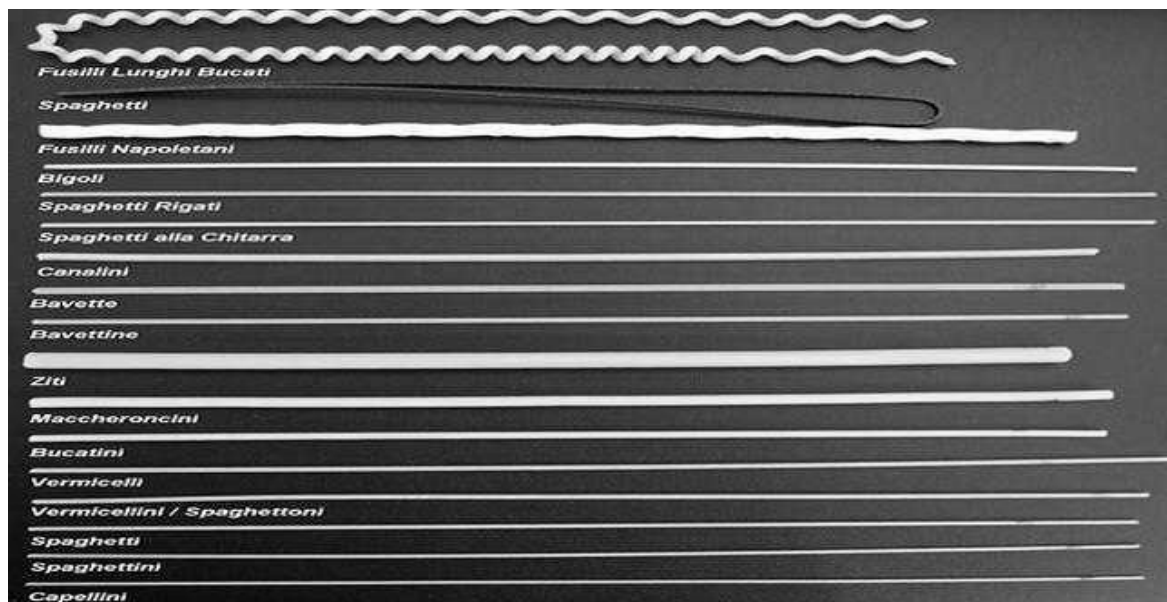
Pressed Cheeses: The curd is broken up into small pieces and forms are made by putting the pieces of curd into a mold made of plastic or stainless steel. They are then pressed for the best disposal of the whey. Pressing time and pressure weight applied, gives the resulting type of cheese and its dimensions. This method is used in producing most cheeses of a semi-hard consistency.

4.5.1 PASTA

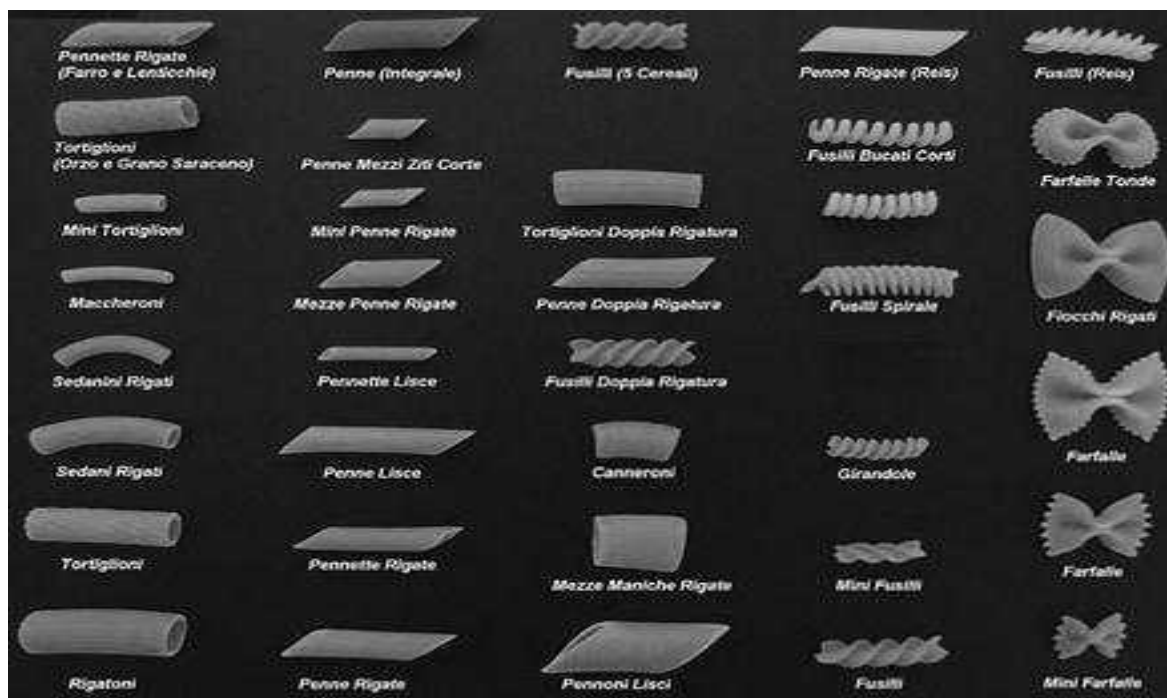
There are many forms of pasta, most of which can be categorized as Italian-style or Oriental. Italian-style pasta is primarily wheat-based. Oriental pasta made from variety of flours and starch and they often take the forms of long strip.

Italian-style Pasta: This type of pasta is made from 'Durum-wheat' flour, water and eggs, herbs, vegetable puree, flavoring; is shaped in various types and can be flavored. It is sold in dried and fresh form. The Durum wheat is grown in Italy and the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Russia, North and South America. It is hard wheat, high in gluten, which is ground into 'semolina'. British semolina is coarse not suitable for pastas. Pasta-flour is milled in fine degree. The term 'semolina' is often used to describe pasta-flour, it refers to the type of wheat is used.

The term 'Italian-style' used, because it is made in other countries. For example *noodles* are similar *tagliatelle* are prepared throughout the Europe, and filled pastas resembling



Italian *ravioli* or *tortellini* are popular in Eastern European countries. Polish *uska* are little filled pears pastas traditionally serves with beetroot soup and *varenyaki* semi-circular dumplings from Russia.



It is a popular belief that the 14th-century explorer Marco Polo introduced pastas into Italy from China, but the first known pastas was made in Sicily in the middle age. It had been a

basic food in Italy for many years. Although become very popular in throughout France. Until the early 20th century, *macaroni* and *vermicelli* were the pastas most commonly used in France, mainly to prepare timbale, gratins and sweet desserts and garnish of soups. After 1840 pastas were manufactured in industrial scale.

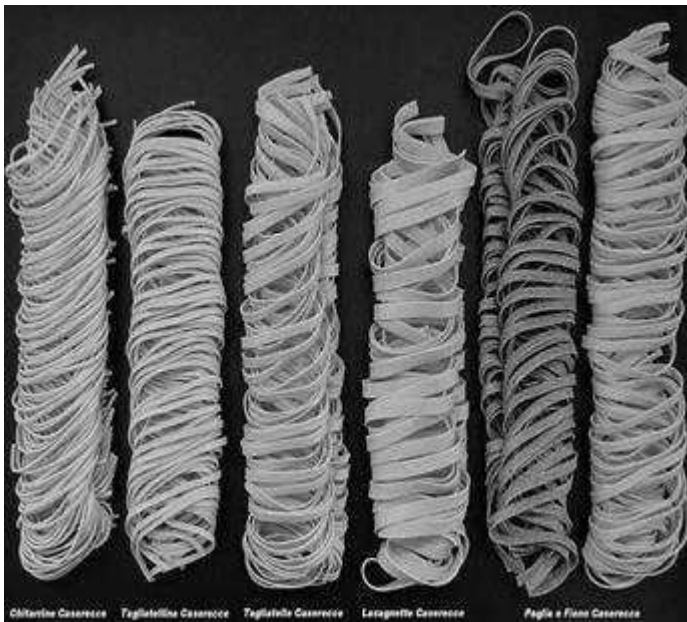
DIFFERENT SHAPES OF PASTA: There are hundreds of different shapes of dried pastas, but they can group in two types:

- **Flat pastas** are made industrially by rolling the dough between roller into thin sheets, which can cut into different shape with suitable machine. The shape includes rectangle, square with straight or wavy edges and flat ribbons of various widths.
- **Cylindrical forms** of pastas made by extruding the dough or forcing it through pierced plate. The hole through which the dough is forced may be straight, curved, notched or fluted to produce solid or hollow tubes of various size and shape. Drying is an important part and care must be taken to ensure that the pastas will mature and keep well.

Fresh pastas are also a same type of product that has not been dried. It must, however, be consume within few days.

DIFFERENT TYPE OF PASTA:

- **Baking Pastas:** Traditional dried and fresh pastas must be boiled before it can be used in baking dishes. Modern *lasagne* and *cannelloni* are manufactured to be staffed or layered dry and cooked in general proportion of sauce. Pastas for baking includes *lasagna*, *tortiglioni*, *bucatini*, *conchigli* etc.



- **Filled Pastas:** A wide variety of filled pastas produced, including *ravioli*, *tortellini*, *tortelloni* (fairly large), *agnolotti* (small slipper), *cappelletti* (little hats). Pastas can

stuffed by traditional meat, innovative fish, poultry, cheese, mushroom mixture or vegetable blends. Dried fresh pastas shaped can be boiled, stuffed, sauced and baked, it include *cannelloni* (tubes), *manicotti* (large-ribbed tubes) etc.

- **Flavored Pasta:** A wide variety of ingredients are used to prepare flavored pastas, both fresh and dried, Herbs, spice, vegetables are popular individually or combination. Spinach and tomato are traditional, beetroot use for strong color with mild flavor, and ceps and porcini give a full flavor. Squid ink is a traditional ingredient, which turn the dough black.
- **Non-wheat Pasta:** There are good range of Italian dried pastas made from corn (maize) and non-wheat flour. These are mainly produced for health food market for those who are allergic to wheat.
- **Soup Pasta:** Vary small in size and made in various shape, soup pastas are added to soup towards the end of cooking. These tiny shapes are also useful for filling vegetables or adding to starters or salads. They include *vermicelli*, *linguine* (small grains), *pennette* (smallquills), *stelline* (littlestar), *risoni* (ricegrains), *conchiglette* (little shells) etc.
- **Whole-wheat and Buckwheat Pasta:** Both this are well established to produce pastas. They are usually dried.

4.5.2 CHEESE

Semi-Cooked and Cooked Cheeses

For these cheeses, the curd is cut up and heated to 42-46°C per about fifteen minutes; in the case of making a cooked cheese the curd is heated to 55°C. They both are pressed. In this way cheeses of a semi-hard consistency are obtained like Fontina, or very hard like Granas.



Woven Cheeses: The cheese curd is left to rest for a few hours in bitter whey, until it has lost a bit of its mineral salt content becoming elastic, just enough to be able to be pulled into long strips. It is extracted from the whey, warmed up with boiling water and processed until obtaining the form desired.

Woven Cheeses: Mozzarella, Provolones, Caciocavalli.

Ricotta is a particular case in which is not related to in world of cheeses and simply obtained by heating whey to 90°C. This way the albumin protein that remains form whitish flakes that can easily be separated from the watery part. The remaining liquid is called "Scotta," and the cheese "Ricotta."

Particular Treatments

Treating cheeses can be done after the caseinogens giving origins to numerous varieties of cheeses. By introducing penicillin or mold spores you will get an "erborinati" or Gorgonzola. The development of the edible mold on crusts creates cheeses of "a crosta fiorita" a flowering crust. The crusts of cheeses can be treated in various ways and with a variety of substances (oils, aromatic herbs, spices, and vinacce "wine sediments") This concludes to the last, but not less important operation in the making of cheese; aging. Only in some cases are cheeses consumed fresh. In general, it is necessary to mature them for at least a few days, being the aging phase in which the cheese develops most of its flavor. The aging is preceded by three operations:

La Stufatura- The Heating

After being placed into molds the curd is left to heat up, and if you favor to drain the excess whey frequently turning it in an atmosphere of 25-30°C will do the trick.

La Pressatura- The Pressing

This operation is necessary for all cheeses of a semi-hard, cooked and semi-cooked nature, with the exception of woven cheeses. The pressing is effective by setting weights on them or by using a machine that drains the whey.

La Salatura- The Salting

In cheese production, the third indispensable ingredient after the milk and rennet is salt. It is used in the conservation of cheese. The salt may be added dry rubbed on the still humid forms. It is also an important anti-bacterial and in some cheese processing is added to the rennet as soon as it's extracted from the caldron, before it's formed. The ideal place in which to age cheeses is in a cavern, cave or "grotto." Aging can be for many years, which in turns needs a constant temperature of 10-12°C, a dark ambient underground if possible, good air circulation, and a high rate of humidity.

A slice of cheese and pears go very well together and is a classic Italian treat after a meal

The optimal place is in a grotto that has been used in the past to age cheeses; this giving it a chance to develop microbiologic conditions to the degree that it gives produces unmistakably trademarked cheeses. The cheeses need to be turned often to avoid swelling. They should be cleaned with salt and water or oil for harder type cheeses- this is to keep parasites



away and to prevent cracking of the crust which would alter the flavor of the cheese. In the

world of cheese you are permitted to play around, just like in the wine world. A normal Gorgonzola is ready after only 90 days of processing, but could be processed to the extreme say for 300 days. It's easy to guess that the same product can fluctuate in the game of mixing and matching!

Soft Cheeses

Soft cheeses have a water content superior to 45%, a limited drainage of whey without being pressed and with a classification that develops from 30-40°C.

Fresh Soft Cheese

These cheeses must be consumed in a few hours, not being put through an aging process; they never present a crust nor

superficial film. They possess a water content superior to 60%; in this category you'd find; fresh Caprini, Tomini, and Quark. The soft cheeses are obtained from a very slow coagulation and are predominately acidic. Cheeses that are spun and elastic are soft cheeses, like Mozzarella and Burrata - others that still have the characteristics of the milk curd; Giuncata, Casatella, or Squaquarone.

Soft Cheeses without a Crust

These cheeses ask for a maturation of 1-4 weeks at a low temperature. Their water content is between 50-60% the texture is soft and the flavor is on the sweet side, and unsalted.

**Soft Cheeses with a Crust**

These cheeses possess a tender crust. Generally they have not been subjected to cooking nor to pressing. Containing a high water content as much as 50%, and the aging period lasts about 30-60 days. The consistency is soft and it is spreadable. From this category we can find; Caciotte, Italico,

Erborinati Cheeses

These are cheeses with the characteristics of fungus inside of the confection. The enzymatic action of this mold inoculates in milk and curd during the process of fabrication

permits the obtainment of strong aromatic cheeses in 2-3 months. (Gorgonzola-soft. Castelmagno--hard)

More Types of Cheeses from Italian Regions

Caprini : This name classifies cheeses that have been produced using goat's milk which possesses particular characteristics and aromas. They are usually produced less, and by artisans with limited quantities. Piedmont is the land of goats; a region who boasts of having the strongest tradition in producing fresh goat cheeses. Caciotta This name is diffused all over Italy and the cheeses are produced by pastors. The cheeses are small and are obtained from bovine, ovine or goat's milk, or mixed. The flavor is sweet and delicate. In Urbino you could always find "La Casciotta" unique DOP of the Marches region.



Crescenza: This is a very soft cheese, aged briefly. The more noted names; Certosa, Certosino and Robiola. Their origins are from Pianura Padana and in a particular zone of southern Milan. In the same family you'd find, a Stracchini cheese.

This Milanese saying was used to depict a person that was disillusioned or made fun of. At one time it was produced only during autumn and winter, seasons in which this cheese is consumed the most!

More than anything it is an ingredient for desserts; optimum with chips of bitter cocoa or melted with robust liquors like rum or delicate rosoli (sweet Italian liquor).

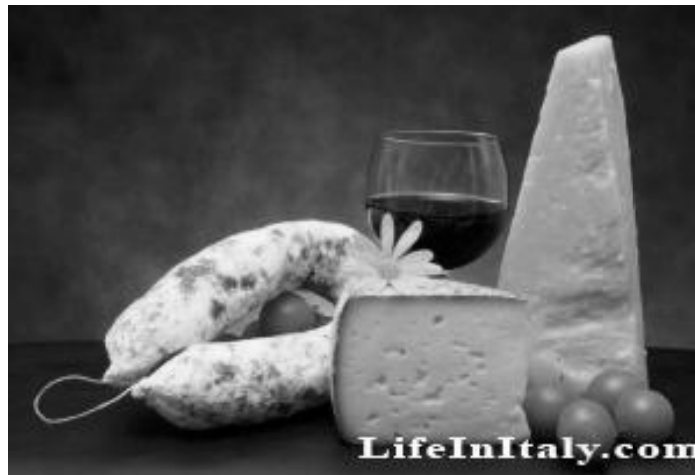


Murazzano: In the past, this cheese was produced exclusively with sheep's milk, but due to the high amount of requests; it was necessary to make it with part bovine milk, but never more than 40%. It is a typical and antique cheese from the Alta Langa Piemontese which comes from the Robiole family.

The most noted town for its production of this cheese, no other than Murazzano! It is produced from May through November.

Robiola di Roccaverano: This cheese is the only one to use a base of goat's milk, and to possess the mark of "DOP" a testimony of its antiquity- in the Piedmont area of Italy. It is a cheese that already had been mentioned in the year 1000. It is originally from a town called Roccaverano in the province of Asti. If it is aged, the Robiola assumes a sharp and spicy flavor.

Sierass del Fen: This particular ricotta is found in the Alpine zone of Pinerolese which had represented one of the principal foods for centuries. It was mentioned already in a 13th century antique text "the Miscellanea Valdostana" by Ferdinando Gabotto. Today Sierass cheese producers have dwindled down to no more than twenty something. The authentic Sierass is made from whey of sheep's milk, while today they mix in cows, sheep or goat's milk. Tuma Dla Paja Cheese. At one time, on dairy farms in Langa; they produced a Robiola, still fresh when it was placed to age on a hay stack. Maturing rapidly it became soft and creamy developing a crust, white and wrinkled with the imprints of the hay remaining on its outer surface. Made from sheep's milk; it has a buttery constancy, soft and white ivory in color, with a sweet scent of milk, is very delicate in flavor.



Semi-Aged Cheeses: Around 1600, Asiago was first mentioned the venue of an important festival featuring wool and cheeses. The production of Asiago is comprised of 4 Northern provinces; Vicenza, Padova, Trento and Treviso. A cheese popularized from the 20's, "Pegorin" is a term which commemorates the flavor and traditions of a time far in the past, and a dialect which indicated the Asiago D'alvevo. This cheese is usually aged no more than 6 months, but can be aged up to two years. Its taste remains delicate and lets your senses recall butter and fresh milk.

Bra : This Piemontese cheese has been produced since the 14th century and diffused from Langhe to Alto Monferrato. It is connected to the little town of Bra; an important center for the aging and trading of cheeses of malgari cuneesi.

There are two types of Braidese cheese; hard and tender, both are shaped into forms of 30-40 centimeters in diameter. The cheese presents an off-white color and has a light gray crust, smooth and elastic. It's soft and sweet to the palate and is aged to a medium around 45 days. Fontina, Montasio, Monte Veronese, Pecorino Toscano, Provolone Valpadana, Raschera, Taleggio, Toma Ossolana, Toma Piemontese, Toma al Prùnent-Ubriaco, Valcasotto

Aged Cheeses :

Bitto, Caciocavallo
Podalico, Fiore
Sardo, Fromadzo,
Grana Padano,
Parmigiano
Reggiano, Pecorino
di Fossa, Pecorino
Romano, Pecorino
Sardo, Pecorino
Siciliano



Fungus Cheeses :

Castelmagno,
Erborinato di
Artavaggio, Gorgonzola

Bel Paese: Bel Paese is from the Lombardy region of Italy. It is a modern, creamery, semi soft cheese and has a light, milky aroma. It is matured for 6-8 weeks. The genuine Italian article can be identified by its wrapping which features an image of a priest and the map of Italy (U.S. licensed versions show a map of the Americas). The name means "beautiful land" and was inspired by the title of a book by Stoppani. Bel Paese is very similar to French St. Paulin. It can also be used instead of mozzarella.

- **Garlic:** The plant of this strong-scented, pungent bulb is related to the onion. Besides fresh garlic bulbs, you also can find dried and bottled minced garlic, garlic juice, garlic powder, garlic salt, and garlic paste. Leave bulbs whole, as individual cloves dry out quickly. Keep any dried garlic products in a cool, dry, dark place and use within six months. Store the bottled minced garlic in the refrigerator for up to six months.
- **Italian parsley:** Italian parsley has flat, dark leaves and a milder flavor than the more familiar curly-leaf parsley.
- **Mushrooms:** Porcini, the most prized wild mushrooms in Italy, have large, meaty, slightly rounded caps that may be white or reddish-brown. The stems are fleshy and wider at the bottom. Another mushroom in Italy is the crimini (Italian brown or Roman), which has the same shape as a regular button mushroom but is light tan to dark brown with a deeper, earthier flavor. To clean, brush mushrooms with a soft

brush or damp paper towel. Store them in a paper bag until ready to use. Serve them within a couple of days. If you have trouble finding a specific kind, look for the dried form. Add fresh or rehydrated mushrooms to soups, sauces, salads, appetizers, pasta dishes, and entrees.

4.5.3 OLIVE OIL

Olives: Italians prefer to use ripe olives rather than the unripe green variety. Although ripe olives in America are usually black, the color of Italian ripe olives can vary from purplish red and brown to jet-black. They are packed in oil or brine, which may be flavored with herbs or citrus peel. Taste olives before serving. If they're too salty, rinse them under cold running water. They can become bitter if overcooked, so allow them just enough time to heat through when adding to a cooked dish.

- **Extra-virgin olive oil** is the best grade of olive oil; it meets Italy's highest standards for rich and fruity olive taste with very low acidity (less than 1 percent).
- **Virgin olive oil** has acidity between 1 and 3 percent and a lighter taste and aroma. It is considered to be slightly inferior in quality to extra-virgin olive oil.
- **Pure olive oil** is filtered twice after a single cold-pressing to lighten the oil's color and aroma and lessen the acidity. It has a delicate flavor and a low acidity.
- **Cold-pressed olive oil** is obtained by pressing the fruit. No heat or solvents are used, therefore it is called "cold-pressed."
- **Extra-light olive oil** refers only to the oil's flavor, not to the calories it contains compared to the other olive oils.

4.5.4 COFFEE

Without Italy, Starbucks would not exist and without coffee, Italy would grind to a halt. No, coffee was not invented in Italy but coffee culture as we know it did originate here. Today Italy is a country of coffee aficionados who will not tolerate (or visit) an establishment that has bad coffee. Italians will even skip coffee in a restaurant to have one at a favorite bar, it is just that important. Most of the world's coffee today comes from either South America or Indonesia

(hence the nickname Java), but coffee originated in the highlands of Ethiopia and did not reach Europe for thousands of years. It was not until the 16th century that the introduction



of coffee to Europe took place. Coffee arrived from the Middle East where it had achieved a near cult like following, with the first coffeehouses being established in Istanbul. Once accepted by Islamic law (it was very nearly banned, like alcohol) the beverage followed the spread of Islam across Africa and Eastern Europe. Venice, which relied heavily upon trade with the Muslim east, was first introduced to the invigorating liquid in the 1570's. However coffee would remain a luxury item at this time and not drunk for refreshment, but as a medicinal drink. However once coffee was transplanted to European colonies in Asia and South America the bean thrived and became accessible to the public.

The Beans: Italian coffees use mainly the Arabica variety of coffee bean, known for its full flavor and low caffeine content. However depending upon the region and particular tastes, the stronger and caffeine rich Robusta beans are blended with Arabica. The blends of the south tend to have more Robusta content in their blends which makes for a stronger espresso.



Roasting : Unlike French roast coffees, which are dark and very oily, Italian roast coffee is a rich brown color and should have very little or no oil on the beans. Roasting time depends upon the blend as Robusta beans need to be roasted longer than Arabica blends. The coffee roaster is a master craftsman that must treat each batch according to the beans being used, taking great care not to roast too long or too hot. A darker roast does not always mean a better espresso and so the roaster must keep a careful eye on the beans during the process since they can burn in the blink of an eye. Once perfectly roasted the beans are allowed to air cool, this allows the beans to retain their flavor until they are grounded for brewing.

Grinding of the beans should be done immediately before brewing to ensure the freshest flavor. Grinders that use grinding wheels (like found in Italian bars) as opposed to a grinding blade are preferred since they allow for a more thorough grind. For coffee made for home brewing, the beans are often pre-ground and then vacuum-sealed in small portions to ensure freshness. The grinding level also depends upon what kind of machine is being used to make the coffee. Commercial espresso machines use a very fine grind that creates its own filter when under the high pressure of the brew cycle. In contrast are some home brewing grinds that are fairly course.

Espresso: known as Caffè in Italy, served in a 3 oz or demitasse cup. Strong in taste with a rich bronze froth known as a crema on top.

Doppio : Simply a double espresso.

Ristretto: More concentrated than a regular espresso that is made with less water.

Lungo or Caffè Americano: An Espresso made with more water - opposite a Ristretto.

Macchiato: Espresso that is "marked" with a dollop of steamed milk on top.

Corretto: Espresso that is "corrected" with grappa, cognac or sambuca.

Cappuccino: Espresso with foamed milk and containing equal parts espresso, steamed milk and foamed milk.

Cappuccino scuro: Cappuccino prepared with less milk and is a darker color.

Cappuccino chiaro: Cappuccino prepared with more milk (but less than a caffè latte) and is lighter in color.

Caffè' latte: Espresso made with more milk than a cappuccino but only a small amount of foam. In Italy it is usually a breakfast drink.

Latte macchiato: Steamed milk that is "marked" (sometimes ornately) with a shot of espresso coffee.

Next to the established world famous brands, Italy hosts a number of new manufacturers such as Amadei. Alessio and Cecilia Tessieri, confectioners by family trade, opened Amadei in 1990, thus starting the Renaissance of Italian chocolate. Their motto is to treat chocolate as wine, which means that they believe that chocolate should be produced using specially selected cocoa varieties such as the very rare Criollo Porcelana from Venezuela with which they produce Amadei Porcelana, a very dark chocolate enriched with toasted almonds.

Their specialties are complex, fruity bars with strong raspberry and cherry notes, which bring them top prizes at chocolate tastings worldwide. And their chocolate named 9--a blend of cocoa from nine plantations, with subtle hints of the woods--won Italy's greatest chocolate award, the Tavoletta D'Oro, in the category for bitter chocolate in 2008.



Another visionary chocolatier is Domodori, founded in 1994 by Gianluca Franzoni, an Italian with Venezuelan ties. Franzoni went much farther than other chocolate producers

and started from the basics. He studied cultivation and processing of cocoa beans and set out to produce the rare ancient Criollo variety at his hacienda in Venezuela. His pitch dark, round, velvety chocolate made of the many flavors of single origin cocoa--Sambirano's red berries, Arriba's hints of ripe banana, Teyuna's honey notes--billows in the mouth and lingers in the throat. Franzoni was the proud winner of the Tavoletta d'Oro for Single Origin Chocolate in 2008 with his slightly spicy Puertomar.

So in Sicily we have Modica, in Tuscany it is Stainer, in Turin Peyrano and Streglio, and in Perugia there is Perugina--just some of the famous companies producing chocolate in Italy today. Perugina's seductive Baci (which means kisses in Italian) are not only delicious, but also come along with a charming slip of paper containing a love quote in several languages.

4.5.5 CHOCOLATE

This food of the gods has been known for ages as the panacea for all that ails mankind. In the past, studies have suggested that those who eat chocolate may live up to a year longer than those who don't. More recent studies seem to confirm what many of us have long known to be true--chocolate does have healing powers! This particular study showed that chocoholics live longer than chocolate abstainers, thanks to the cocoa's cholesterol-battling antioxidants that are said to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Chocolate, especially dark chocolate, puts you in a good mood, it is beneficial for the cardiovascular system and it also provides relief from cough, diabetes, anemia, headaches and depression. And let's not forget its aphrodisiac properties! The famous Italian libertine Casanova was probably the first to use chocolate as a subtle aphrodisiac for his numerous conquests and we all know how well that worked for him.



While many are aware that the first chocolate was produced with cocoa beans from America brought to Europe by the Spanish, few realize that the chocolate bar was actually invented in Italy! In 1778 an Italian inventor named Doret constructed a machine that mixed cocoa butter with vanilla and sugar, creating in effect a chocolate praline. This system was then perfected by Joseph Fry who produced chocolate bars as we know them today. Before the advent of the chocolate bar, however, chocolate was consumed in drink form and it was the Venetians--always open to new influences, creations and trade--who picked up the new trend quickly and started serving the dark liquid in their city's coffee shops. After the

machine that turned the liquid into bars was invented the whole world, including Italians, went crazy for chocolate.

Need proof of Italy's amorous feelings for cioccolato? Perugia, the charming, ancient hill town in central Italy's Umbria region is turned into Italy's chocolate capital every October. For the last 17 years Perugia, a manufacturer of some delicious chocolates hosts a festival that last year alone saw chocolate fever overcome over a million visitors who consumed 205 tons of chocolate in a variety of forms. This year's festival took place from October 15 to 24, and its theme was Zip: Viaggio Lampo nel Cioccolato (Zip: A Flash Trip in Chocolate).



Perugia opened its Old Town to chocoholics that travelled from far and wide--and also near--to take part in numerous exhibitions, events, conferences, educational and hands-on workshops, contests and--best of all--tastings of some great Italian chocolate. And in what style!

The journey began with an extravagant birthday cake made, of course, of chocolate. Along Corso Vannucci over 600 stands loaded with delicacies tempted you to taste and try. Like



Spalm Beach where you could make yourself a sandwich with chocolate spread before plopping down in a comfortable sun chair to eat while being entertained by the sounds of Caribbean music. A visit to the market's "Ciock'è Tipico" was also a must; while sampling local products you could win coupons

that could be exchanged for chocolate bars. In Piazza IV Novembre Perugina, the legendary Italian chocolatier, exhibited a large installation showing the history of the famous Bacio chocolate. The center of attraction of this edition was undoubtedly "Il

Pavone," a theater for the sweet tooth: a master chocolatier gave lessons on his craft, while a DJ used real chocolate disks for the soundtrack. For those who love pampering there was Choco farm where you could get the most exclusive dark and milk chocolate beauty treatments.

Among the exhibitors were the best Italian chocolate makers, many of them famous worldwide. Who has not heard of Ferrero, the makers of Rocher chocolates and the heaven-on-a-spoon spread Nutella? This family business, founded in 1946, has grown to be one of the largest chocolate manufacturers in the world. Think also Kinder Surprise, Mon Chéri, Duplo and Pocket Coffee.

Aside from Perugina, there was also the Perugia-based Vannucci, founded in 1997 by four former employees of the Perugina factory. Named after the famous Umbrian painter Vannucci, better known as Il Perugino, the company undertakes to safeguard the best traditions of the chocolate confectioners of Umbria region. Vannucci's signature product

are definitely their hand crafted pralines, covered with pure extra dark chocolate, filled with cherry or orange mousse, chocolate mousse, grounded hazelnuts, maraschino made with almond paste, liqueur filled chocolates and, really, anything delicious you can dream of.



While the love of chocolate is strong in Italy the history of Italian chocolate tycoons is a long one. In 1880 the Trappist

Monks (Fratelli Trappisti) started producing chocolate in Rome. Without interruption, except during the two World Wars, the factory never stopped kneading and shaping their typical bars, decorated with an easily recognizable motif of Coliseum and cross on the wrappers. In one of Rome's oldest chocolate factories the craft is passed on from generation to generation, as the techniques of the Trappist monks require specific expertise and strict adherence to the standards of ancient top secret recipes. Dark, bitter to seventy per cent, milk, and hazelnut chocolate--there is something for every taste.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-II

1. Write short notes on ingredients used in Italian cuisine.

2. Write short notes on various cheeses used in Italian cuisine.

4.6 REPRESENTATIVE DISHES FROM ITALIAN CUISINE

Pancetta (pan-CHEH-tuh): Think of pancetta as the Italian version of bacon. Made from the belly or pancia of a hog, pancetta has deep pink stripes of flesh similar to bacon. Pancetta is seasoned with pepper and other spices, and is cured with salt, but is not smoked. It comes in a sausagelike roll or flat and is used to flavor sauces, vegetables, or meats.

Pesto (PES-toh): A pasty sauce of olive oil, garlic, fresh basil, and Parmesan cheese. It usually is served with pasta.

Pine nuts or pignoli: This small seed is from one of the several pine tree varieties. The pine nut, which has a sweet, faint pine flavor, also is known as pignoli and pinon. The small, creamy white nut can be slender and pellet-shaped or more triangular. Pine nuts turn

rancid quickly, so refrigerate them in an airtight container for up to two months or freeze them for up to six months.

Polenta (poh-LEN-tuh): This Italian-style mush is made by boiling a mixture of cornmeal or farina and water. Polenta usually is served with tomato sauce as a side dish, or it may be served without sauce as a bread substitute. It is eaten as a thick porridge or can be molded, sliced, fried, or broiled.

Prosciutto (proh-SHOO-toh): Like ham, prosciutto is from the hog's leg. Salt curing draws out the moisture, a process called *prosciugare* in Italian. Unlike ham, the cured pork is air-dried, not smoked. The result is a somewhat sweetly spiced, rose-colored meat that has a slight sheen. Parma ham is the authentic prosciutto of Italy. They are designated as *prosciutto cotto* (cooked) or *prosciutto crudo* (raw). The raw is cured, however, so it is ready to eat. Use small amounts in pasta, sauces, and meat dishes. Add it to cooked dishes at the last minute so it doesn't toughen.

Risotto (ree-ZOHT-toh): This rice dish consists of broth-cooked rice, butter, cheese, and other bits of meat and/or vegetables. Risotto Milanese (from Milan) are always additionally flavored with a little saffron.

Tomatoes: Italian cooks mainly use two kinds of tomatoes. They like elongated plum or Roma tomatoes for cooking, because they have fewer seeds, firmer flesh, and thicker juice. The round eating tomatoes are prized in salads, appetizers, or anywhere fresh tomatoes are needed. To ripen, store firm tomatoes at room temperature in a brown paper bag. When ripe, they will yield to gentle pressure.

4.6.1 MEALTIME CUSTOMS

Italians generally eat three meals a day. Adults eat a light breakfast (*la prima colazione*), often stopping at a coffee shop on their way to work for a *caffellatte* (coffee with milk) or *cappuccino* with bread, butter, and jam, or cake. Lunch and dinner are similar meals. They consist of an antipasto (an appetizer based on cold meats), a pasta or rice dish (depending on the region) such as risotto, a main meat or fish course, a salad, and cheese and fruit. Lunch (*il pranzo* or *la seconda colazione*) is the main meal of the day for many Italians and is eaten between noon and 2 P.M.

Whether eating at home or in a restaurant, Italians take food seriously. They prefer to dine in a leisurely fashion, savoring their meals over a bottle of wine and conversation. Wine and bread are always served during main meals. Even children are often allowed a taste of wine. In southern Italy, where people take a long break during the hottest part of the day, dinner (*la cena*) is served later than in the north, often after 7:30 P.M.

In addition to their main meals, Italians have two traditional snack times. *Spuntini* (midmorning snacks) and the mid-afternoon *merende* . Both usually serve a type of bread dough with toppings. Some typical *merende* are *bruschetta* (usually a long loaf of bread, cut into slices and topped with seasonings), *focaccio* (an Italian flatbread),

and *crostini* (fried slices of polenta). Originally a rural tradition, these snacks lost popularity following World War II as people migrated to Italian cities. However, increased interest in traditional dishes and consuming healthy, lighter meals has helped these snacks become popular again, even in the United States.

4.6.2 ITALIAN DESSERT

ITALIAN DESSERTS: COOKIES AND BISCOTTI

A visit to any Italian bakery will show just how many flavors, shapes and colors Italian style cookies come in. Many Italian cookies have a crumbly, slightly sweet flavor and texture similar (but not nearly as hard) to biscotti. Much like biscotti, some cookies are slightly bitter and are served with red wine. However most Italian cookies are sweet, but usually not too sweet, being flavored with nuts, candied fruits or light glazes.



Biscotti have become more of a gourmet dessert in the US with thousands of varieties, but Italian still prefer the original hard and slightly sweet or savory twice baked cookie. In Italy the sweeter versions that Americans consider biscotti are starting to be called cookies even if they use the traditional cooking method. The reason biscotti are twice baked is to remove as much moisture as possible, giving them their distinctive hard, dry and crumbly texture. The subtle sweetness of biscotti is from flavors such as anise, almonds or just a touch of molasses. Biscotti are the ideal dunking snack since they are so hard and in Italy the best method is to dunk your biscotti in a local red wine.

Italian Desserts: Traditional Holiday Sweetbreads

Panforte

This aptly named "strong-bread" of Siena is a dense mix of almonds candied fruit sweetened with honey and spices. Today

Assorted delicious desserts in a single plate

you can find Panforte year round but it was traditionally a Christmas sweetbread. Today's versions of Panforte are lighter and sweeter than their medieval origins, when they were made by pharmacists and nuns. Panforte is round and dense with several styles available, the



most popular being the sweet Panforte Margherita and the bitter Panforte Nero. All varieties of Panforte should be enjoyed with a glass of Vin Santo or another sweet dessert wine.

Panettone: The most famous of the Italian Christmas cakes is Milano's Panettone. During the holiday season boxes of the famous cake can be found in Italian bakeries and cafes worldwide. The origin of the dessert is mysterious, with two competing legends involving a poor baker named Toni, giving Panettone the translation of "Toni's Bread". However Panettone probably dates to even earlier and denser medieval bread made from wheat flour named Pan del Ton - "luxury bread" in the Milanese dialect of the 13th century. Even today there is a flat version of Panettone besides the more popular dome variety, which may be descended from this earlier Pan del Ton. Today's varieties use an acidic dough and a multi day "proof" to give the Panettone its trademark fluffiness and dome shaped. Within its fluffy folds of dough the Panettone is flavored with bits of candied fruits and raisins. Slices of Panettone can be served with Mascarpone cheese or Zabaglione custard and accompanied by a dessert wine or liqueur.

Pandoro: Verona's famous Christmas bread is known as Pandoro and is characterized by its distinctive star shape. Modern Pandoro is little more than one hundred years old, but has roots that may go back to Roman times. The name Pandoro may derive from the fact that only the rich could afford sweet bread flavored with honey and made from white flour. By the time of the Venetian Republic the sweetbread was taking on its flavor, using lots of butter, eggs and sugar. The shape of Pandoro was an influence of the 18th century Austrian court, whose bakers would create holiday cakes shaped like a Christmas tree. Unlike Panettone, Pandoro traditionally does not have anything in the dough and is simply dusted with powdered sugar. However there are variations of Pandoro with fillings such as custard or gelato that have become very popular.

ITALIAN DESSERTS: CUSTARD-STYLE TREATS

Tiramisu: This famous "pick me up" may have originated in Siena where it was first made for the benefit of Duke Cosimo de Medici. Both the Duke and others liked it so much that it caught on quick and spread along with Italian immigrants to the rest of the world. This story is debated especially in the city of Treviso where they claim the origin of



Tiramisu has a seedier past - as an energizing snack for weary prostitutes. Whatever the

origins of this delicious treat, Tiramisu just may be the most popular of the Italian desserts (excluding Italy's great gift to mankind: Gelato) and contains lady finger cookies, espresso, liquor, eggs, cocoa and mascarpone cheese. Those familiar with trifle style desserts will recognize the familiar layered texture of tiramisu, with the lady fingers dipped (but not soaked through) in strong espresso creating a delicious foundation for the other layers to be built upon.

Zabaglione: This delicious and simple custard hails from the Veneto (others argue Tuscany) and is made from egg yolks, sugar, and dessert wine. This is another dessert that has spread from its origins and takes on local characteristics such as toppings of whipped cream, shaved chocolate or even as a base for other desserts. When served by itself it is often served warm, accompanied by a glass of Marsala wine, but also works well with just about anything- especially fresh fruit. Sometimes it is even drunk like eggnog; this may be the original way to enjoy Zabaglione.

Zuppa Inglese: This oddly named dessert is the Italian take on an English trifle - layers of sponge cake and custard or cream. How it got to Italy may be from English tourists visiting Tuscany in the 19th century where it took on a decidedly Italian flair with the use of Zabaglione custard, candied fruits, Italian liqueurs and various shapes and sizes. It has since become very popular and is found nationwide and often served with a chilled local white wine.

ITALIAN DESSERTS: SOUTHERN ITALIAN FAVORITES

Cannoli: The Cannoli is the most famous of the Sicilian desserts and can be found in virtually every Italian

pasticceria. This dessert is made by filling a hollow pastry shell with sweetened (or fresh) ricotta. Candied fruit and chocolate pieces can be mixed with the filling and the ends are dipped in chopped pistachios. At one time Cannoli was a gift given



amongst friends during Carnevale, but has since gained worldwide recognition and numerous delicious variations.

Cassata alla Siciliana: This favorite of the Palermo area is yet another culinary gift brought from the Arabs. Cassata originates from the Arabic al-qasat, which a round bowl and sort of describes the shape of the dessert. Cassata has changed away from Sicily to include custards, pudding or ice cream as filling. All of these variations are delicious, but the authentic Cassata is made by lining a cake mold with layers of sponge cake soaked in rum or sweet liqueur. Then sweetened ricotta with bits of candied fruit peel, pistachios and chocolate bits is used to fill the cake.

Zeppole: Zeppole are basically "Italian doughnuts" and traditionally they are simply dusted with sugar and cinnamon or dipped in honey. Over time they have evolved to include a delicious cream filling and often covered with whipped cream. Zeppole are most often seen during Italian festivals especially St. Joseph's Day on March 19th.

ITALIAN DESSERTS: CONFECTIONS

Torrone: This nougat confection dates back to Roman times and was used in religious ceremonies and later eaten during Christmas time. Nougat is made of various combinations of honey, egg whites and nuts like almonds, walnuts or pistachios and is known throughout the Mediterranean. However the torrone from Cremona is the most popular even today and dates to a mid 15th century wedding. The wedding between the powerful Visconti and Sforza families produced a spectacular dessert: A model of Cremona's tower made of the delicious nougat that spread in popularity thereafter. Today torrone is synonymous with nougat to candy lovers worldwide and is still used to make magnificent sculpted desserts.



4.6.3 ITALIAN DISHES ACCORDING TO THEIR TRADITION

PASTA E FAGIOLI (NOODLE AND BEAN SOUP)**Ingredients**

- i. 5 cups water
- ii. 1½ cups dried white beans: navy, baby lima, or northern
- iii. 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- iv. 2 cups canned Italian-style tomatoes, with juice
- v. 1 cup each of celery and carrots, finely chopped and sliced
- vi. 3 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped, or 1 teaspoon garlic granules
- vii. ½ pound cooked smoked ham, chopped
- viii. 3 bay leaves
- ix. ½ cup macaroni (shells, bows, or elbows), uncooked
- x. Salt and pepper, to taste
- xi. ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated, for garnish

Method

- i. Place water and beans in saucepan.
- ii. Bring to a boil over high heat for 3 minutes and remove from heat.
- iii. Cover and set aside for 1 hour.
- iv. Add the onion, tomatoes, celery, carrots, garlic, smoked ham, and bay leaves.
- v. Mix well and bring to a boil over high heat.
- vi. Reduce to simmer, cover, and cook until beans are tender (about 1½ hours). Stir frequently.
- vii. Add macaroni and mix well. Cover and continue simmering until macaroni is tender (about 12 minutes).
- viii. Remove and throw out bay leaves before serving.
- ix. Serve hot soup in individual bowls with a side dish of Parmesan cheese for the guests to sprinkle into their soup. Serve with crusty bread to dip in the soup.

FETTUCINE ALFREDO**Ingredients**

- i. 1 cup butter or margarine at room temperature
- ii. ½ cup heavy cream
- iii. ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- iv. 1 pound cooked pasta, such as fettuccini (cook according to directions on package)
- v. Salt, pepper, and ground nutmeg to taste

Method

- i. Cook pasta according to directions on package. Warm a serving bowl in the oven set to the lowest temperature until ready to use.
- ii. Place butter or margarine in a mixing bowl, and using a wooden spoon, beat until light and fluffy. Gradually add cream and mix until well blended.

- iii. Add the cheese by Tablespoon, beating well after each addition.
- iv. Using oven mitts, remove the heated serving bowl from oven and place on a heatproof work surface.
- v. Place the drained, cooked pasta in the warm bowl and add cheese mixture.
- vi. Make sure all the pasta is coated with the sauce.
- vii. Add salt, pepper, and nutmeg to taste and continue to coat pasta.
- viii. Serve while very hot with a side dish of grated cheese.
- ix. The dish goes well with a green salad with Italian dressing and warm garlic bread.

POLENTA**Ingredients**

- i. 1 pound coarsely ground corn meal
- ii. 8 cups water
- iii. 1 teaspoon salt

Method

- i. Measure the water into a large pot, add the salt, and heat the water to boiling.
- ii. Add the corn meal to the boiling water in a very slow stream, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon to keep lumps from forming.
- iii. Don't let the water stop boiling.
- iv. Continue stirring as the polenta (mush) thickens, for about 30 minutes, adding small amounts of boiling water if necessary (the longer you stir, the better the polenta will be; the finished polenta should have the consistency of firm mashed potatoes).
- v. The polenta is done when it peels easily off the sides of the pot.

SALTIMBOCCA ALLA ROMANA (VEAL SCALLOPS WITH SAGE AND PROSCIUTTO)**Ingredients**

- i. 12 slices of veal scallops (1½ pounds)
- ii. 12 fresh sage leaves
- iii. 12 slices of prosciutto ham
- iv. Flour, for dusting
- v. 3 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- vi. 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- vii. 1 cup white wine
- viii. 1½ pounds freshly cooked spinach, seasoned with salt and pepper

Method

- i. Spread out veal scallops and lay one sage leaf and one slice of ham on each.
- ii. Roll up and secure with toothpicks.
- iii. Lightly dust each with flour.
- iv. Heat the butter and oil in a skillet large enough to hold all the rolls in one layer.

- v. Sauté, turning the rolls carefully, until brown.
- vi. Lift the veal from the pan and set aside on a warm platter.
- vii. Add the wine to the skillet, add salt and pepper to taste, and cook to reduce the size by half.
- viii. Arrange the hot spinach on a warm dish, place the veal on it, and cover with the wine sauce.

Food for Religious and Holiday Celebrations: Every Italian village celebrates its own saint's day with a festival featuring fireworks, feasting, and dancing. The traditional main dish for these festivals is roast suckling pig. A popular Easter dish throughout Italy is *Agnellino* (roast baby lamb), often served with roasted artichokes.

Santa Lucia Dinner

- Minestrone soup
- Osso bucco (braised veal shanks) with baby artichokes
- Lemon orzo (a rice-like pasta)
- Arugula salad with lemon-garlic vinaigrette dressing
- Ripe peaches and figs
- Biscotti

Although the holiday bread called *panet-tone* is the best known of Italy's many holiday desserts, regions throughout the country have their own traditional holiday sweets featuring local ingredients. In the north, butter is a major ingredient of these desserts. *Zelten* cakes, similar to fruitcake, are filled with raisins, dates, figs, almonds, pine nuts, orange peel, rum, and cinnamon, are baked two or three weeks before Christmas because they improve with time. Strudel is popular in the Tyrol region in northern Italy. In the south, dessert recipes are more elaborate and use olive oil (instead of butter), lots of eggs, candied fruit, and honey. Among the best known are *struffoli*, fried cubes of egg pastry covered with honey and sprinkled with colored sugar, a specialty from Naples.

ITALIAN EASTER BREAD

Ingredients

- i. 3 cups flour
- ii. $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- iii. 1 package active dry yeast
- iv. 1 teaspoon salt
- v. $\frac{2}{3}$ cup warm milk
- vi. 2 Tablespoons butter, softened
- vii. 7 eggs
- viii. $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mixed candied fruit, chopped
- ix. $\frac{1}{4}$ cup almonds, chopped
- x. $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon anise seed
- xi. Vegetable oil

Method

- i. In a mixing bowl, combine 1 cup flour, sugar, yeast and salt.

- i. Add milk and butter; beat 2 minutes on medium.
- ii. Add 2 eggs and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour; beat 2 minutes on high.
- iii. Stir in the fruit, nuts, and anise seed, mixing well.
- iv. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough.
- v. Place on a lightly floured board and knead until smooth, 6 to 8 minutes.
- vi. Place in a greased bowl; turn once. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.
- vii. If desired, dye remaining eggs (leave eggs uncooked); lightly rub with oil.
- viii. With a fist dipped in flour, punch dough down. Divide in half and roll each piece into a 24-inch rope.
- ix. Loosely twist ropes together; place on the baking sheet and form into a ring. Pinch the ends together.
- x. Gently split ropes and tuck eggs into openings. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes.
- xi. Preheat oven to 350°F.
- xii. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove from the pan and cool on a wire rack. Serves about 6.

PANETTONE (ITALIAN CHRISTMAS BREAD)**Ingredients**

- i. 4 Tablespoons yeast
- ii. 2 cups warm water
- iii. $\frac{1}{2}$ pound butter, melted
- iv. 4 teaspoons salt
- v. 1 cup sugar
- vi. 4 eggs, beaten
- vii. 6 egg yolks, beaten (discard egg whites or save for another use)
- viii. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
- ix. 2 cups citron, sliced fine
- x. 2 cups raisins, seedless

Method

- i. Dissolve yeast in the water. Mix in the butter, sugar, salt, eggs, and yolks.
- ii. Stir about 10 cups of flour into the butter and yeast mixture until blended.
- iii. Spread a little flour on a board. Turn dough out onto the board and knead for 8 to 10 minutes. When the dough is soft and smooth, knead in the citron and raisins.
- iv. Place dough in a greased, round pan, and brush the top with melted butter.
- v. Cover, and allow to rise until the dough has doubled in bulk (about 1 hour).
- vi. Preheat oven to 425°F.
- vii. Using a sharp knife, cut a deep cross in the top of the loaf.
- viii. Bake for about 8 minutes, or until the top begins to brown. Lower heat to 325°F and bake for 1 hour more.

BISCOTTI**Ingredients**

- i. 6 eggs
- ii. 1½ cup sugar
- iii. ½ cup butter, melted
- iv. ½ cup vegetable oil
- v. 3 cups flour
- vi. 2 teaspoons baking powder
- vii. 4 teaspoons vanilla or almond extract

Method

- i. Preheat oven to 350°F.
- ii. Beat eggs. Add sugar and beat until thick and golden.
- iii. Add melted butter and oil and beat well.
- iv. Add vanilla or almond extract and blend well.
- v. Add flour and baking powder, and beat until a thick dough forms.
- vi. Turn dough into ungreased 9-inch by 13-inch pan.
- vii. Bake at 350°F for 15 to 20 minutes.
- viii. Remove from oven and slice into three strips, 3 inches by 13 inches each.
- ix. Cut each strip into slices about 1 inch wide.
- x. Place slices on a cookie sheet. Toast slices under the broiler. Turn, and toast other side.

Biscotti should be crunchy. Serve with coffee.

FRITTATA**Ingredients**

- i. 2 eggs
- ii. 1 teaspoon flat-leaf parsley, finely-chopped
- iii. 1 small zucchini (known as *courgettes* throughout Europe), sliced thin
- iv. 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- v. Salt and pepper to taste

Method

- i. Place eggs and parsley into a bowl and beat well.
- ii. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat.
- iii. Swirl the oil around in skillet to coat the bottom. Add the egg mixture.
- iv. Arrange zucchini slices in a single layer on top of the eggs.
- v. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Hold a lid over the pan, and turn the pan over, flipping the frittata into the lid. Carefully slide the frittata back into the skillet, cooked side up. Cook other side until firm, about 2 more minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- vi. Cut into 4 or 6 wedges.

- vii. Serve warm or at room temperature.
Serves 4 to 6.

BRUSCHETTA (TOASTED GARLIC BREAD)**Ingredients**

- i. 6 slices of crusty white bread, cut ½- to ¾-inch thick, slices each cut in half
- ii. 2 cloves garlic, lightly crushed
- iii. ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- iv. Salt

Method

- i. Grill or broil the bread on each side.
- ii. Rub each slice with a crushed garlic clove, letting the juices sink into the bread.
- iii. Sprinkle olive oil and salt on the bread.
- iv. Serve warm, if possible.

CANNOLI**Ingredients**

- i. 18 ready-made cannoli shells
- ii. 2 pounds ricotta cheese
- iii. 2 cups powdered sugar
- iv. ¼ cup candied orange and citron, finely diced
- v. ¼ cup semisweet mini-chocolate chips
- vi. ⅓ cup pistachio nuts, chopped medium to fine

Method

- i. Mix the ricotta with the powdered sugar until it is no longer grainy.
- ii. Blend in the candied fruit and chocolate.
- iii. Whisk until the mixture is very creamy.
- iv. Place filling in a wide-nozzles pastry tube and fill the shells. (A spoon may also be used).
- v. Place the chopped nuts on a flat surface and lightly dip both ends of the cannoli into the nuts to decorate.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-III

1. Write a note on ‘Meal Time Customs’?

2. Write short notes on ‘Italian Dessert’.

3. Write short notes on ‘Italian Dishes.’

4.7 SUMMARY

In this unit we have learnt about the meal time customs, cooking methods and equipments used in Italian cuisine. Further we have also learnt about various ingredients like pasta, chocolate, coffee, cheese, olive oil etc. used in Italian Cuisine. We have also learnt about various desserts and representative dishes of Italian cuisine in this unit.

4.8 GLOSSARY

Al Dente: ‘To the teeth’ is the literal meaning of al dente which refers to a way of cooking pasta. Perhaps undercooking is a better word! If a pasta dish is going to be cooked once again, the pasta is usually cooked al dente the first time. This means when you bite it, it feels firm to the teeth and not soft. It is sometimes also used to refer to the way in which vegetables are cooked.

Al Forno: Italians love to cook their pastas and pizzas ‘al forno’ which means ‘in the oven.’ Although this term applies to any oven nowadays, the traditional wood-burning oven or open flame grill was and is sometimes still used to cook dishes al forno.

Alla Bolognese: This refers to the way in which a meat-based tomato and vegetable sauce that is cooked for several hours over low heat. The traditional ingredients added are onion, celery and carrot with some minced meat. Red wine is added and cream or milk seals the sauce’s unique flavor. Originating in the Bolognese region, this sauce is usually served with flat pasta shapes such as tagliatelle or fettuccine.

Alla Caprese: Mozzarella, olive oil, basil and tomato are staples at the heart of this cooking method which originated in Capri. These ingredients combined together are served as antipasto or a starter. These versatile ingredients are also combined to prepare a variety of pastas and dishes such as fusilli alla caprese and spaghetti alla caprese.

Alla Genovese (Pesto) Pesto is synonymous with alla Genovese which refers to the method of pounding or crushing olive oil, basil, pine nuts and garlic to make a sauce. The method originated in Genoa and a mortar and pestle are used to crush or pound the ingredients. There are other variations of this, for example pesto rosso uses tomato and almonds.

Alla Mattone: Mattone literally means a heavy brick or tile, and this cooking method gets its name from the brick that’s used to apply pressure to anything being cooked, especially for grilling or sautéing. Chicken or any other meat is a typical example of an ingredient that’s cooked in this manner.

Arborio rice: Risotto is traditionally made with this Italian rice, although other rice’s can be used. Risotto is Arborio rice that is browned first in margarine, butter, or oil, and then cooked in broth. The finished rice has a creamy consistency and a tender, but slightly firm, texture.

Artichokes: Look for firm, compact globes that are heavy for their size. They should yield slightly to pressure and have large, tightly closed leaves. (Sometimes leaf edges darken because the plant got too cold. This darkening, called "winter kiss," does not affect the quality.) To store, place fresh artichokes in a plastic bag and refrigerate for up to a week.

Asiago cheese: Made from cow's milk, Asiago is a semi-hard to hard cheese. Full of many tiny holes, the cheese has a rich flavor and creamy texture when it hasn't been aged for very long. As it ages, the cheese becomes firmer and can be grated easily. It is similar in fat content to Parmesan cheese.

Baking pan: An ovenproof and microwave-safe pan is a must-have for cooking lasagna, baked ziti and eggplant Parmigiano.

Balsamic vinegar: This sweet, dark brown vinegar is made from the boiled-down juice of a white grape. According to Italian law, balsamic vinegars labeled as "aceto balsamico

tradizionale" cannot contain any wine vinegar and must be aged at least 12 years. These vinegars can sell for \$40 to \$350 for 4 ounces. Less expensive balsamics blend wine vinegar with the grape juice.

Basil: The aroma and flavor of this herb range from peppery and robust to sweet and spicy. Its leaves can be various shades of green or purple. Use the leaves of this herb in dried or fresh form.

Battuto: In Italian, battuto means to 'beat' or 'strike' and refers to the method of finely chopping onions, celery, carrots, parsley and some meat like bacon which are then cooked in fat, usually olive oil or lard. It forms the flavour base of many Italian pastas, risottos and soups.

Caffe' latte: Espresso made with more milk than a cappuccino but only a small amount of foam. In Italy it is usually a breakfast drink.

Cappuccino chiaro: Cappuccino prepared with more milk (but less than a caffe latte) and is lighter in color.

Cappuccino scuro: Cappuccino prepared with less milk and is a darker color.

Cappuccino: Espresso with foamed milk and containing equal parts espresso, steamed milk and foamed milk.

Cheese grater: Cheese is another great aspect of Italian cooking. Buy a high-quality cheese grater that you find comfortable and easy to use.

Chef's knife: A sharp 6-inch chef's knife is ideal for Italian cooking. Look for a knife that is made of carbon or stainless steel. Make sure it is comfortable to hold and has a textured knob to prevent slipping.

Colanders: Colanders are used to drain pasta and vegetables. Make sure you buy a colander that is big enough to accommodate the volume of pasta and vegetables you'll be using.

Cold-pressed olive oil is obtained by pressing the fruit. No heat or solvents are used, therefore it is called "cold-pressed."

Corretto: Espresso that is "corrected" with grappa, cognac or sambuca.

Crudo: Meaning 'raw' in Italian, the method refers to slicing seafood, usually fish, very thinly and topping it with olive oil, salt and citrus juice. You'll find this served in Italian fishing towns. It can also refer to a mixture of raw herbs and vegetables chopped together and added to a cooked dish just before it is served.

Doppio : Simply a double espresso.

Espresso: known as Caffè in Italy, served in a 3 oz or demitasse cup. Strong in taste with a rich bronze froth known as a crema on top.

Extra-light olive oil refers only to the oil's flavor, not to the calories it contains compared to the other olive oils.

Extra-virgin olive oil is the best grade of olive oil; it meets Italy's highest standards for rich and fruity olive taste with very low acidity (less than 1 percent).

Fontina: This delicate, sweet, semi-soft cheese has a nutty flavor. Made from cow's milk, fontina melts easily and smoothly. The more aged the cheese, the richer the flavor. One ounce has about 9 grams of fat.

Garlic press: Garlic is an essential ingredient in Italian cooking. A garlic press can help you squash various sizes of garlic cloves.

Gorgonzola: This blue-veined cheese is made from cow's milk and possesses a creamy texture with a slightly pungent, rich flavor. When aged for more than six months, the flavor can become very strong. It's a great accompaniment to fruit, such as apples or pears. It also can be melted into sauces or crumbled over salads. For a milder variety, look for torta di Gorgonzola, which layers Gorgonzola with sweet mascarpone. Gorgonzola cheese has 8 grams of fat per ounce.

Ladle: Ladles are used for better pouring of pasta sauces and soups. Make sure you buy a ladle with a long handle and sufficient capacity.

Latte macchiato: Steamed milk that is "marked" (sometimes ornately) with a shot of espresso coffee.

Lungo or Caffè Americano: An Espresso made with more water - opposite a Ristretto.

Macchiato: Espresso that is "marked" with a dollop of steamed milk on top.

Mascarpone: Super-rich mascarpone tastes like a cross between whipped butter and cream cheese. It is often used in desserts, but it's also great as a spread for delicate crackers or fresh fruit, such as strawberries and pear slices. It is a soft cheese made from cow's milk and has about 13 grams of fat per ounce -- use sparingly.

Mezzaluna: A mezzaluna is a half-moon-shaped knife with handles at the ends of the blade. Cooks roll the blade from side to side to chop herbs and vegetables. Be careful using a mezzaluna as the blade is extremely sharp.

Mozzarella: Best known as a pizza topper, mozzarella is made either from cow's milk or, in Italy, from water buffalo's milk. It is mild in flavor and can be found in lower-fat varieties. Fresh mozzarella, a real treat, is made from whole milk and has a softer texture

and sweeter, more delicate flavor than regular, factory-made mozzarella. It contains from 4 to 7 grams of fat per ounce, depending on the fat content of the milk used to make it.

Olives: Italians prefer to use ripe olives rather than the unripe green variety. Although ripe olives in America are usually black, the color of Italian ripe olives can vary from purplish red and brown to jet-black. They are packed in oil or brine, which may be flavored with herbs or citrus peel. Taste olives before serving. If they're too salty, rinse them under cold running water. They can become bitter if overcooked, so allow them just enough time to heat through when adding to a cooked dish.

Pancetta (pan-CHEH-tuh): Think of pancetta as the Italian version of bacon. Made from the belly or pancia of a hog, pancetta has deep pink stripes of flesh similar to bacon. Pancetta is seasoned with pepper and other spices, and is cured with salt, but is not smoked. It comes in a sausagelike roll or flat and is used to flavor sauces, vegetables, or meats.

Parmesan cheese: Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, an aged hard cheese made from cow's milk, is strictly regulated in Italy to control its quality. In the United States, this cheese often is limited, but the results are different from the Italian cheese. Older, aged varieties of Italy have a stronger flavor and are drier. Stick to freshly grated aged varieties for the most flavor. You'll be able to use less due to its more intense flavor. It contains 7 grams of fat per ounce.

Pasta Pot: Italian cooking is incomplete without its delicious pasta dishes. Cooking pasta requires a lot of water, so you will need at least 5-gallon pot; and 8-gallon pot, if you cook for a larger group.

Pecorino: Cheese made from sheep's milk is known as pecorino (Pechora means sheep in Italian). If it is aged can be used instead of Parmesan on pasta dishes and is sometimes preferable if a sharper taste is desired. I use it often on plain fresh Tomato pasta - Costco offers some good grated Pecorino at an economical price. The best known is the Pecorino Romano other popular pecorinos are from Tuscany Sardinia and Sicily.

Pecorino: Made from sheep's milk, the flavor of pecorino will depend on the area where it is made in Italy. It ranges from a firm, sharp, salty cheese to a milder, semi-firm variety. It has 8 grams of fat per ounce.

Pesto (PES-toh): A pasty sauce of olive oil, garlic, fresh basil, and Parmesan cheese. It usually is served with pasta.

Pine nuts or pignoli: This small seed is from one of the several pine tree varieties. The pine nut, which has a sweet, faint pine flavor, also is known as pignoli and pinon. The small, creamy white nut can be slender and pellet-shaped or more triangular. Pine nuts turn rancid quickly, so refrigerate them in an airtight container for up to two months or freeze them for up to six months.

Polenta (poh-LEN-tuh): This Italian-style mush is made by boiling a mixture of cornmeal or farina and water. Polenta usually is served with tomato sauce as a side dish, or it may be served without sauce as a bread substitute. It is eaten as a thick porridge or can be molded, sliced, fried, or broiled.

Pressed Cheeses: The curd is broken up in to small pieces and forms are made by putting the pieces of curd into a mold made of plastic or stainless steel. They are then pressed for the best disposal of the whey. Pressing time and pressure weight applied, gives the resulting type of cheese and its dimensions. This method is used in producing most cheeses of a semi-hard consistency.

Prosciutto (proh-SHOO-toh): Like ham, prosciutto is from the hog's leg. Salt curing draws out the moisture, a process called prosciugare in Italian. Unlike ham, the cured pork is air-dried, not smoked. The result is a somewhat sweetly spiced, rose-colored meat that has a slight sheen. Parma ham is the authentic prosciutto of Italy. They are designated as prosciutto cotto (cooked) or prosciutto crudo (raw). The raw is cured, however, so it is ready to eat. Use small amounts in pasta, sauces, and meat dishes. Add it to cooked dishes at the last minute so it doesn't toughen.

Provolone: Made from cow's milk, this cheese is delicate and creamy when aged for up to two months. When aged longer, it begins to take on a spicy, sharp flavor. Although it's great as a table cheese, provolone is also an excellent cooking cheese. Aged provolone can be used for grating. One ounce has about 8 grams of fat.

Provolone: This mildly smoky cheese is made from cow's milk. For provolone, enhanced colour and flavor come with age although the cheese may be aged for as few as a month or two, or up to one year. The more yellow the colour, the more ripe and flavourful. With a firm and slightly elastic texture, provolone is an excellent cheese for melting, or on sandwiches.

Pure olive oil is filtered twice after a single cold-pressing to lighten the oil's color and aroma and lessen the acidity. It has a delicate flavor and a low acidity.

Ricotta: Ricotta is generally made from cow's milk, although it can be made from sheep's milk, which has more flavor. It's not readily available in the United States. Ricotta is characteristically a bit grainy in texture with a mildly sweet flavor. It can be found in lower-fat versions at the supermarket. Depending on whether the milk used in making the ricotta was whole or skim, the fat content of 1/2 cup (4 ounces) ranges from 0 to 15 grams.

Risotto (ree-ZOHT-toh): This rice dish consists of broth-cooked rice, butter, cheese, and other bits of meat and/or vegetables. Risotto Milanese (from Milan) are always additionally flavored with a little saffron.

Ristretto: More concentrated than a regular espresso that is made with less water.

Tomatoes: Italian cooks mainly use two kinds of tomatoes. They like elongated plum or Roma tomatoes for cooking, because they have fewer seeds, firmer flesh, and thicker juice. The round eating tomatoes are prized in salads, appetizers, or anywhere fresh tomatoes are needed. To ripen, store firm tomatoes at room temperature in a brown paper bag. When ripe, they will yield to gentle pressure.

Virgin olive oil has acidity between 1 and 3 percent and a lighter taste and aroma. It is considered to be slightly inferior in quality to extra-virgin olive oil.

Wooden spoon: Wooden spoons are considered best for making sauces and soups in Italian cooking. Buy wooden spoons of different sizes for your kitchen.

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- Parvinder S Bali – International Cuisine & Food Production – Oxford University Press

4.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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4.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain various types of olive oils used in Italian cuisine?
- 2 Write short notes on various types of coffee prepared in Italian cuisine.
- 3 Explain in detail the characteristic of Italian cuisine. What are the various types of Pasta used in Italian cooking?
- 4 Explain the equipments and utensils used in Italian cuisine.
- 5 Describe the importance of cheeses in Italian cuisine.
- 6 Explain various types of olive oil used in Italian cuisine?
- 7 Illustrate the various ingredients used in Italian cuisine.