

POLENTA

The local stone ground flour is the base ingredient for polenta. The key to obtain a nicely flavoured polenta is slow cooking it in a copper pot, stirring with a wooden stick, if possible using a wood-burning stove. For centuries, polenta has represented the main dish for Bergamo, a peasant food often served as main and only course in farming families, from the plain to the valleys.

POLENTA TARAGNA

To turn a "regular" polenta into *polenta taragna*, it is fundamental to add generous pieces of cheese like Formai de Mut DOP, Bitto DOP or Branzi a few moments before polenta is ready. The name "taragna" probably derives from the word *tarèl*, which indicates the long stick used to stir polenta and to blend it with cheese.



BERGAMO UNESCO CREATIVE CITY OF GASTRONOMY

Bergamo was designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2019, thanks to its excellent and unique dairy and agri-food products.

A unique combination of anthropological expressions that make up the identity, history know-how and economy of a community, a culture linked to a tangible and intangible heritage.

A RECORD-SETTING PROVINCE

Bergamo and its province boast a very peculiar record, being the European area to produce the highest number of D.O.P. (P.D.O.: Protected Designation of Origin) certified kinds of cheese: nine.

No other European or other territory has such a variety of cheeses that differ in type, shape, seasoning and taste.



THE MEAL IS SERVED

CASONCELLI DELLA BERGAMASCA CASONÈI DE LA BERGAMASCA

Fresh stuffed pasta similar to ravioli, traditionally served with melted butter, bacon, garlic, sage and grated cheese. The filling consists of dry bread, egg, Grana Padano, salami, beef, amaretto biscuits, raisins, pears, spices, lemon zest, garlic and parsley. Casoncelli were invented in order to use the remains of the roast and appeared successfully on middle-class and aristocratic tables during the 18th Century.

SCARPINOCC DI PARRE

The name of this typical raviolo from Parre, a village located in Alta Valle Seriana, probably derives from the local rag shoes (*scarpinocc*) that were used by local farmers until a few decades ago. Scarpinocc represent a peculiarity of the local culture, for they have always been served during all kinds of celebration. They differ from Casoncelli, as the filling does not contain any kind of meat.

FORMAI DE MUT DELL'ALTA VAL BREMBANA DOP

In dialect, the name means "mountain cheese", the word *Mut* refers to the alpine pastures in Alta Valle Brembana. This aged semi-cooked curd cheese, which is produced only with raw cow's milk, has a slightly salted and delicate flavour. It is traditionally served with polenta and Valcalepio wine, white if the cheese is fresh, red or reserve red if it is ripe.

STRACHITUNT DOP

Literally "rounded Stracchino", this raw curd cheese is produced through natural marbling, exclusively in the villages of Taleggio, Vedeseta, Gerosa and Bello. The peculiarity of this cow's milk cheese originates from the mix of the curd produced in the evening with the one produced during the day. The taste is aromatic, intense and can be sweeter or spicier depending on its ageing.

TALEGGIO DOP

This cheese, born in Val Taleggio, is made with cow's milk and has very ancient origins (10-11th Century). It belongs to the family of Stracchino cheeses. Together with other cheeses, it used to be very appreciated as a bargaining chip. When ripening is extended, Taleggio gets softer under the rind and its sweet, slightly flavoured and sour taste becomes stronger. It is perfect when served with polenta.

THE CHEESE TABLE



BRANZI

Its name derives from Branzi, a small village located in Alta Valle Brembana, that once hosted a well known cheese market. This soft semi-cooked curd cheese is produced with full-fat, raw cow's milk. It tastes sweet and delicate and gets spicier and stronger as the ageing goes on.

CAPRINI DELLA BERGAMASCA

This term indicates all kinds of caprino cheese, which are exclusively produced with whole goat's milk. They vary in taste and scent. Caprini are produced inside the province of Bergamo, especially in the high hills and in the mountains.

FIURÌ O FIURIT

Obtained from cow's milk, it is the first cream that emerges when whey is boiled (also known as "ricotta flower"). Creamy and white, its taste is very pleasant and slightly aromatic.

FORMAGGELLE

These semi-cooked curd cheeses, made with cow's milk, are typically produced in the valleys of Bergamo. Their flavour depends on the area of production. In dialect the word *formagèla* means "small cheese". Particularly appreciated are Formagella from Val di Scalve and Formagella Valseriana.

GRANA PADANO DOP

Produced with cow's milk, each cheese wheel must weigh at least 24 kilograms and is aged at least 9 months. It was created nearly 900 years ago by the Cistercian monks and named after its grainy texture.

PROVOLONE VALPADANA DOP

Cow's-milk cheese, *a pasta filata* (stretched-curd), sweet or spicy depending on its ageing, which is also produced in a smoked variety. Its origins date back to the period after the Italian Unification (1861), when some southern dairy farmers moved to Northern Italy.

QUARTIROLO LOMBARDO DOP

This cow's-milk, slightly sweet and sour with edible rind cheese, has been produced since the 10th Century. Its name refers to the fourth annual cutting of the grass, which was eaten by the cows during their return to the stables at the end of the summer.

SALVA CREMASCO DOP

Soft cow's-milk cheese with raw curd. Its taste, which is sweet at the beginning, gets slightly salty and sour in a very balanced way. It was created in order to save (*Salvare* in Italian) the spring milk surplus.

BITTO DOP

Mountain-pasture cheese, made with cow's milk during the summer, with 10% goat's milk usually added. Its intense taste depends on its ageing period that can last up to 8-9 years. It is likely that its name refers to the Celtic word *bitu*, which means "eternal".

GORGONZOLA DOP

Cow's-milk cheese with typical greenish-blue marbling. It belongs to the group of Stracchino cheeses and its origins are thousand-year old. Its name derives from the city of Gorgonzola in Lombardy.

AGRÌ DI VALTORTA

Its production has always been typical of the village of Valtorta. Fresh, raw curd, delicate and aromatic flavoured cheese, it is made with whole cow's or goat's milk and hand kneaded. Today it is a Slow Food Presidium.

TORTA OROBICA

Soft, raw curd cheese, produced with cow's milk. It comes exclusively from farms within the province of Bergamo.

STRACCHINO BRONZONE

Sweet to the taste, slightly sour and buttery, this is an excellent soft cow's-milk cheese produced on the hills between Endine Lake and Iseo Lake. It is still hand-produced to this day.

SCALET

Old artisanal production from Alta Val Seriana. This raw, cut-off-pyramid shaped cheese has a delicate taste and is produced with cow's milk.

STRACCHINO

Stracchino cheese has ancient origins and is still produced everywhere in the whole territory of Bergamo. It seems like the name could derive from the dialect term *stracch*, which means "tired", for it was produced at the end of the summer by tired cows coming down from the alpine pastures. It is a soft, sweet and delicate cheese with raw, white curd.

STRACCHINO ALL'ANTICA DELLE VALLI OROBICHE

To preserve this unique artisanal cheese, made with raw whole cow's milk, Slow Food created the Presidium for Orobic Valleys' Traditional Stracchino in 2010. According to its product specifications, this Stracchino can only be produced through the ancient method *a munta calda*, with freshly milked milk. This tasty, slightly spicy cheese, very creamy under its rind, can be considered the ancestor of Taleggio.





MOSCATO DI SCANZO DOCG

The production of this DOCG (Controlled and Guarantee Denomination of Origin) wine, according to its specifications, is allowed only on the hills of the village of Scanzorosciate. Its harvest takes place in October, the grapes are left to dry from 20 to 50 days on trellises in rooms under 15 degrees temperature. After a minimum period of two years ageing, the wine can be bottled. Its alcohol content varies from 15 to 18 degrees. It is perfect if served with a dry dessert or a spicy cheese.

POLENTA E OSEI

This is the best known dessert from Bergamo. It resembles one of the traditional dishes of the local cuisine: polenta and birds. This dessert is a sponge cake shaped like a half sphere filled with butter, chocolate and nut cream with a small addition of rum. The cake is then covered with yellow marzipan and dusted with yellow sugar crystals that recreate the grainy texture of polenta. Marzipan chocolate birds are placed on the top.



TORTA DI TREVIGLIO

At the beginning of the 1990s, this cake won a competition held in occasion of the celebration of Madonna delle Lacrime, Treviglio's patron Saint. Thanks to its simple, natural and traditional ingredients, it has become so famous that it is now produced all year long. Delicious and flavoured, this can be considered the typical "grandma's cake", as it is made with shortcrust pastry, eggs, vanilla flavouring and almonds.

A SWEET LAND

LARDO

Made with fat pig meat, the ageing of Lardo takes 60 days, followed by other 30 days of maceration in a white wine infusion. Lardo is normally sweet, has a soft consistency that melts once you taste it. In the past it represented a significant calories source in farmers' nutrition.

PANCETTA

Pancetta is made with fresh pork, its taste is sweet and delicate, slightly spicy. It can be served fresh with bread, and used as well as an ingredient for sauces and seasonings.

SALAME BERGAMASCO

Salame is a typical product of Bergamo's cuisine, as it has been produced since ancient times with fresh meat derived from all parts of the pig. The mixture is enriched with black pepper, red wine, garlic and spices, then it is stuffed into natural pork casings, hand-tied and hung on a cellar ceiling, so that the casing enriches itself with mould which gives it its unique and delicious taste. Its consistency is doughy and compact, its taste delicate, sweet and savory.

VALCALEPIO DOC

The DOC-labeled Valcalepio wines are:
WHITE: straw yellow coloured, delicate scent, dry taste, perfect if served with fish.
RED: ruby red coloured, intense scent, full and enduring, perfect if served with meat and polenta.
RESERVE RED: deep ruby red coloured, intense scent, dry and rich taste, perfect if served with red meat
MUSCAT STRAW: ruby red coloured, aromatic and intense scent, sweet and harmonious, perfect with desserts.

TORTA DONIZETTI

In 1948, upon the 100th death anniversary of Bergamo's world renowned composer Gaetano Donizetti, the historical local pastry shop Balzer created this dessert. It is a soft, ring-shaped cake, very delicate to the taste, made with a traditional dough: flour, eggs, sugar, butter and yeast. Pineapple, candied apricots, Maraschino liquor, vanilla are then added, and icing sugar dusts the top of this cake.

MIELE DELLA BERGAMASCA

The variety of territories of Bergamo's area, which stretches from the plain to the mountains, allows a wide production of honey. They are characterized by different colours, scents and taste: acacia, chestnut, rhododendron, linden, dandelion, honeydew and wildflower honey. Its peculiar connection to the territory is reflected in a very traditional production, which is distributed through typical markets and served in the menus of local restaurants, often accompanying cheeses.



THE BUTCHER'S ART

COTECHINO DELLA BERGAMASCA

Cotechino is produced with different types of fresh minced pork, kneaded together with black pepper, wine, spices, flavourings and fresh garlic. The mixture is then stuffed into its casing. Cotechino is usually consumed fresh and it is one of the most characteristic dishes of Bergamo, together with polenta. It can be served roasted, grilled or boiled.

SALSICCIA DELLA BERGAMASCA

This sausage is typical of the rural tradition and it is better known as *loanghina de la bergamasca*. It is produced with fresh pork mixed with salt, wine and spices. It can be cooked in different ways and served with a large variety of side dishes.

TESTINA BERGAMASCA

It was invented in order to reuse the less refined parts of the pig. As it is cooked, it doesn't need neither drying nor ageing, and it can be eaten after 48 hours. Its taste is very aromatic.

TERRE DEL COLLEONI DOC

These DOC (Controlled Denomination of Origin) labeled wines are obtained from the vinification of grapes coming from vineyard located on the hills or at the foot of the hills in Bergamo's province. This DOC wine is extremely versatile and includes 14 varieties of red and white wines. Its name derives from Bartolomeo Colleoni, a legendary warlord born at the end of 15th Century in Solza, a village located on Bergamo's side of river Adda.

SCAROLA DEI COLLI DI BERGAMO

A rare variety of escarole, called Scarola dei Colli, is grown on the hills of Bergamo. Its peculiarity is the whitening of its leaves: in October every tuft is tied up so that its inner leaves are not exposed to the light. With the arrival of the cold weather the plants are moved to cellars where the lack of light prevents the leaves from becoming green. This escarole is considered a delicacy.

OLIO D'OLIVA DEL SEBINO

The territory of Iseo Lake (which is also called Sebino), on the eastern side of the Province of Bergamo is one of the production area of the **EXTRAVIRGIN OLIVE OIL LAGHI LOMBARDI DOP**. The lake climate allows the growing of olive trees, from which this yellow-greenish, fruity yet slightly sour and spicy oil is produced.

POTATO OF MARTINENGO

Yellow skinned, white pulp tuber. It has peculiar organoleptic characteristics obtained from the microclimate and the soil it grows in, and is perfect for different recipes.

RETATO DI CALVENZANO

Elongated-shape melon (from 2 to 5 kilos). During the 1920s and the 1930s it used to be served in the most important restaurants in Paris and at the British Royalty. Nowadays it is used for jam and for a very particular liquor.

NATURE ON THE TABLE

PROSCIUTTO CRUDO 'IL BOTTO'

This product was invented over a century and a half ago in a farmstead called "Il Botto" in Val Seriana, where pigs are bred, butchered and processed. One of its peculiarities is its ageing, that lasts 12 months and takes place in rooms with floors covered with hay. The taste of this kind of ham is peculiar, thanks to its sweet and delicate flavour.



GRAPPA

The local production of this kind of spirit is very relevant. It is obtained from the distillation of carefully selected marcs of grapes harvested in the vineyards located in the area.

CRAFT BEERS

During the last few years, the province of Bergamo, like many other areas in Italy, is experiencing a great increase in the production of artisanal beers. There are, in fact, numerous microbreweries located in the province.

FARINA BRAMATA BERGAMASCA

This intense yellow-gold flour, used for polenta, is obtained from the rough grinding of corn exclusively grown in the province of Bergamo. Other typical varieties of corn are:
MAIS SPINATO DI GANDINO, intense yellow;
MAIS ROSTRATO DI ROVETTA, dark brown;
MAIS NOSTRANO DELL'ISOLA, light yellow. They are perfect for desserts, biscuits and crackers.



MUSHROOMS

Local varieties include: caesar's, porcini, porcinielli (black and red), chanterelles, honey fungus, poplar, parasol and field mushrooms.

CHESTNUTS

They once had such large impact on the traditional diet in the Valleys, that they were called "peasant's bread".
BILIGOCC
 Dry smoked chestnuts sold individually or in big garlands at the local *Sagra dei Biligocc*, which takes place in winter.