

# Be Inspired

FOOD ~ WINE ~ TRAVEL

CLASS 034



Online Cooking Class

# Sardinian

Inspired by **Giovanni Pilu**





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## How To Be inspired



I want to inspire your culinary adventures every way I can.

If you're a skip-the-stories-and-just-get-on-with-it kind of cook, use the contents table to click directly to the recipes and video links.

If you like a printed copy, use the **PRINT-FRIENDLY** link below for a black and white pdf of just run sheets and recipes with video QR codes.

This magazine-style recipe booklet sets the scene, including a curated playlist of tunes to cook to. There are details on the food and wine we'll be exploring, plus some travel tips for a vicarious holiday or to help inspire the next real one!

### JOIN THE BE INSPIRED COMMUNITY

Be Inspired has an active online community. Our cooks, chefs and producers love to share their inspiration, ask and answer questions, offer tips, and substitution and sourcing ideas.

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If you're posting to Instagram, please tag #beinspiredfood and follow me **@robertamuir**

### EVENTS

We get together in person too, for dinners, producer visits and other events. See what's coming up **here**.

Some events can be arranged as private functions with friends and family or for **corporate entertaining**.

### TOURS

Each year I take a small group of food and wine lovers to Europe with me for the culinary adventure of a lifetime. I'd love you to join me – **details here**.

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FRIENDLY RECIPES**





Here's the ingredients you'll need for all four menus. Some are available from the Be Inspired Market Place. I've included preferred brands where applicable and you can read more about some of the awesome producers I recommend on [page 68](#).

Deli / Grocer
Butcher/Fishmonger
Greengrocer
Available from Be Inspired Market Place
Be Inspired Care Pack

Menu 1 Menu 2 Menu 3 Menu 4	recipe	Quantity	Ingredient	Notes
✓	Fresh Cheese with Honey	2 sheets	carta di musica/pane carasau	
✓	Fregola & Olive Salad	75g	fregola	2½oz
✓✓	Lombicchi Steak	25g	bottarga (grated)	1oz
✓	Fresh Cheese with Honey	12g	calcium lactate powder	½oz/1 tablepoon
✓	Lamb Rump with Fregola & Olive Salad	1	lamb rump, cap on - 350g/12½oz	
✓	Prawns with Bottarga Butter	6	prawns, green - large (U10) - 270g/9½oz	Dietary Variation
✓	Salmon with Fregola & Olive Salad	2	salmon fillet, skin on, pin-boned - 180g/6½oz	Dietary Variation
✓	Snapper with Pine Nut & Herb Stuffing	1	snapper, gilled, gutted and scaled - 600g/21oz	Dietary Variation
✓	Spatchcock with Pine Nut & Herb Stuffing	1	spatchcock (baby chicken/poussin) - 600g/21oz	
✓	Steak with Bottarga Butter	1	steak, sirloin - 330g/11½oz	
✓	Rainbow Trout with Olives & Rosemary	2	trout, rainbow (gilled, gutted and scaled) - 300g/10½oz	or 1 x 600g (1lb 5oz)
✓	Lombicchi alla Carlofortina	150g	tuna, sashimi-grade	5½oz
✓	Almond Meringues	80g	almonds, blanched or slivered	3oz/½ cup
✓	Steak with Bottarga Butter	2	bread rolls	if not making potato bread
✓✓	Spatchcock Steak	70g	bread, sourdough (stale)	2 slices/2½oz
✓✓✓	Spatchcock, Steak Seadas	150g	butter	5½oz
✓	Fresh Cheese with Honey	300ml	cream, single	1¼ cups
✓	Spatchcock with Pine Nut & Herb Stuffing	1 tbsp	currants or sultanas	10g/½oz
✓	Stuffed Zucchini, Meringues	4	eggs	3 yolks leftover
✓✓✓✓	Everything	500ml	extra virgin olive oil	
✓	Seadas	300g	flour, plain	can use bakers/strong flour
✓✓	Lombicchi Potato Bread	500g	flour, bakers (strong flour)	18oz
✓✓	Fresh Cheese Seadas		honey	
✓	Fresh Cheese with Honey	1lt	milk, full-cream	2 US pints
✓✓	Trout, Fregola Salad	1l	olives, green (large)	
✓✓	Pesto Rocket Salad Stuffed Zucchini Seadas	150g	Pecorino Sardo	5½oz

Menu 1 Menu 2 Menu 3 Menu 4	recipe	Quantity	Ingredient	Notes
✓	Pesto Spatchcock	25g	pine nuts	6 tea-spoons/1oz
✓	Fresh Cheese, Seadas	360g	ricotta	if not making primo sale (12½oz)
✓	Meringues Seadas	185g	sugar, castor	6½oz
✓	Seadas	500ml	vegetable oil	2 cups
✓	Fregola & Olive Salad	20ml	vinegar, red agrodolce	4 tea-spoons
✓	Rainbow Trout with Olives & Rosemary	125ml	wine, dry white	½ cup
✓	Soft Potato Bread	1tsp	yeast, dried	3.5g
✓	Pesto	1 bunch	basil (small leaves)	need ½ cup (12g/½oz) leaves
✓	Green Beans with Mint & Garlic Dressing	120g	beans, baby green	4½oz
✓✓✓✓	Everything	1 head	garlic	6 cloves
✓	Rainbow Trout with Olives & Rosemary	1	green onion/scallion	
✓✓✓	Rocket Salad Meringues Zucchini Flowers Seadas	3	lemons, small	
✓✓✓	Stuffed Zucchini Beans Fregola Salad	8 sprigs	mint	
✓	Lombicchi, Spatchcock	2	onion, red - small	
✓	Fregola & Olive Salad	1	orange, small	
✓	Spatchcock Zucchini Flowers Fregola Salad	8 sprigs	oregano (or marjoram)	
✓	Rocket Salad, Spatchcock, Trout, Zucchini Flowers	½ bunch	parsley leaves, flat-leaf	
✓	Soft Potato Bread	1	potato, floury (medium)	about 250g/9oz
✓	Rocket & Herb Salad with Pecorino	30g	rocket	1oz/large handful
✓	Rocket Salad Spatchcock Trout Fregola Salad	4 sprigs	rosemary	
✓✓	Lombicchi Stuffed Zucchini	160g	tomatoes, grape	1 punnet
✓	Grilled Zucchini Flowers	6	zucchini flowers	or radicchio, endive, witlof, asparagus
✓	Stuffed Zucchini	1	zucchini, large (or 2 medium)	about 250g/9oz

**Visit the Market Place  
to Be Inspired**

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Email Roberta with any questions about sourcing or substituting ingredients at [roberta@food-wine-travel.com](mailto:roberta@food-wine-travel.com)



# Purchase & Storage Tips

If you don't have a herb garden, I recommend buying potted herbs to keep on your kitchen bench. They last well if you look after them: discard the plastic sleeve, sit them in a sunny spot in a small dish kept half full of water (**except** for thyme and rosemary which seem happier watered regularly but in a dry dish).

I recommend freezing all protein unless you're going to use it within a couple of days. It thaws quickly in a sink of **cold** water and is always best frozen as fresh as possible (don't leave it until just before the use-by-date to freeze). Here are some tips on how to store items for maximum freshness and quality.

## Meat, Poultry & Seafood

Seafood and poultry should be stored in the coldest part of the fridge (usually bottom shelves), and generally used within 2 days or frozen asap.



**Prawns** – store in a tub of water as soon as possible to prevent them oxidizing (blackening). Stored like this they will keep in the fridge for 4 days. Freeze asap in a tub of water if you plan to cook them later. Once thawed, refrigerate in the tub of water and use within 2 days.

**Salmon, Trout & Tuna** – store in the coldest part of the fridge in a plastic bag on a plate with an ice brick beneath and above them, like this they will keep for 4 days. For maximum quality, use or freeze within 24 hours (cook tuna through if not using within 24 hours).

**Snapper** – store in the coldest part of the fridge in a plastic bag on a plate with an ice brick beneath and above it, like this it will keep for 3 days. For maximum quality, use or freeze within 24 hours.

**Bottarga** – refrigerate, check use-by date (generally use within 3 months).

**Spatchcock** – use within 24 hours or freeze asap if you plan to use it later. Packaged poultry can have an odd 'confinement odour' due to the harmless gas used in the packing process and not related to the product's freshness. Once thawed, use within 24 hours.

**Lamb & Steak** – will keep for 4 days in the fridge (2 weeks vac-packed), but I prefer to freeze it asap. Always check best-before date on packaged meat and freeze asap if you aren't planning on using it before then.



# Purchase & Storage Tips



## Vegetables & Herbs

**Lettuces, including rocket**, are quite hardy. Store sealed in a bag in the crisper, revive by soaking in a sink of cold water if need be and discard any damaged leaves before using.

**Potatoes** – store in a cardboard box or paper bag in a cool dark place (never refrigerate potatoes to be used for frying).

**Tomatoes** – I prefer grape tomatoes for most recipe as they are the most consistently ripe and flavourful year-round. If tomatoes are unripe, store at room temperature, ideally in a sunny spot, until fully ripe, then in a bag or punnet in the crisper of the fridge until needed.

**Other fresh fruit, vegetables and leaves (excluding onion, including citrus)** store in freezer bags, zip-lock bags or sealed plastic containers in the crisper section of the fridge.

Basic ingredients can vary widely in weight, my recipes assume the below approx. weights:

Garlic: 1 clove = 5g whole | Red Shallot: 1 = 40g  
Small Chilli: 1 = 3g | Long Chilli: 1 = 20g

Herbs, average bunch whole weight:  
Flat-leaf Parsley = 75g (1 cup chopped)  
Mint = 40g (½ cup chopped)  
Coriander = 60g (⅔ cup chopped)

## Other

**Eggs** – store in the fridge and bring to room temperature before using.

### Dairy

I recommend storing cheeses inside a sealed plastic container in the fridge to create a microclimate for them and prevent them drying out. To prevent cross-contamination, store hard cheeses separately to those with mould.

**Pecorino** will keep for at least 3 weeks refrigerated wrapped tightly in the waxed paper it arrives in (or in baking paper).

**Nuts (almonds, pine nuts)** – refrigerate for maximum freshness.

**Bread** – if not using within a few days, freeze asap wrapped in aluminium foil inside a zip-lock bag. If using for breadcrumbs, leave out overnight (covered with something that allows ventilation) to dry out. Put rolls into a 160°C oven for a few minutes to freshen up before serving.

**Vegetable oil** used for shallow- or deep-frying can be cooled, filtered (through muslin, a clean Chux or coffee filter) and stored in the fridge or a cool dark place to be reused. Dispose of it (in the bin, never down the sink) after 3 weeks or 3 uses, whichever comes first.





## Giovanni Pili & Pili at Freshwater

Giovanni grew up in a small town in northern Sardinia, where his family always kept a few cows, chickens and rabbits, and there was his father's vegetable garden.

His childhood memories are of gathering berries, wild greens and herbs from the hedgerows on the way home from school, of bringing down small birds with sling shots, and spending long summer evenings with friends searching streams in the hills near his home for trout and eels.

Giovanni began his hospitality career in his uncle's bar in Olbia, then gained experience in the kitchens of various coastal resort hotels.

There he met Marilyn Anecchini, an Australian of Italian descent on a working holiday in Sardinia.

They took a summer job together in a restaurant in San Teodoro on the north-east coast.

She headed back to Australia after the season finished and Giovanni followed not long after, arriving in Sydney in 1992.





Lacking formal training and with very little English, he did his apprenticeship at Il Piemonte in Terrey Hills, where he was living with Marilyn's family; learning cooking and English side-by-side.

Many years later in a pleasing twist of fate, Giovanni opened Cavallino pizzeria in the same building.

In 1997, Giovanni opened Cala Luna at The Spit where he introduced Sydneysiders to a few Sardinian specialities.

Then, in 2004, he and Marilyn opened Pilu at Freshwater where they crafted a total dining experience around authentic Sardinian food, wine and hospitality. In August 2024, they celebrated the restaurant's 20th anniversary.

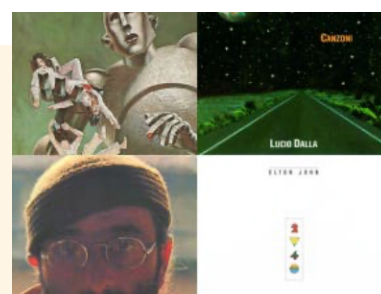
While Giovanni does import a few uniquely Sardinian ingredients, he's passionate about supporting local producers wherever possible and now makes his own bottarga from Australian mullet roe (see [page 10](#) for more on bottarga).



## WATCH



Giovanni and Roberta discuss Sardinian food



## LISTEN



Giovanni's favourite music to cook to on Spotify



## EXPLORE



Be Inspired by Giovanni



## EXPERIENCE



Pilu at Freshwater Celebrating 20 years in 2024



# A SARDINIAN COOKBOOK

*Giovanni Pili  
and  
Roberta Muir*

## A SARDINIAN COOKBOOK

More than just a collection of recipes – including malloreddus with clams, bottarga and zucchini flowers; roast suckling pig with scented apple sauce; and seadas (Sardinia's wonderful cheese-filled pastries) – A Sardinian Cookbook is filled with details of Sardinia's unique foods and culinary heritage and stories of Giovanni's youth among the forests and hills of his island home.

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# Sardinian Food

As an island, some 8 hours boat journey from mainland Italy, Sardinia has remained more isolated than other Italian regions and so has developed – and retained – a very distinctive cuisine.

Rugged and untamed, Sardinia has long been a place apart from the mainland, separated by language, culture and history as well as geography.

It is one of five autonomous regions to which the Italian Constitution granted 'home rule' at the end of WWII to prevent their secession from Italy and to take into account their linguistic and cultural differences.

Given its strategic location in the middle of the Mediterranean, Sardinia's culture and cuisine have been influenced by many invading forces over the millennia, from Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Greeks and Arabs, to Genovese, Pisans, Catalans, Spanish and finally the House of Savoy, before it became part of the newly founded Kingdom of Italy in 1861.

Such invasions made Sardinians wary of the coast, typically living inland on higher, more defensible, ground. Traditionally Sardinians have lived in the mountains as shepherds and farmers, and so, unusually for island

dwellers, their cooking has been based on meat (pork, mutton and wild game), along with sheep's cheese and fregola (the local couscous-like pasta).

Apart from much-loved bottarga, seafood is a relatively new addition to the Sardinian diet.

The rhythm of life in Sardinia is still largely determined by the seasons. The year is punctuated by numerous festivals to celebrate local produce, successful harvests, and patron saints, plus holy days like Christmas and Easter. Festivals are an excuse for whole villages to come together to cook, eat, drink and enjoy each other's company.

The cover photo shows Giovanni helping to carry a statue of Sant'Elia, the patron saint of his village, Sa Serra in the northeast of the island, at the annual festa in his honour.

In Oliena, there's an annual festival called cortas apertas, meaning 'the doors are open', when local people open their homes to visitors to see traditional foods being made.

Giovanni explains: "Some houses are very low-roofed and you duck your head to walk inside then see the ladies doing what they've done forever.

They haven't lost the past even if the world has moved forward, they still get up at 4am and make bread and bake sweets and the men still go and milk the sheep then come home for breakfast before going to their 'day jobs'.

Some sell the milk if they're too old to make cheese, it's a little extra income that helps the family. Keeping a few cows or sheep is still common in Sardinia, even if you aren't a farmer, and most homes have a vegetable garden. Before and after work people tend their gardens and animals, it's a way of life."

Food and the hospitality associated with sharing it are integral to the Sardinian way of life, almost any occasion is a reason to eat and drink with friends and family. Giovanni and I hope these recipes will encourage you to do just that.

Bonu Proe!





## Bottarga

Bottarga di muggine – the salted, pressed, air-dried roe sacs of grey mullet – has been made all over the Mediterranean since ancient times. The Greeks call it avgotaraho, the French poutargue, in Spain it's botarga and in Arabic batarekh. Tuna roe (bottarga di tonno), especially popular in North Africa, is made in a similar way.

Nowhere is bottarga more popular than in Sardinia, where it's the favourite seasoning for all sorts of dishes. It's grated over pasta, shaved over salads, and eaten on its own with crusty bread and a glass of wine.

Despite being an island, Sardinians traditionally lived inland as the coast was prone to raids from invaders.

So what seafood they ate was usually preserved to make it portable and durable.

Whole bottarga looks like a flat orange sausage, resembling a piece of amber when sliced.

From August to October female grey mullets are full of roe.

This is gently extracted to keep the roe sac intact, then salted, pressed between wooden paddles, and dried for a month or more.

While it's drying, it's rubbed regularly to remove any air pockets between the roe and the sac.

Traditionally bottarga was hung on hooks by the end of the sac in a cool dry place and air-dried, then sealed in beeswax to preserve it. Today the roe is still salted and pressed, but now it's dried in temperature-controlled rooms on perforated trays then cryovaced.

After a month bottarga is great for slicing, and aged for 3–4 months it's ideal for grating.

Generally Giovanni advises: "Buy and store bottarga whole then grate or slice it as needed. If you're slicing it, peel it first, but for grating leave the membrane on to help hold it together then sift the grated bottarga to remove the pieces of membrane." To make it even easier, he now also sells small jars of freshly grated bottarga.

About 10 years ago, Giovanni was talking to a bottarga merchant at a food market in Sardinia. When he said he was living in Australia, the merchant told him: "That's where the roe comes from for our bottarga."

Suddenly realising that the imported Sardinian bottarga he'd been buying was made with Australian mullet roe, Giovanni decided to reduce the food miles and make his own bottarga in Sydney. Pilu Bottarga di Muggine is available online for delivery anywhere in Australia (whole or grated).

You'll need some for the steak (page 38) or prawns (page 40) with bottarga butter and can use the rest grated over the lombrichi pasta (page 29) or sliced on the wild rocket salad (page 35) instead of Pecorino.

It's addictive stuff, once you've experienced it's salty/umami flavour, you'll be serving it on everything.





## Honey & Abbamele

Honey has always been Sardinia's favourite sweetener. Traditionally the islanders harvested it from wild hives rather than buying expensive imported sugar.

The most common honey is still millefiori (literally 'thousand flowers'), collected from the hives of bees that have roamed across fields of wildflowers.

Today many different honeys, popular for their distinctive flavours, are collected from hives where bees live among specific plants including eucalyptus, acacia, chestnut, lavender, rosemary and cardoon.

The most distinctively Sardinian honey however is from bees living among the flowers of corbezzolo (also called wild strawberry), which grows wild all over the island.

This miele amaro (bitter honey) has a complex flavour, starting slightly sweet before a long, pleasantly bitter aftertaste.

By October, when the corbezzolo trees flower, the bees are almost at the end of their honey-making season. So there's only a short window for them to gather nectar from the small white, bell-shaped flowers to make this highly-prized honey that's always in limited supply.

Abbamele is a dialect word that comes from abba, meaning 'water', and mele meaning 'honey'.

It's a distinctively Sardinian product made by boiling whole honeycomb with citrus zest and water then squeezing it to extract both the honey and the pollen, producing a thick amber syrup with a complex caramel flavour.

It's used in many Sardinian desserts and often drizzled over cheese. It's almost impossible to find outside Sardinia, so substitute your favourite honey instead.





## Sardinian Cheeses

There isn't a lot of flat grazing land on Sardinia. So, while families often keep a cow for milk, herds of dairy cows are rare. Most of the milk used for cheese production in Sardinia comes from sheep, animals much better suited to grazing on the mountainous terrain.

Pecorino cheese gets its name from the Italian word for sheep: pecora. It's a staple on the Sardinian table and eaten at any time of day.

The island produces three different pecorinos with PDO appellation (Protected Designation of Origin): Pecorino Sardo, Pecorino Romano and Fiore Sardo.

**Pecorino Sardo** is made from raw sheep's milk set with calf's rennet.

It's sold dolce (aged for 20–60 days) and maturo (aged for 2–12 months). Pecorino dolce is supple with a mild, slightly tangy flavour, while the firmer pecorino maturo is nutty and slightly sweet until about 6 months, becoming more granular with a

stronger flavour after that, when it's mainly used for grating.

**Pecorino Romano** is made from raw sheep's milk set with lamb's rennet.

It evolved around Rome, as the name suggests, but is now mostly made in Sardinia where more land is available for grazing.

Aged for at least 5 months, it's firmer than Pecorino Sardo with a stronger, more acidic flavour.

**Fiore Sardo** pre-dates Roman times and was traditionally made by shepherds who aged it in their huts where the fires added a smoky character.

Fiore means 'flower', referring to the vegetable extract traditionally used instead of animal rennet.

**Casu marzu** (or casu frazigu, both meaning 'rotten cheese' in dialect), is a Sardinian delicacy from Giovanni's area, Nuoro.

It is definitely an acquired taste.

To make it, pecorino (usually Fiore Sardo) is infested with cheese-fly larvae, which break it down to a very soft consistency with a sharp, tangy flavour.

It's eaten with one hand shielding the eyes so the maggots don't jump into them!

Not surprisingly, it's banned from sale, and can only be made for home consumption.





## Pilu at Freshwater

A great restaurant can transport you, to another place or an alternative care-free reality. That's the magic of Pilu at Freshwater.

On a sunny day, there's no better view than the one from the balcony of this iconic beachfront diner, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in August 2024.

The sun sparkles on the Pacific Ocean, surfers dip in and out of the waves and – for just a few hours – all's right with the world.

Of an evening – sipping a sbagliato negroni, nibbling carta di musica with house-made ricotta and watching the sunset colours over the ocean – this is the ideal place to end a busy week.

While weather can't be relied upon, thankfully the food, wine and service at Pilu at Freshwater are consistently fabulous.

The menu seamlessly merges tradition and innovation, evolving seasonally but always including great crudo; hand-rolled fregola; the best

suckling pig; and crunchy, creamy, honey-filled seadas.

The Sardinian Experience menu is a vicarious holiday to Giovanni's homeland.

It features all the classics, including culurgiones (potato, mint and pecorino-filled pasta shaped like ears of wheat), bottarga, and fish cooked with vernaccia, a distinctive Sardinian wine.

Giovanni has curated the most comprehensive collection of Sardinian wines and beers in Australia, some imported exclusively for him. So adding the Sardinian wine pairing to the menu is like visiting Sardinia without getting on a plane.

The restaurant's a la carte menu shows a strong Sardinian influence too, but also draws wider inspiration from Italy's other 19 regions.

The two-course weekday menu is a quick, great-value way to enjoy the Pilu experience without committing to the immersive degustation.

There's always great house-made pasta – from simple spaghetti tossed with bottarga butter and preserved lemon, to richer goat ragu with pappardelle and stracchino cream.

Seafood and poultry are often paired with herbs, nuts and dried fruit, showing Sardinia's Arabic influence. And vegetarian dishes are as exciting as those designed for carnivores.

Combining the comfortable charm of a beachside restaurant, and the discreet eye-for-detail only seen in the finest diners, Pilu at Freshwater epitomises the best of Australian hospitality with a relaxed sophistication that puts everyone at ease and transports diners for a few magical hours.





## Sardinian Wine

Phoenicians were most likely the first to make wine from Sardinia's native grapes and the Catalans later introduced Spanish varieties to the island.

At the turn of the 21st century however, Sardinia was still lucky to be deemed worthy of more than a paragraph in a book on the wine regions of the world.

It produced quaffable whites for the tourists on the Costa Smeralda; heavy, often oxidative, reds drunk by the locals; and bulk wine to add weight to those made in cooler regions.

Sardinia's largest wine estate, Sella e Mosca near Alghero, was one of the first to gain international attention with its Anghelu Ruju, a fortified wine

made from partially-dried cannonau. In 1996 British wine writer Robert Joseph already deemed its cabernet sauvignon, Marchese di Villamarina, good enough to give the Super Tuscans a run for their money.

Today Sardinia is hailed as one of Europe's 'emerging wine regions'.

In 2024 it had 1 DOCG appellation (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita), 17 wines with DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) and 15 with IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) status.

The three most common appellations are:

**Vermentino di Sardegna DOC**, made from Sardinia's most popular white grape

**Cannonau di Sardegna DOC**, made from Sardinia's most popular red grape

**Isola dei Nuraghi IGT** which applies to the entire island; nuraghe being the megalithic buildings found throughout Sardinia.

There's never been a better time to explore the unique wines of this island.





## Be Inspired Wine Pairing

Phoenicians were most likely the first to make wine from Sardinia's native grapes and the Catalans later introduced Spanish varieties to the island. Today Sardinia is hailed as one of Europe's emerging wine regions. In 2024 it had 1 DOCG appellation (Vermentino di Gallura), 17 DOC wines and 15 with IGT status. Vermentino and cannonau are Sardinia's most popular white and red grapes respectively. Here are my guidelines for matching wines with the four menus and a suggested pairing for each.

### 1 SIDDURA SPÈRA VERMENTINO DI GALLURA DOCG

The fragrant herb stuffing with the spatchcock (or snapper) in this menu needs an equally aromatic wine, like a Sardinian vermentino. Gallura, in the island's north, produces Sardinia's finest vermentinos. Siddura's has wonderful herbal notes, a great hint of citrus, and a dry savoury finish. Great with the lombrichi too!

### 2 LE BOMBARDE CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA DOC

Cannonau is Sardinia's most popular red grape, well suited to the island's hot, dry climate. Its typical soft acidity, red berry flavours and hint of white pepper marry well with the rich bottarga butter in this menu. The Le Bombarde from Alghero has an intriguing subtle chocolatey note that I like with this simple steak dinner.

### 3 CANTINA SANTA MARIA LA PALMA RÀFIA VERMENTINO DI SARDEGNA DOC

Vermentino, Sardinia's most popular white wine, is also very versatile. I like a fuller-bodied version, perhaps one that's seen a little oak, with the flavours in this simple trout dish. The Ràfia is fermented in oak for about 10 days before spending 12 months on lees in steel, giving it a smooth, complex flavour with great length.

### 4 CANTINA SANTA MARIA LA PALMA CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA DOC RISERVA

The rich flavours of lamb, rosemary and olives call for a fuller-bodied wine like a reserve cannonau. The Riserva from Santa Maria la Palma is intense yet elegant. With hints of red fruit, wild Mediterranean herbs and spice on the nose and palate, it's a great match for the lamb and the aromatics in the fregola salad.



**Roberto Dessanti of Euro Concepts is offering a pack of Sardinian wines to complete your vicarious tour of Sardinia. Order here, enter coupon BEINSPIRED at checkout and click 'Apply coupon' for free delivery. Please call Roberto Dessanti on 0420 904 255 with any questions.**

Prices include GST. Euro Concepts Sydney supports the responsible service of alcohol and therefore all deliveries are to be received and signed for by a person of 18 years of age or over. It is against the law to sell or supply alcohol to, or to obtain alcohol on behalf of, a person under the age of 18 years. Licence No. LIQP770010259.





## Alghero – Sardinia's Little Barcelona

Its strategic Mediterranean location means Sardinia has been occupied by many foreign forces over the millennia. Each leaving its trace on the island's complex tapestry of food and culture, some more obvious than others.

Alghero, a pretty city on the northwest coast, was conquered by the Crown of Aragon in the mid-14th century.

Many local families were forcibly relocated to the Iberian Peninsula and replaced by settlers from Catalonia, Valencia and Aragon, all of whom shared similar dialects and cultures.

Aragonese-Catalan control lasted almost four centuries, leaving a significant Catalan influence on the city. Known as 'Barceloneta' (Little Barcelona), today Alghero has bilingual street signs and the Algherese Catalan

dialect is spoken in the streets and even used in media and education.

The blend of cultures is deliciously evident in the local cuisine, with seafood dishes like paella Algherese and – one of my favourites – aragosta alla Catalana, a deliciously simple rock lobster salad with tomato and onion. Crema Catalana, one of Spain's and Sardinia's most popular desserts, also entered Sardinia's culinary repertoire during the occupation.

Sella & Mosca, near Alghero, is one of Sardinia's most renowned wineries.

Along with the wines made from the island's favourites, vermentino and cannonau, they use torbato, a grape introduced by the Catalans, to produce a delicious sparkling wine.

For a deep dive into what makes Alghero so special, visit in the second half of September for the Festa de Sant Miquel, honouring the city's patron saint, the Archangel Michael. Celebrations feature a fusion of Catalan and Sardinian music and dance, and a wonderful opportunity to try Alghero's unique Catalan-Sardinian cuisine.



# Be Inspired BY *Roberta!*

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I generally design my recipes into four 2-course menus, with a suggestion for a simple third course and a link to that recipe on my website.

Sardinian meals typically start with a simple antipasto, which may be as basic as bread with cheese and olives. Pasta traditionally follows, then a meat or seafood dish with salad or vegetables, and something sweet to finish. So feel free to mix and match these recipes to create your own menus.

## ESSENTIALS



Hand-Rolled Sardinian Pasta

Pesto

How To Toast Nuts

How To Truss A Chicken

How To Store & Boil Prawns

Seadas Pastry

**PRINT  
FRIENDLY  
RECIPES**

## MENU 1



Lombrichi alla Carlofortina



Spatchcock with Herb & Pine Nut Stuffing



Whole Snapper with Herb & Pine Nut Stuffing\*



Rocket & Herb Salad



Pomegranate  
Sorbet



From **BeInspired.au**

## MENU 2



Steak with Bottarga Butter



Grilled Prawns with Bottarga Butter\*



Stuffed Zucchini



Sardinian Potato Bread



Bianchini (Almond Meringues)



Pane Carasau with  
Rosemary & Olives



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## MENU 3



Homemade Ricotta-style Cheese with Honey



Rainbow Trout with Olives & Rosemary



Green Beans with Mint & Garlic Dressing



Crema  
Catalana



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## MENU 4



Roast Lamb Rump



Pan-Fried Salmon\*



Fregola & Olive Salad



Grilled Zucchini Flowers with Herb Dressing



Seadas



Cicciones  
with Pork Ragù



From **BeInspired.au**





## Lombrichi



Lombrichi are a traditional hand-rolled Sardinian pasta with a lovely chewy texture.

The name means 'worms' and the pasta dough is often coloured with squid ink so that it looks even more worm-like.

You can easily double the quantity here and freeze any excess dough. You can also toss cooked pasta with oil and refrigerate it for a day or 2 then reheat by blanching in boiling water for 30–60 seconds.

Don't confuse lombrichi with lombrichelli, a hand rolled pasta from Lazio with a similar name also referring to its worm-like shape; they're much longer than lombrichi, like thick spaghetti.



# Hand-Rolled Sardinian Pasta

*Lombrichi*

Makes about 270g (9½oz)



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 180g baker's flour, plus extra for dusting (6½oz/1¼ cups)
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- ½ cup warm water, more or less (125ml)

## METHOD

Put the flour and salt into a bowl.

Add half the water and mix with your hands, adding remaining water a little at a time to form a firm dough, you may not need it all. It doesn't take much extra water for the dough to become too soft, so add it very gradually towards the end.

Knead on a lightly floured work surface for about 5 minutes, until smooth and elastic; or use an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook.

Roll into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and set aside for at least 1 hour or refrigerate overnight.

Dust a tray lightly with flour and place on a clean, dry work surface.

Pinch off a walnut-sized piece of dough and use the palms of your hands to roll it into a long thin worm-shape. Only if it starts to stick, dust the bench with a little flour.

Cut the strip into 5cm lengths.

Roll each piece between the palms of your hands or along the bench, place them on the tray, toss them well in the flour and spread them out so they don't stick together.

Repeat with remaining dough then cover with a clean cloth and set aside until ready to cook.

When ready to cook, bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil using 10g salt/litre water (⅓oz salt/2 US pints water).

Pour lombrichi into the water and return to the boil.

Stir well then boil for about 12 minutes, until they're tender and no longer taste floury.

Drain well, reserving some of the pasta cooking water.

### GIOVANNI'S TIP

If the dough starts to slip on the bench rather than roll, put a drop of water on your hands to stop this.





While classic Ligurian pesto alla Genovese is made with a mixture of sheep's milk pecorino (usually Sardinian) and cow's milk Parmigiano-Reggiano, in Sardinia they're more likely to use just the local Pecorino Sardo.

Buy a young one (6–9 months) if you can, otherwise a Pecorino Toscano from Tuscany is a good alternative.

This recipe contains more oil than a classic pesto so it's smoother and easier to drizzle over the lombrichi.

You'll find a classic pesto alla Genovese recipe [here](#) (and in the video on the following page) if you'd like to compare the two.

I find a stick blender is better than a food processor for making this small quantity of pesto, however you could also double it and store the rest covered with a layer of oil in an airtight jar.

Use potted basil rather than a bunch if possible, as the smaller leaves are better for pesto.



# Basil Sauce

*Pesto*

Makes about 100ml



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 teaspoons (about 10g/1/3oz) pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated young Pecorino Sardo (about 8g/1/4oz)
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- Good pinch salt flakes, crushed
- 1/2 cup small basil leaves (about 12g/1/2oz)
- 1/4 cup delicate extra virgin olive oil (60ml)

## METHOD

Use a stick blender to process pine nuts, Pecorino, garlic and salt as finely as possible.

Add basil and oil and blitz until smooth.

Transfer to a container, press a piece of plastic wrap onto the surface and set aside, or refrigerate, until needed.

Leftover pesto will keep refrigerated for weeks with a thin layer of oil on top in a sealed container.



# How To Toast Nuts



WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO



Due to their high oil content, nuts can go rancid quickly. So always buy them in small quantities from a Middle Eastern grocer or another store with a high turnover – I get mine from [Harkola](#) – and store them in the fridge.

Recipes often call for nuts to be toasted (or roasted), which adds a lovely aroma and toasty flavour by cooking some of the oil in the nuts. As nuts are high in oil they can burn quickly, so toasting them requires a bit of attention.

Here's how to toast nuts, large and small, and also remove the dark outer skin from nuts like hazelnuts.

## Toasting Nuts In A Pan

Small nuts like pine nuts, or pieces like slivered almonds, can be toasted successfully in a heavy-based frying pan over a medium heat for about 5 minutes. Stir them regularly so they colour evenly and remove them from the pan as soon as they're coloured so they don't burn in the residual heat of the pan.

## Toasting Nuts In The Oven

Larger nuts – like whole cashews, peanuts and almonds – are best toasted on an oven tray in a 180°C (360°F) oven for 5–10 minutes, depending how dark you want them. Check them after a few minutes and stir if necessary so they colour evenly.

## How To Remove Hazelnut Skins

Some nuts, such as hazelnuts, need to be heavily toasted to remove the skins if they haven't already been blanched. This is best done in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Stir the nuts regularly until the skins are black, then wrap in a tea towel and rub vigorously to loosen the skins.



# How To Truss A Chicken



WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO



Trussing a chicken, or any poultry, means tying it securely with twine so the wings and legs stay close to the body.

This makes the bird more compact so it cooks evenly and the wings and drumstick tips don't burn. Trussing also gives the cooked chicken a neater, more attractive appearance.

Use a strong, unbleached cotton twine, called kitchen twine, butcher's twine or cooking twine; it's important

to use pure cotton twine as synthetic twines may melt or burn.

For a full-sized chicken, cut about 130cm (4'3") of kitchen twine.

Place the chicken on its back with the neck end closest to you.

Place the twine underneath the chicken's back then bring the ends towards you between the body and wings ('under the arms') then around the outside of the wings and away

from you to cross it under the tip of the breast, pulling tightly to secure the wings close to the body.

Bring the twine around the outside of the tips of the drumsticks then cross it under them, pulling them together.

Holding the twine tightly, flip the chicken over onto its breast.

Twist the twine around the tail and knot it.

Cut off the excess twine.



# How To Store Prawns



WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO



Once taken out of the water, prawns oxidise quickly and blacken around the head and joints. This harmless but unsightly discolouration can be prevented by adding sulphur, freezing, cooking or peeling them. Peeled prawns can be refrigerated for a couple of days.

But the best way I've found to store prawns is to place them, unpeeled, in a container of water so that they're completely covered. Store them like this in the coldest part of the fridge for 2–3 days or freeze them for up to 3 months then thaw overnight in the fridge or in a sink of cold water.

## How To Boil Prawns

It's essential to buy raw (green) prawns for cooking, as reheated cooked prawns will be tough. While pre-cooked prawns are a convenient standby, there's a big difference in the texture and flavour of prawns you've cooked yourself. Follow my simple guidelines for how to boil prawns to use in salads and sandwiches and they'll be juicy and sweet every time.

Use plenty of water at a rolling boil so it comes back to the boil as quickly as possible once the prawns are added.

Salt it well: 120g natural cooking salt to 2 litres of water (4 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz/4 $\frac{1}{4}$  US pints).

Cook for 1 minute/25g (1oz) average weight (2.4 seconds/gram) timed from when the prawns go into the boiling water.

Prawns are graded by an old system referring to how many are in a pound. Medium king prawns are U12/15, meaning there are between 12 and 15 prawns in a pound (about 30/kg).

They average 33g (1 $\frac{1}{2}$  oz) so should be cooked for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.

Transfer them straight from the boiling water into a bowl of well-iced water and leave to cool completely before peeling them.





I've used both regular plain flour and plain baker's flour for this dough with equally good results, so use whichever you have on hand, just not self-raising flour.

This recipe makes plenty of dough as I prefer to be able to cut all 8 discs from the first rolling rather than having to re-roll the dough; you can experiment with the leftover dough and make extra pastries if you have leftover filling.

When measuring water that isn't an even cup, half, third or quarter cup, I find it easiest to weigh it, as 1ml of water weighs 1g.

Note though that this applies specifically to water, not necessarily other liquids that may be denser.



# Seadas Pastry

Makes enough for 8 seadas if you reroll offcuts



**WATCH VIDEO 00:47-3:59**

## INGREDIENTS

- 250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting (1 $\frac{2}{3}$  cups/8 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz)
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- 100ml warm water (1 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup + 4 teaspoons)
- 25g butter, softened (1oz/5 teaspoons)

## METHOD

Place flour, salt and water in a mixing bowl and mix to combine well, it will have a stringy texture.

Add butter and knead together to form a firm dough.

Tip onto a clean, dry workbench and knead for about 5 minutes, until smooth and elastic, only adding a light dusting of flour if it starts to stick; or use an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook.

Roll dough into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and set aside for at least 30 minutes; you can refrigerate it overnight then remove from the fridge 30–60 minutes before rolling.



# Menu 1



Lombrichi alla Carlofortina



Spatchcock with Herb & Pine Nut Stuffing



Whole Snapper with Herb & Pine Nut Stuffing\*



Rocket & Herb Salad



Pomegranate  
Sorbet



From **BeInspired.au**

\*Dietary option





## Lombrichi alla Carlofortina



Carloforte is a town with a fascinating history. It's on Isola di San Pietro, an island off the southwestern coast of the Sardinian mainland.

It was founded in the 1700s by Ligurian fishermen who had settled on the North African island of Tabarka 200 years earlier.

When the coral reefs they fished deteriorated (along with their relationship with the local Arab population), the Ligurian community left.

Charles Emmanuel III of Savoy, who controlled Sardinia at the time, granted them San Pietro and the surrounding islands (the Sulcis Archipelago).

So the food and dialect of San Pietro are a wonderful mixture of Ligurian, Sardinian and Arabic influences.

San Pietro is famous for tuna fishing and this classic sauce is often served with malloreddus (Sardinian shell pasta) or twisted Ligurian trofie. Any pasta shape with crevices for the sauce to cling to works well, including strozzapreti, cavatelli and casarecce.



# Hand-Rolled Pasta with Tuna & Pesto

*Lombrichi alla Carlofortina*

Serves 2 as a primo



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (30ml)
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 100g grape tomatoes, quartered (3½oz/about 11)
- 1 quantity Lombrichi (see [page 19](#))
- 150g sashimi-grade tuna, cut into 1cm/½" dice (5¼oz)
- Pesto, for drizzling (see [page 21](#))
- Freshly grated bottarga, for serving (optional)

## METHOD

Place oil, onion and salt in a frying pan over medium heat, cover and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring often, until tender but not coloured.

Meanwhile, bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil using 10g salt/litre water (⅓oz salt/2 US pints water).

Pour lombrichi into the water and return to the boil.

Stir well then boil for about 12 minutes, until they're tender and no longer taste floury.

When pasta is almost ready, add tomato to the onion and cook for a few minutes, crushing gently with a wooden spoon to combine everything into a sauce. If it's starting to break down too much before the pasta is ready, remove the pan from the heat and set aside to keep warm.

Strain Lombrichi well, retaining some of the cooking water and add Lombrichi to the pan; or use a large slotted spoon to lift them straight out of the water into the pan.

Over a medium heat, toss Lombrichi through the sauce for a minute or so to coat well, adding a few tablespoons of the reserved cooking water to give a creamy consistency.

Remove from heat, add tuna and toss to combine well.

Cover and set aside for a minute or 2, until the tuna is semi-cooked.

Stir in another tablespoon or 2 of cooking water if the sauce is a bit dry.

Serve into flat pasta bowls and drizzle with Pesto and oil; add a grating of bottarga if you like.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

In Italian cuisine, sauce can wait for pasta but pasta should never wait. So always time your cooking so that the sauce is ready at the same time as, or before, the pasta.



## Galletti Ripieni con Pinoli e Erbette di Campo



Most Sardinian families keep chickens and, as each hen house only needs one rooster, excess males are fattened up for the dinner table.

I never really cared for stuffings until I tried this one inspired by a dish Giovanni served me.

Herbs – including rosemary, thyme and oregano – grow wild throughout Sardinia and are known as ‘erbette di campo’, herbs of the field.

They add a fabulous aroma and flavour to stuffings used for chicken,

quail or any of the small wild birds that are caught all over the island.

The pine nuts and dried grapes are a remnant of the Arabic influence that often still appears in Sardinian cooking.



# Spatchcock with Pine Nut & Herb Stuffing

*Galletti Ripieni con Pinoli e Erbette di Campo*

Serves 2



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 600g (21oz) baby chicken (also called poussin or spatchcock)
- Extra virgin olive oil, for rubbing
- Salt flakes, to taste
- Rocket & Herb Salad, for serving (see [page 35](#))

## PINE NUT, CURRANT & HERB STUFFING

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (40ml)
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 3 teaspoons (about 10g/1/3oz) pine nuts, toasted and chopped (see [page 23](#))
- 40g stale sourdough bread, crusts discarded, finely diced (1 1/2oz)
- 1 tablespoon (about 10g/1/3oz) currants, soaked in warm water for about 30 minutes, drained
- 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely sliced (about 10g whole)
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced oregano leaves
- 2 teaspoons very finely chopped rosemary leaves
- 25g cold butter, diced (1oz)

## METHOD

Remove chicken from the fridge 30–60 minutes before cooking.

Pat the skin dry with paper towel and wipe out the cavity well to remove any remaining blood or offal. Cover and set aside in a cool place to come to room temperature.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 200°C (390°F).

Make Pine Nut, Currant & Herb Stuffing: Place oil, onion and a good pinch of salt in a saucepan and cook over medium heat for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until just starting to colour. Stir in garlic and cook for a further minute or 2, until aromatic. Transfer to a bowl, add remaining ingredients and stir to combine well.

Pack the Stuffing inside the cavity of the chicken and seal the opening with a toothpick.

Truss the chicken if you want to, this helps it cook more evenly and makes for a better presentation, but isn't essential (see [page 24](#)).

Rub the chicken well with oil, place in an oiled baking dish, breast side up, and sprinkle generously with salt.

Bake for about 40 minutes, basting occasionally, until well coloured.

Remove from oven, cover loosely with foil or a clean cloth and set aside in a warm place for 5–10 minutes.

Cut chicken in half, arrange on plates, drizzle with any cooking juices and serve with Rocket & Herb Salad.



## Dentice Ripieni con Pinoli e Erbette di Campo



Whole fish are an impressive centrepiece and very easy to cook.

This delicious stuffing of herbs, pine nuts and dried grapes adds delicious flavour and aroma and is so typically Sardinian.

Herbs like rosemary, thyme and oregano grow wild all over the island – they're called 'erbette di campo' (herbs of the field).

The nuts and dried fruit are a remnant of the Arabic influence in Sardinia.

Giovanni insists that whole fish should always be plated so that their head is to the left when their belly is closest to the diner.

"Otherwise they look like they're swimming in the wrong direction", he says.

The easiest way to serve whole fish is to lift sections of the top fillet onto diners' plates, then lift the head and back bone away from the fish to reveal the lower fillet.

So it can be handy to have a spare plate on the table to put the head and frame onto.



# Snapper with Pine Nut & Herb Stuffing

*Dentice Ripieni con Pinoli e Erbe di Campo*

Serves 2



**PESCATARIAN VERSION**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 600g snapper, gilled, gutted and scaled (21oz)
- Extra virgin olive oil, for rubbing
- Salt flakes, to taste
- Rocket & Herb Salad, for serving (see [page 35](#))

## PINE NUT, CURRANT & HERB STUFFING

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (40ml)
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 3 teaspoons (about 10g/1/3oz) pine nuts, toasted and chopped (see [page 23](#))
- 40g stale sourdough bread, crusts discarded, finely diced (1 1/2oz)
- 1 tablespoon (about 10g/1/3oz) currants, soaked in warm water for about 30 minutes, drained
- 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely sliced (about 10g whole)
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced oregano leaves
- 2 teaspoons very finely chopped rosemary leaves
- 25g cold butter, diced (1oz)

## METHOD

Remove fish from the fridge 30–60 minutes before cooking.

Wipe out the belly cavity to remove any remaining blood. Wipe the skin to remove any stray scales and pat dry with paper towel.

Using a sharp knife, cut 3 deep slashes angled towards the head, into both sides of the fish, through to the bone.

Cover and set aside in a cool place to come to room temperature.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 180°C.

Make Pine Nut, Currant & Herb Stuffing: Place oil, onion and a good pinch of salt in a saucepan and cook over medium heat for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until just starting to colour. Stir in garlic and cook for a further minute or 2, until aromatic. Transfer to a bowl, add remaining ingredients and stir to combine well.

Pack the Stuffing inside the cavity of the fish.

Place in an oiled baking dish, rub well with oil and sprinkle with salt.

Bake for 15 minutes or so, basting occasionally, until the flesh inside the scoring at the thickest part of the fish is just opaque all the way to the bone.

Remove from oven, cover loosely with foil and set aside in a warm place for 5 minutes.

Place on a platter, drizzle with any cooking juices and serve with Rocket & Herb Salad.



## Insalata di Erbette di Campo con Pecorino Sardo



This simple recipe reflects the way salads were traditionally made in Sardinia and other rural communities.

Go into the field or garden, pick whatever edible greens are there, toss with olive oil, lemon juice and salt, and enjoy!

So use whatever salad leaves you prefer or have on hand.

I especially like slightly peppery leaves like watercress or large-leafed rocket, and bitter ones like radicchio or dandelion.

Any soft herbs work well including parsley, mint and basil; use woody herbs – like oregano, thyme and rosemary – sparingly.

You may not need all the salad dressing, use just enough to coat the leaves, not drown them; refrigerate any leftover in the jar for later.



# Rocket & Herb Salad with Pecorino

*Insalata di Erbette di Campo con Pecorino Sardo*

Serves 2 as a side dish



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 30g rocket (1oz)
- ½ cup fresh herb leaves, such as parsley, oregano and mint (a handful)
- 1 teaspoon strained lemon juice (5ml)
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil (20ml)
- 20g young Pecorino Sardo, shaved (¾oz)

## METHOD

Wash rocket then dry it well, discarding any discoloured leaves.

Place into a large mixing bowl.

Slice the herbs and add to the rocket.

Place lemon juice and salt in a screw top jar and shake to dissolve salt.

Add oil and shake well to emulsify.

Just before serving, mix greens with just enough dressing to coat them.

Toss well, pile onto a platter and scatter with Pecorino, tucking some under the leaves.

### GIOVANNI'S TIP

Regardless of where they come from, always wash and dry salad leaves well. Soak them in a sink of cold water for a while to revive any that are looking a little wilted, then pick over them to discard any discoloured ones.



# Menu 2



Steak with Bottarga Butter



Grilled Prawns with Bottarga Butter\*



Stuffed Zucchini



Sardinian Potato Bread



Bianchini (Almond Meringues)



Pane Carasau  
with Rosemary & Olives



From **BeInspired.au**

\*Dietary option





## Bistecca Tagliata con Burro di Bottarga



Steak in Italy is usually served sliced into strips, this is called tagliata meaning 'cut'. The slices look more appealing than a big slab of meat on the plate and are easier for sharing.

Steak with flavoured butter is perfect for a quick, tasty dinner; even more so if you keep a roll of bottarga butter in the freezer. Bottarga, dried mullet roe, is Sardinians favourite seasoning (see [page 10](#)).

Use this recipe as inspiration for making all sorts of flavoured butter to melt over steak, poultry, seafood or vegetables – or toss through freshly cooked pasta. Garlic, fresh herbs, and spicy 'nduja all work just as well as bottarga.

While I like most steaks medium-rare, sirloin is a firmer cut that's most tender cooked to medium.

As the thickness of steaks vary, the best way to ensure they're cooked to your liking is to use a probe thermometer; at about 60°C (140°F) you'll know it's medium.

Don't be mean with the butter, you want plenty to mop up with the bread.

As you'll see from the photos I like lots, so I use about a third of the roll.

Use as much or as little as you like and freeze the rest for later.



# Steak with Bottarga Butter

*Bistecca Tagliata con Burro di Bottarga*

Serves 2



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 330g sirloin steak (11½oz)
- Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- Salt flakes, to taste
- Bread rolls, for serving

## BOTTARGA BUTTER

- 15g grated bottarga (½oz/1 tablespoon)
- 100g butter, at room temperature (3½oz/5 tablespoons)

## METHOD

Remove steak from the fridge an hour or so before cooking, to bring it to room temperature.

Meanwhile, make Bottarga Butter: Use a fork to mash the bottarga into the butter until they're well combined.

Spoon butter horizontally down the centre of a long strip of baking paper, fold the paper over and use a ruler to press against the side, pushing the butter into a log.

Roll up in the paper, twisting the ends to secure them, and refrigerate (or freeze) until needed.

Heat a barbecue or char-grill pan to medium-high.

Meanwhile, slice some of the Bottarga Butter into discs and set aside.

Rub steak well with oil on both sides and sprinkle one side generously with salt.

Place onto the grill, salt side down, and cook for 2½–3 minutes.

Sprinkle with salt, reduce heat to medium, turn steak over and cook the other side for about 1½ minutes for medium, or until cooked to your liking. If the meat has a thick strip of fat, place that in contact with the pan for 30 seconds or so to cook it a little.

Remove to a warm plate, cover loosely with foil and set aside for a couple of minutes.

Cut steak, on the diagonal, into slices about 1cm thick.

Arrange on a warmed platter, top with Bottarga Butter and serve with bread for soaking up all the delicious butter.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

If the butter is a little cold and doesn't melt with the heat of the steak, pop the platter under a very hot overhead grill for just a few seconds to start it melting.



## Gamberi con Burro di Bottarga



Prawns are at their most succulent if cooked only on the shell side without turning them over, as the shell protects the delicate flesh.

If you prefer them cooked more thoroughly, cook them for longer on the shell side.

Use this recipe as inspiration for making all sorts of flavoured butter to melt over steak, poultry, seafood or vegetables – or toss through pasta.

Garlic, fresh herbs, and spicy 'nduja all work just as well as bottarga, which is dried mullet roe (see [page 10](#)).

Don't be mean with the butter, you want a nice disc on each prawn so there's plenty to mop up with the bread. Freeze the rest for later.

If the butter is a little cold and doesn't melt with the heat of the prawns, pop the platter under a very hot overhead grill for just a few seconds to start it melting.



# Prawns with Bottarga Butter

*Gamberi con Burro di Bottarga*

Serves 2



**PESCATARIAN VERSION**

## INGREDIENTS

- 6 large green prawns (about 270g/9½oz)
- Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- Salt flakes, to taste
- Bread rolls, for serving

## BOTTARGA BUTTER

- 15g grated bottarga (½oz/1 tablespoon)
- 100g butter, at room temperature (3½oz/5 tablespoons)

## METHOD

Remove prawns from the fridge 30–60 minutes before cooking, to bring them to room temperature.

Meanwhile, make Bottarga Butter: Use a fork to mash the bottarga into the butter until they're well combined.

Spoon butter horizontally down the centre of a long strip of baking paper, fold the paper over and use a ruler to press against the side, pushing the butter into a log.

Roll up in the paper, twisting the ends to secure them, and refrigerate (or freeze) until needed.

Heat a barbecue or char-grill pan to medium-high.

Meanwhile, slice 6 discs of Bottarga Butter and set aside (freeze the rest for later).

Cut off and discard the prawn heads.

Place prawns on a chopping board on their backs and split down the underside almost all the way through without cutting through the shell.

Remove the digestive tracts, leaving any orange roe behind.

Turn them over and, with the heel of your hand, press firmly along the shell to flatten them out.

Brush shells with oil.

Arrange prawns in the pan, shell side down, in a single layer.

Sprinkle with salt and cook for about 3 minutes, depending on size, until flesh is just opaque.

Place prawns on a warmed platter.

Top with Bottarga Butter and serve with bread for soaking up all the delicious butter.



## Cozzula Muddizzosa



Bread is always on the Sardinian table at every meal.

Even between meals a plate of crisp pane carasau (also called carta di musica) tends to be there for snacking on as you pass by.

These simple little flat rolls are easy, delicious, keep for days and reheat really well in a warm oven.

In Sardinian dialect cozzula means 'bread' and muddizzosa means 'soft' and these rolls are usually wrapped in a cloth while cooling to keep them as soft as possible. I don't bother as I reheat them just before serving.

Traditionally cozzula muddizzosa are made with a sourdough starter, but yeast works just as well. I find dried yeast gives a more reliable result than fresh, which can sometimes be stale.

Sachets of dried yeast are usually 7g, so use half a sachet or double the recipe. If using fresh yeast, triple the weight (10g/1/3oz).

Store any leftover rolls in an air-tight container for a few days in a cool place (the fridge is fine especially when it's humid) or place inside a brown paper bag then into a zip-lock bag and freeze.



# Soft Potato Bread

Cozzula Muddizzosa

Makes 8 rolls



WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

## INGREDIENTS

- 250g floury potato (9oz)
- 1 teaspoon dried yeast (3.5g)
- 1 tablespoon lukewarm water (20ml)
- 250g baker's flour, plus extra for dusting (9oz/1⅔ cups)
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes, crushed

## METHOD

Wash potato and cook it in its skin in boiling salted water for about 40 minutes, until a wooden skewer can be inserted without any resistance. Drain well.

Meanwhile, mix the yeast with the lukewarm water, cover and set aside until it foams.

Place flour into a mixing bowl and add salt.

Pass potato through a potato ricer into the bowl, or peel and press through a fine strainer.

Mix until roughly combined.

Add yeast and mix with your hands to form a firm dough, then knead for about 5 minutes until smooth and elastic, ideally using an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook.

On a clean, lightly floured workbench, break dough into 8 equal-sized pieces, placing each one under a clean dry tea towel as you go.

One at a time, form each piece into a ball by stretching the dough down and tucking it underneath the base of itself to give a smooth surface.

Pat and roll into a 1cm-thick (½") disc (about 7–8cm/3" diameter) and place onto a lightly floured baking tray, spreading them out well. If not using a perforated tray, line it with baking paper before dusting it with flour.

Cover loosely with plastic wrap then a clean, dry tea towel and set aside in a warm place for about 2 hours, until they spring back when gently pressed.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 170°C (340°F).

Place tray into the oven and cook for about 15 minutes, until well coloured.

Remove from oven and set aside to cool.

### GIOVANNI'S TIP

If using two trays, swap their positions in the oven about halfway through the cooking so the rolls brown evenly.



## Zucchine Ripiene



Sardinians' love of stuffed vegetables is likely a remnant of the Arabic influence on the island.

This filling is great for any vegetables and, depending on the size of your zucchini, you may have some leftover

which you can use to fill more zucchini or other vegetables such as capsicum halves or quarters.

As well as a side dish, you could serve these stuffed zucchinis as a simple starter or use smaller zucchini or

squash as part of an antipasto platter.

Giovanni recommends eating any leftovers cold the next day with a slice of bread and an extra drizzle of olive oil, which is delicious!



# Stuffed Zucchini

*Zucchini Ripiene*

Serves 2–4 as a side dish



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 large zucchini (about 250g/9oz) or 2 smaller zucchini
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (20ml)
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 6 grape tomatoes, chopped (about 60g/2oz)
- 1 tablespoon sliced mint leaves
- 30g stale sourdough bread, roughly chopped (1oz)
- 1 egg
- 40g freshly grated Pecorino Sardo (1½oz)

## METHOD

Halve zucchini lengthways and use a teaspoon to hollow out most of the flesh, leaving just enough on the sides and base to form a cup strong enough to hold the filling.

Roughly chop zucchini flesh.

Preheat oven to 200°C (390°F).

Put oil, garlic and a good pinch of salt in a small saucepan.

Place over medium heat and cook for a minute or 2, until it starts to sizzle.

Add chopped zucchini and tomato and cook for about 5 minutes, until soft but not coloured.

Using a small food processor or stick blender, pulse the zucchini mixture with mint, bread, egg, salt and three-quarters of the Pecorino to combine well.

Fill zucchini cups with the mixture, mounding it up slightly, and place them on a baking paper-lined oven tray.

Sprinkle with remaining Pecorino.

Bake for about 20 minutes until zucchini is tender and cheese is well coloured.

Serve drizzled with oil.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

I find it easiest to use the teaspoon like a melon-baller to scoop most of the centre out of the zucchini, then carefully scrape it along the hollow from either end to smooth out the ridges.





I suspect these traditional Sardinian sweet treats came about as a way to use up the egg white leftover from making crema Catalana, another very popular Sardinian sweet.

The name means 'little white ones' and they are the most deliciously moreish meringues I've ever tasted!

Giovanni told me how his aunts used to work together to whisk the egg and sugar by hand using just two forks, passing the bowl between themselves as each one tired.

Then they'd cook the bianchini in the remaining warmth of the wood-fired oven that had been lit the previous day.

Bianchini are sweet, so a little goes a long way; store them in an airtight container for a week or more and enjoy one each evening with a grappa.

Remember to freeze the leftover egg yolks for your next crema Catalana.



# Almond Meringues

Bianchini

Makes about 20 pieces



WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO

## INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup blanched or slivered almonds (80g/3oz)
- 3 egg whites
- Pinch salt flakes, crushed
- 165g castor sugar (¾ cup/6oz)
- 1 small lemon

## METHOD

Preheat oven to 160°C (320°F).

Spread almonds on a baking tray and place in the oven for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly coloured and toasty.

Reduce oven to 100°C (215°F).

Chop almonds roughly and set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, using an electric mixer, whisk egg whites and salt for a couple of minutes until frothy.

With the mixer on low speed, slowly pour the sugar into the egg, then whisk on high speed for a few minutes until stiff peaks form.

Add cooled almonds and grate the lemon zest into the bowl. Fold them through the egg mixture.

Use two dessertspoons to spoon blobs of the mixture onto a baking paper-lined tray, leaving some space between each one.

Place in the oven for about 2 hours, until they're crusty on the outside and still slightly soft inside.

Remove from oven and set aside on the tray to cool.

Store in an air-tight container in a cool place (not refrigerated).

### GIOVANNI'S TIP

The easiest way to line a tray with baking paper is to brush it lightly with water first, so the paper stays in place without sliding around.





## Menu 3



Homemade Ricotta-style  
Cheese with Honey



Rainbow Trout with Olives  
& Rosemary



Green Beans with Mint &  
Garlic Dressing



Crema Catalana



From **BeInspired.au**





Primo sale is a fresh Italian cheese, sometimes resembling ricotta or cottage cheese, sometimes aged for a few weeks until it's firmer.

Traditionally it's made from sheep milk, though some versions today use cow milk or a mixture of cow, sheep and/or goat milk.

The name means 'first salting' because the salt is added to the milk before it's formed into curds and whey, when typically it's added later in the cheesemaking process.

At Pilu at Freshwater, Giovanni makes a ricotta-like primo sale to serve as a snack with aperitivi.

The milk is curdled with calcium lactate, available from health food stores and online; it's the same substance that often occurs as small crunchy crystals in aged hard cheeses.

You'll need muslin (or a similar thin cloth) to strain the cheese; a digital thermometer is handy too.

While this fresh style of primo sale is best eaten the day it's made, it keeps refrigerated for at least a week (I leave it wrapped in its cheesecloth). Giovanni serves primo sale drizzled with abbamele which he makes himself (see page 11).

This unique Sardinian honey product is rarely available outside Sardinia, so I use honey instead. Save 60g of your primo sale to use in the Seadas (see page 64).



# Fresh Cheese with Honey

*Primo Sale con Miele*

Makes about 400g/14oz (Serves 6 as a starter)



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 litre full-cream milk (2 US pints)
- 300ml single cream (1¼ cups)
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes, crushed, plus extra for sprinkling
- 1 tablespoon (12g/½oz) calcium lactate powder
- Pane carasau (carta di musica), for serving
- Extra virgin olive oil, for brushing
- Honey, for drizzling

## METHOD

Combine milk, cream and salt in a saucepan over a low-medium heat, stirring occasionally until it reaches 80–85°C (175–185°F); a digital thermometer is the best way to measure this, but if you don't have one, it's the point where steam just starts to appear when it's stirred.

Stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, sprinkle in the calcium lactate.

Increase heat to medium-high and bring to the boil.

Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes; it will separate into curds and whey.

Scoop curds into a muslin-lined strainer and leave to drain until cool.

Twist muslin to squeeze the curds lightly then refrigerate for at least an hour (overnight is fine).

Remove cheese from the fridge 20–30 minutes before serving.

Preheat oven to 180°C (355°F).

Place pane carasau on a baking tray, brush with oil, sprinkle with salt and place in the oven for 5–8 minutes, until lightly coloured.

Place a scoop of cheese on a plate, drizzle with honey and serve with pane carasau on the side.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

If you can't find calcium lactate or don't want to make your own cheese, use this recipe as inspiration for serving a good ricotta (such as the ones from Vannella).



## Trota con Olive e Rosmarino



Trout are abundant in the streams and creeks that flow across Sardinia.

Giovanni told me how, as a boy, he and his mates would go out into the hills around his village to catch trout by stunning them with electricity from a generator made from a modified pushbike dynamo.

The stunned fish would float to the surface and Giovanni and his mates would just scoop them out of the water.

He also said he'd known people to be electrocuted doing this, so I'm not recommending it!

This classic way of cooking freshwater fish, using just a few ingredients that most people will have on hand, is typical of the delicious simplicity of Sardinian cooking.

Ideally serve a vermentino with this dish and use a little of it in the cooking.



# Rainbow Trout with Olives & Rosemary

*Trota con Olive e Rosmarino*

Serves 2–4



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 x 300g (375g/10½oz) or 1 x 600g (1lb 5oz) rainbow trout gilled, gutted and scaled
- 1 green onion (scallion), finely sliced
- 1 clove garlic, finely sliced
- 1 sprig rosemary, leaves very finely chopped, plus extra for garnish
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 6 large green olives, cheeks sliced
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup dry white wine (125ml)
- Extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- Green Beans with Mint & Garlic Dressing, for serving (see [page 53](#))

## METHOD

Remove fish from the fridge 30–60 minutes before cooking.

Use paper towel to wipe the skin dry and wipe out the belly cavity.

Place the fish on the chopping board with their heads to the left and their bellies facing you.

Using a sharp knife, cut 4 slashes through to the bone into just one side of each fish, angled towards the tail.

Cover with a clean, dry tea towel and set aside to come to room temperature.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 180°C (355°F).

Place fish in an oiled baking dish, scored side up.

Scatter onion, garlic, rosemary, parsley and olive over the top.

Sprinkle with salt and a good grind of pepper.

Gently pour wine over and around the fish.

Place in the oven for 15–20 minutes (if small) or 25–30 minutes (if large), basting well a few times, until the flesh inside the scoring at the thickest part of the fish is just opaque all the way to the bone.

Remove from oven, cover loosely with foil or a clean cloth, and set aside for 5 minutes or so.

Arrange fish on a platter and garnish with a sprig or 2 of rosemary if you like.

Pour any cooking juices over the fish, drizzle with oil and serve.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

Giovanni says that whole fish should always be plated so that the head is to the left and the belly is closest to the diner, otherwise they look like they're swimming in the wrong direction!

So place the fish on the chopping board facing this way before scoring (not the other way around as I did in the video)!



## Fagiolini Verdi con Mentuccia e Aglio



There's an art to cooking green beans so that they're tender but still retain some bite – neither raw (crunchy) nor overcooked (mushy).

The key is to cook them quickly in plenty of rapidly boiling well-salted water then chill them immediately in plenty of well-iced water and serve them at room temperature.

The salt helps lock in the colour, as does cooling them quickly in iced water.

Hand-picked green beans, also sold as 'baby beans', are my favourites as they're small, straight and tender.



# Green Beans with Mint & Garlic Dressing

*Fagiolini Verdi con Mentuccia e Aglio*

Serves 2 as a side dish



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons fine cooking salt (10g/1/3oz)
- 120g baby green beans, topped and tailed (4 1/3oz)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (30ml)
- 1 tablespoon finely sliced mint leaves
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## METHOD

Add salt to 1 litre of water (2 US pints) and bring to the boil.

Add beans, return to the boil, then boil for 3–4 minutes, until tender and no longer squeaky.

Strain, put straight into iced water and leave until cool.

Meanwhile, combine oil, mint, garlic, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl.

Drain beans and use a clean cloth or paper towel to pat dry well.

Toss beans with the oil mixture.

Cover and set aside until needed.

Serve at room temperature.



# Menu 4



Roast Lamb Rump



Pan-Fried Salmon\*



Fregola & Olive Salad



Grilled Zucchini Flowers  
with Herb Dressing



Seadas



Cicciones  
with Pork Ragù



From **BelInspired.au**

\*Dietary option





## Sella di Agnello con Insalata di Fregola e Olive



Chefs hate overcooked meat, generally preferring to serve it rare or medium-rare.

Rump is an exception as it's a firmer cut that needs to be cooked beyond medium-rare to break down some of the fibres and make it tender.

Giovanni recommends serving rump cooked to medium and says the best way to ensure this is using a probe thermometer.

The layer of fat on a lamb rump is called the cap, and you can usually buy rump either with this left on or removed.

As the melting fat helps to marinate the meat while it's cooking, it's best to buy it cap-on if you can, trim some off if you like but leave most of it on to flavour the meat and keep it moist.

You can always discard the remaining fat before serving or eating if you prefer.



# Lamb Rump with Fregola & Olive Salad

*Sella di Agnello con Insalata di Fregola e Olive*

Serves 2



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 350g lamb rump, cap on (12½oz)
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (30ml)
- Fregola & Olive Salad, for serving (see [page 60](#))

## METHOD

Remove lamb from the fridge 1–2 hours before cooking.

Trim off any of the skin or membrane on top of the fat, leaving most of the fat on for cooking (even if you won't be eating it).

Cover and set aside to come to room temperature.

Preheat oven to 200°C (390°F).

Sprinkle lamb generously all over with salt, patting it in.

Heat an oven-proof frying pan over a medium–high heat.

Add oil then lamb, fat-side down, and cook for 2–3 minutes, until fat is well browned.

Turn and cook the other side for about 2 minutes, until well browned.

Place pan in the oven for 10–15 minutes, until a meat thermometer shows 58–60°C/136–140°F (for medium).

Remove lamb from the oven to a rack over a plate (but don't turn the oven off). Cover plate loosely with foil and set aside for about 6 minutes. Set pan aside with a cloth over the handle as a reminder that it's very hot.

Remove foil from the lamb, return it to the frying pan (be careful the handle will still be hot) and place it back in the oven for a couple of minutes to just warm through.

Meanwhile, arrange Fregola & Olive Salad on a lipped platter.

Remove lamb from the oven to a chopping board.

Place the frying pan over a low–medium heat and place a tea towel over the handle as a reminder that it's hot. Add a good grind of pepper and heat the cooking juices, reducing them a little if there's a lot.

Meanwhile, slice lamb lengthways (against the grain) into about 6 slices and arrange on top of the fregola.

Drizzle cooking juices over the lamb, sprinkle with salt, drizzle with oil and serve.



## Salmone con Insalata di Fregola e Olive



The fregola salad that Giovanni serves with baked lamb is just as delicious with seafood, especially beautiful pink salmon.

In the lamb video, Giovanni explains how leaving the fat on the meat while cooking helps to flavour it and keep it moist.

The same is true for the skin on fish, especially oily fish like salmon.

If you prefer not to eat the skin, you can always remove it before serving – in which case serve it skin side down as the flesh side will be more attractive.

This baked salmon is a great dinner party dish as it's easy and impressive and most of the work can be done ahead of time.

Starting fish in a pan then finishing it in the oven is a chef trick for keeping it moist.

You could just pan-fry it if you prefer. In which case, leave it cooking on the skin side for as long as possible and only turn it over to just sear the flesh side.



# Salmon with Fregola & Olive Salad

*Salmon con Insalata di Fregola e Olive*

Serves 2



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 x 180g pieces salmon fillet, skin on, pin-boned (6½oz)
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (30ml)
- Fregola & Olive Salad, for serving (see [page 60](#))

## METHOD

Remove salmon from the fridge 30–60 minutes before cooking.

Cover and set aside to come to room temperature.

Preheat oven to 180°C (355°F).

Sprinkle fish skin generously with salt.

Heat an oven-proof frying pan over medium–high heat.

Add oil then fish, skin-side down, and cook for about 3 minutes, until well browned.

Sprinkle flesh with salt, turn fish over and place pan in oven for 3–5 minutes, until cooked to your liking; depending on the thickness, 3 minutes should still be pink in the centre, 5 minutes should be cooked all the way through.

Remove from oven to a warmed plate and set aside.

Meanwhile, arrange Fregola & Olive Salad on a lipped platter.

Place fish on top, skin side up.

Sprinkle with salt, drizzle with oil and serve.



## Insalata di Fregola e Olive



Fregola (or fregula in Giovanni's dialect) is a reminder of the Arabic influence in Sardinia.

Slightly larger than North African couscous, it may have been introduced to Sardinia by the Ligurian fishermen who moved from Tabarka to Isola San Pietro in the early 1700s.

The name fregola comes from the Latin *fricare*, meaning 'to rub' (related to our word 'friction'), as it's made in

a similar way to couscous by rubbing hard durum wheat with a little water in the bottom of a broad, flat-bottomed bowl to form tiny balls of dough called fregola or slightly larger ones called fregolone.

Here the similarity with couscous ends, as fregola is then slowly oven-dried, giving it a lovely nutty aroma and flavour and an uneven colour as some pieces toast more than others.

Always buy authentic fregola with this signature uneven colour.

When cooking fregola 'rain' it into the cooking water ('a pioggia' in Italian) the same way you do with polenta, so that it doesn't clump together.

Fregola is delicious in salads like this one, it's also popular in soups and stews, or cooked risottata-style, stirred with the cooking liquid or sauce in the same way as risotto.



# Fregola & Olive Salad

*Insalata di Fregola e Olive*

Serves 2 as a side dish



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 75g fregola (2½oz)
- 1 small sprig rosemary, leaves picked
- 1 sprig oregano or marjoram, leaves picked
- 1 sprig mint, leaves picked
- 1 small orange
- 5 large green olives, pitted, finely chopped
- 1 small clove garlic, germ removed, finely sliced
- 1 tablespoon red agrodolce vinegar (20ml)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (40ml)
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

## METHOD

Bring a large saucepan of well-salted water to the boil, using 10g salt/litre water (½oz salt/2 US pints water).

Rain the fregola into the water, stir well and boil for about 10 minutes, until al dente (see recommended cooking time on packet).

Meanwhile, slice the herbs finely and place into a large mixing bowl.

Grate the rind of the orange into the bowl (if you have a large orange, use about half).

Add remaining ingredients and toss to combine well. Set aside until fregola is cooked.

Strain fregola well and set aside to cool a little.

While fregola is still warm, add it to the bowl and toss to combine well, cover and set aside.

Serve at room temperature.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

Always use a very sharp knife to slice herbs. Roll the herb leaves together and slice them finely rather than chopping them too brutally, which will result in crushing the flavour into the board.



## Fiori di Zucca alla Griglia



This dish is great as a side dish, starter or part of an antipasti. The dressing recipe makes more than you'll need, but it's hard to blend a smaller quantity.

Store leftover dressing in the fridge and use it as inspiration for grilling any seasonal vegetables, including those you'd typically serve raw such as lettuce.

Italians often serve lettuces cooked, especially the ones with firmer leaves like radicchio, endive and witlof, which are abundant in winter.

Asparagus spears are ideal in late spring to early summer and, in late summer to early autumn, pretty zucchini flowers are perfect.

There are two types of zucchini flowers: female attached to a baby zucchini, and male with just a thin stem.

I like the female ones for this recipe as you get to enjoy the different textures of the baby vegetable and the flowers' petals.



# Grilled Zucchini Flowers

*Fiori di Zucca alla Griglia*

Serves 2 as a side dish



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 6 female zucchini flowers
- Extra virgin olive oil, for rolling
- Salt flakes, to taste

## HERB DRESSING

- ⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil (80ml)
- 2 tablespoons finely sliced flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 sprig oregano, leaves picked
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (20ml)
- Salt flakes, to taste

## METHOD

Heat BBQ or char-grill plate to medium.

Meanwhile, remove the stamen from inside the zucchini flowers, roll the zucchini and flower in oil and set aside.

Make Herb Dressing: Use a stick blender or small food processor to blitz all ingredients together until well combined.

Place zucchini flowers onto the grill and cook for 7 minutes or so, turning as needed to colour all sides. Depending on their shape, you may need to use a spatula or egg lift to gently press the baby zucchini onto the grill until they soften slightly.

Arrange on a serving platter, drizzle with some of the Herb Dressing, sprinkle with salt and serve more dressing on the side for dipping if you like.





These delicious pastries are the classic Sardinian dessert, popular all over the island.

They were one of the first Sardinian dishes Giovanni introduced Sydney diners to on the menu of his first restaurant, Cala Luna.

They were my introduction to Sardinian food and I've loved them ever since!

Giovanni's refined version is filled with ricotta and sultanas, though traditionally it's a shepherd's dish filled with young Pecorino flavoured with lots of lemon zest.

I've taken inspiration from both and added some of the primo sale from Menu 3 to the Pecorino filling. Giovanni says such a combination is popular in Sardinia today.

A set of different sized cookie cutters is ideal for making seadas, or improvise by cutting around small bowls or cups of different sizes.



# Deep-fried Cheese-filled Pastries

Seadas

Serves 2 (makes 4 pieces)



**WATCH THE RECIPE VIDEO**

## INGREDIENTS

- 60g Primo Sale (see page 49) or well-drained ricotta (2oz) (see Roberta's Tip)
- 60g freshly grated young Pecorino Sardo (2oz)
- 1 tablespoon castor sugar (18g/ $\frac{2}{3}$ oz)
- 1 small lemon
- Seadas Pastry (see page 26)
- Plain flour, for dusting
- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- Honey, for drizzling

## METHOD

Place Primo Sale or ricotta, Pecorino and sugar into a mixing bowl

Grate the lemon zest into the bowl then mash together with a fork until well combined.

Roll Seadas Pastry into a rectangle about 2mm-thick ( $\frac{1}{10}$ " ) on a clean, dry workbench, lightly dusted with flour only if necessary.

Use a 7.5cm (3") cutter to cut out 4 discs and a slightly larger cutter (about 8.5cm/ $3\frac{1}{3}$ " ) to cut another 4.

Divide cheese mixture between the smaller discs, mounding it into the centre.

Top with remaining (larger) discs and press gently around each mound of filling to extract as much air as possible.

Press well with the tines of a fork to seal the edges together.

Gently mark the dough around each mound of filling with a smaller cutter (about 6.5cm/ $2\frac{1}{2}$ " ), then use a wheel pastry cutter to cut out the seadas (or press them out with the cookie cutter), placing them on a lightly floured tray.

Heat oil for deep-frying, it's ready when small bubbles appear around the handle of a wooden spoon inserted into it.

Fry seadas, in batches if necessary, for a few minutes, until golden all over.

Drain on paper towel on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, warm honey in a small saucepan.

Serve seadas drizzled with the warm honey.

### ROBERTA'S TIP

If using ricotta, ensure it's well drained otherwise it may make the dough soggy; if it's very fresh and moist leave it to drain in a sieve or muslin for a few hours in the fridge over a bowl.



# Running Order – Menus 1 & 2

## Menu 1

### RUNNING ORDER

#### Day Before:

- Make pasta dough (make double and freeze half to make cicciones)
- Make pesto
- Make pomegranate sorbet (if serving)

#### A Few Hours Before:

- For pasta
  - Cook onion
  - Prep other ingredients
  - Make lombrichi
- For chicken
  - Remove chicken/snapper from fridge
  - Make stuffing & stuff chicken/snapper
  - Soak rocket in cold water
  - Make salad dressing
  - Assemble salad without dressing

#### Just Before Serving:

- Salt chicken/snapper and put in oven
- Boil lombrichi & finish pasta sauce
- Serve lombrichi
- Dress salad & serve with chicken/snapper



### SUGGESTED RECIPE

Pomegranate Sorbet

From **BeInspired.au**

## Menu 2

### RUNNING ORDER

#### Day Before:

- Make bottarga butter
- Make bread dough
- Make bianchini

#### A Few Hours Before:

- Return bread dough to room temperature & bake
- Remove steak/prawns from fridge
- Prep zucchini (can be cooked and reheated just before serving)
- Heat & platter pane carasau (if serving)

#### Just Before Serving:

Reheat bread rolls (& zucchini)  
Cook steak/prawns



### SUGGESTED RECIPE

Pane Carasau  
with Rosemary & Olives

From **BeInspired.au**

**PRINT FRIENDLY RECIPES**



# Running Order – Menus 3 & 4

## Menu 3

### RUNNING ORDER

#### Day Before:

- Make cheese
- Make crema Catalana (if serving)

#### A Few Hours Before:

- Blanch green beans & prep dressing
- Assemble trout in baking tray with other ingredients

#### Just Before Serving:

- Heat pane carasau for primo
- Place trout in oven
- Plate & serve cheese while trout is cooking
- Toss green beans with dressing



### SUGGESTED RECIPE

Crema Catalana

From **BeInspired.au**

## Menu 4

### RUNNING ORDER

#### Day Before:

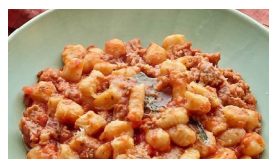
- Make seadas pastry & filling
- Make cicciones, toss with oil and refrigerate (if serving)
- Make pork ragù for cicciones (if serving)

#### A Few Hours Before:

- Remove lamb (or salmon) from fridge
- Make fregola salad
- Prep zucchini flowers & make herb dressing
- Assemble seadas

#### Just Before Serving:

- Reheat pork ragù & blanch cicciones (if serving)
- Cook lamb
- While it's resting, grill & dress zucchini flowers
- Serve lamb
- Deep-fry & serve seadas



### SUGGESTED RECIPE

Cicciones with Pork Ragù

From **BeInspired.au**

**PRINT FRIENDLY RECIPES**



# Thank You To These Awesome Producers

Thanks to Giovanni Pilu (@chefgiovannipilu) from Pilu at Freshwater (@pilurestaurant) for the inspiration.

Good food is as much about awesome producers and provedores as it is about kitchen skills. Here are some of the producers and brands I use and recommend for these recipes.



## **ALTO Olives**

Robert Armstrong's commitment to his land and olive groves, in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range near Crookwell, has led to ALTO becoming Australia's most awarded extra virgin olive oil. See Robert's guided extra virgin olive oil tasting [here](#). His agrodolce (bitter-sweet) merlot and chardonnay vinegars are the best Australian vinegars I've found too. ALTO is at Carriageworks Market every Saturday.  
[@altoolives](#)

## **Euro Concepts**

Roberto Dessanti carries a good range of Italian specialty items, along with a whole lot of wines, at his Silverwater warehouse. You can order online too.  
[@euroconcepts](#)

## **Formaggi Ocello**

Carmelo & Sonja Ocello have the best range of specialty cheese I've seen this side of Europe.  
[@formaggiocello](#)

## **Frank's Fruit Market**

John and Bree Velluti sell the best range of Italian fruit and veg from this 50 year old greengrocers at Haberfield in Sydney's Inner West.  
[@franksfruitmarket](#)

## **Game Farm**

The Jalaty family produces game birds – including the spatchcock (poussin) I cook so often – using small-scale methods on their farm in Arcadia.  
[@gamefarm](#)

## **GetFish**

I source my seafood from Frank Theodore whose family has been in the seafood business for many years. You can order all your favourite seafood online.  
[@getfishau](#)

## **Harkola**

This impressive warehouse – with a huge array of bulk nuts, spices, legumes and more – is also the importer of Cortas and other leading Middle Eastern brands. It's the best place for the freshest nuts and dried fruit. Well worth a visit.  
[@harkola.au](#)

## **Lario**

Gianmarco Balestrini imports the best fregola, carnaroli rice, polenta taragna, dried porcini and other excellent specialty Italian products.  
[@lariofinefoodpurveyor](#)

## **New Leaf Nursery**

If you love cooking, it's great to grow your favourite herbs in planter boxes or the garden. Dan and his team at this Ingleside nursery stock the best range of edible plants I've seen anywhere. It's worth a visit wherever you live.  
[@newleafnursery](#)



## Thank You To These Awesome Producers



### **Nomad/La Boqueria**

I love the chorizo and other small goods from this Sydney-based producer. They also import the best olives from boutique Spanish producer Losada, cured in natural brine for great flavour and texture.

[@losadaolives](#)  
[@laboqueriaau](#)

### **Olsson's Salt**

Alex Olsson's family has been making solar sea salt since 1948. They're Australia's oldest family-owned and operated sea salt producer and I love their pure Australian salt flakes and gorgeous flavoured salt rubs. Find them at Carriageworks Market every Saturday.

[@olssonssalt](#)

### **Parisi**

Father and son team, Chris and Julian Parisi, are at Flemington Produce Markets every day as well as working with an extensive network of growers. Order online the same fruit and veg used by chefs like Peter Gilmore,

Josh Niland and the Merivale Group.

[@parisiaustralia](#)

### **Pepe Saya**

Artisanal butter maker Pepe Saya batch churns single origin cream to produce the best quality butter, buttermilk, ghee and crème fraîche. At Carriageworks Market every Saturday.

[@pepesaya](#)

### **The Gourmet Potato**

Annette and Wentworth Hill work with small producers to source the best potatoes I've ever tasted. Praised by chefs like Neil Perry, they're available at Carriageworks Market every Saturday.

[@thegourmetpotato](#)

### **The Red Spoon**

This shop at The Cannery in Rosebery is a treasure trove of kitchen kit and hard-to-find gourmet goodies – including calcium lactate for cheesemaking. They also sell online.

[@redspoonco](#)

### **Vannella Cheese**

Master Cheesemaker Giuseppe Minoia and his team are as passionate about cheese as I am! A great place to buy ricotta-style cheese when you don't want to make your own. At Carriageworks Market every Saturday.

[@vannellacheese](#)

### **Vic's Meat**

I source my meat from father and son, Vic and Anthony Puharich, who have been supplying Sydney's finest restaurants for over 25 years. You can order all your meat and poultry online, including a good range of smallgoods.

[@vics.meat](#)

## Measurements

All cup and spoon measurements used are Australian standard:

1 cup = 250ml

1 tablespoon (**tbsp**) = 20ml

1 teaspoon (**tsp**) = 5ml

To measure in grams, refer to the weight:volume tables for dry goods/meat or for fruit and vegetables.

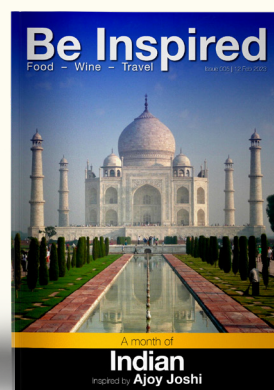
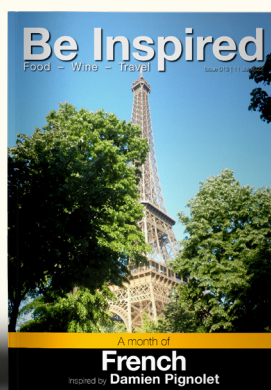
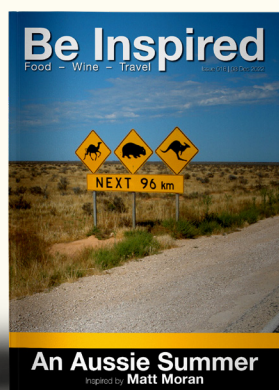




# Be Inspired

Be Inspired makes it easy for everyone to explore new cuisines and ingredients through small group food & wine tours, events and online cooking classes.

**Online cooking classes** include detailed written recipes, step-by-step videos and a full-colour eMagazine with extra recipes and food, wine and travel information.



[www.BeInspired.au](http://www.BeInspired.au)