

Food in Abruzzo - Italy

The local word for chili pepper is diavolicchio or diavolillo and it is the protagonist of nearly all Abruzzesi dishes. It is in the local pasta dish maccheroni alla chitarra, in the succulent 'ndocca 'ndocca, as well as in simpler pasta sauces and all pork products.

The Abruzzese version of brodetto, the fish soup made along the length of the Adriatic coast, is flavored with tomatoes, garlic, onion and bay leaves. Unlike other versions of brodetto it contains no saffron, which is surprising since the crocus from which saffron is extracted is extensively cultivated near the capital of the region, Aquila. In fact saffron appears in only one local dish, scapece - pickled fish, which is fried and then preserved under saffron- flavored white vinegar in wooden barrels.

The origins of this dish go back over the centuries to the Greeks, who landed on the coast but never penetrated into the interiors as they did in other regions.

Pasta-making was once a craft but is now a large-scale industry, with local brands in strong competition with those from Naples. It is the tradition that has made the modern product so successful, as well as the high- quality durum-wheat grown locally.

Foods of Abruzzo

Peperoncino This red chili pepper, known to the people of Abruzzo as diavolino, or little devil, is a key ingredient in the local cuisine. It spices up everything from brodetto alla pescarese, a fish soup made in the fishing port city of Pescara, to the time-honored spaghetti aglio, olio, e peperoncino (spaghetti with olive oil, garlic and chili).

Maccheroni alla chitarra is an egg pasta that is made with a chitarra, a rectangular beech-wood frame, over which fine metal strings, like those on a guitar, are stretched. The thinly rolled pasta dough is laid over the strings and pushed through with a rolling pin, cutting the dough into uniformly fine, long strands. Traditionally, the maccheroni is served with a lamb, tomato and peperoncino sauce, sprinkled with the local Pecorino cheese.

Saffron is another seasoning that makes an appearance on the Abruzzi menu. The Abruzzi is Italy's principal source of saffron, with the majority of it grown for export. Worth more than its weight in gold - it takes approximately 130,000 flowers to produce just two pounds - saffron is used respectfully and sparingly by judicious Abruzzese cooks.

Parozzo is a famous local dessert, a soft cake made with flour, butter, eggs, sugar, and almonds, covered with chocolate. It was a favorite of the poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, a native of Pescara, who supposedly gave the cake its name (which derives from pan rozzo, a round bread of the countryside) and sang its praises in verse.

Confetti: The town of Sulmona, Italy's confectionary capital since the Renaissance, is known for producing the country's best confetti, or sugar-coated Jordan almonds. These tasty, colorful treats are transformed (using silk, plastic, colored paper, wire, and other accessories) into flowers, blossoms, exotic fruits, and many other imaginative arrangements. Confetti are a common sight at weddings and christenings, where they are given to guests in elaborate bags festooned with ribbons.

Cent'herbe is the most powerful of all Italian liqueurs. Emerald green in color, with a high alcoholic content, it was first produced by herbalists of Abruzzo from various plants indigenous to the alpine region of Abruzzo; hence its name, 'one hundred herbs';

The old sheep is boiled in water for 8/9 hours, according to the age of the sheep, until the meat pulls from the bones, in a big pot (cotturo in Abbruzzese)...in this way the sheep loses the greases and becomes tender... then it is put in another pot in layers... sheep, herbs, potatoes - sheep, herbs, potatoes - and so on and it is cooked for one hour... the herbs??? about ten (parsley, carrot and so on, some are secret)

[First, find your sheep](#) - Food an article published: Jan 19, 2008 - The Times - South Africa

Agnello alle olive: lamb cooked in an earthenware pot with olive oil, black olives, lemon, oregano, hot peppers.

Cicoria, cacio e uova: soup of wild chicory and other vegetables with salt pork in chicken broth thickened with eggs and grated pecorino.

Coda di rospo alla cacciatore: monkfish cooked with garlic, rosemary, anchovies, peppers.

Lasagne abruzzese: pasta sheets with a peppery meat and tomato sauce.

Maccheroni alla chitarra: noodles are often served with a ragout of lamb stewed in wine and olive oil with tomatoes, garlic, bay leaf and peppers.

Mazzarelle d'agnello: lamb's lung and innards wrapped in beet greens or chard and braised in white wine.

Indocca: pungent stew of pork ribs, feet, ears and rind with rosemary, bay leaf, peppers and vinegar.

Pizza rustica: pork sausage, mozzarella, eggs and Parmigiano Reggiano baked in a pie.

Polpi in purgatorio: octopus cooked with tomato, garlic, parsley and diavolicchio.

Scapeco di Vasto: pieces of raw fish, such as ray and smooth hound shark, preserved in earthenware vases with salt, chili peppers and saffron.

Scrippelle 'mbusse or 'nfusse: fried crepes coated or filled with pecorino and served in chicken broth.

Timballo di crespelle: crepes layered with spinach, artichokes ground meat, chicken giblets, mozzarella and grated Parmigiano Reggiano baked in an elaborate mold.

Virtù#251; soup of Teramo that according to legend was made by seven damsels who contributed various ingredients, including pieces of pork, beans, peas, greens, herbs, carrots, garlic, onions, tomato and pasta.

Zuppa di cardi: soup of giant cardoons from L'Aquila with tomatoes and salt pork.

Zuppa di lenticchie e castagne: tiny mountain lentils and fresh chestnuts in a soup with tomatoes, salt pork and herbs.

Abruzzo Recipes:

[Agnello Agrassato](#) - Lamb Stew

[Bucatini all'Amatriciana](#)

[Cinghiale all'agrodolce](#) - Wild Boar in Sweet and Sour Sauce

[Fegatelli di maiale allo spiedo](#) - Pork Liver on the Spit

[Lepre al vino rosso](#) - Hare in Civet

[Porchetta](#) - Roast Suckling Pig

[Zuppa di pesce \(brodetto\)](#) - Fish stew

About the Author

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