

il

SUMMER 2001

AMADIO, INC.

BOLLETTINO

INFORMATION AND TIPS ABOUT THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

A Culinary Italian ABC

Summer is a time for lighter fare. Rather than the more ponderous grammatical or syntactical subjects, this issue of "il Bollettino" deals with the very basis of the language, its alphabet.

The Italian alphabet has 21 letters of which one, H, has only auxiliary purposes and is used after "C" and "G" to make their sound hard as in, respectively, "K" or the English "G". J, K, W, X, Y are considered foreign letters.

The letters of the alphabet are illustrated here using randomly selected culinary terms in the hope that at least some will be of interest to the reader.

A

Affogato: Found most commonly in the dessert section of a menu, this term (literally "drowned") refers to ice cream over which has been poured hot coffee (**affogato al caffè**) whisky (**affogato al whisky**) or other liquor (cognac, etc.).

B

Bolognese, alla: Bologna is the capital of the Emilia-Romagna region, one of the best known gastronomic areas of Italy. This is the region of **parmigiano Reggiano**, **prosciutto di Parma**, and **mortadella**. "Alla bolognese" means in the style of Bologna and is typically used in reference to the characteristic pasta sauce with meat (**ragù**), veal cutlet with ham and cheese (**scaloppina alla bolognese**), and pasta filled with a variety of meats, cold cuts, cheese, and eggs (**tortellini alla bolognese**).

C

Carpaccio: A relatively new, but popular, entry in Italian menus. It is a dish consisting of very thin slices of uncooked meat dressed with olive oil and shredded parmesan cheese and may be served over a bed of salad. It is named after the painter Carpaccio because the dish was invented in Venice during a show of his works in 1963.

D

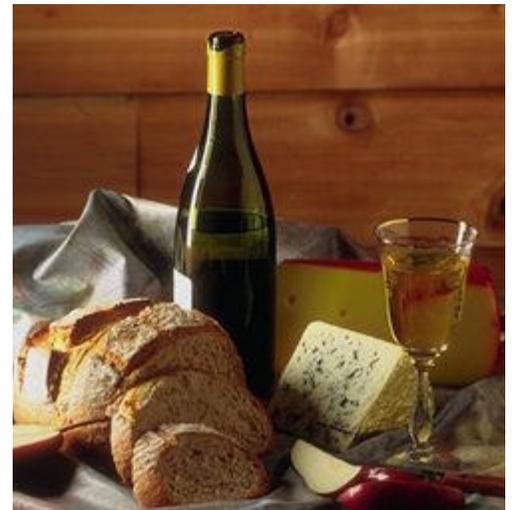
DOC (or D.O.C.) and DOCG (or D.O.C.G.): This is an acronym that should be looked for in the labels of wines. They mean, respectively, **Denominazione di Origine Controllata** (registered product of origin) and **Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita** (registered and guaranteed product of origin) and represent governmental designations for products (mostly wines) that are produced in limited areas according to specific standards. The more restrictive acronym (DOCG) has been created in response to the abuse of the term DOC that had been extended to indicate just about anything semi-official or of high quality.

E

Espresso: Now a household name in the USA, espresso is the most common and basic coffee drink in Italy. It is also the base for any other coffee drink, such as **cappuccino**, or **caffelatte**. In summer, it becomes a cold drink (**caffè freddo**). Also (see A) it is used as a topping (or as an ingredient) for desserts.

F

Fiorentina, la: This is a thick T-bone beefsteak grilled very rare over coals. In Tuscany it is referred to simply as "bistecca" or steak.



G

Gorgonzola: The Italian version of what is known as blue cheese in the USA. It is a blue-veined cheese from the Lombardy and Piedmont regions. However, unlike blue cheese, it comes in varying textures depending on creaminess.

I

IGP and IGT: Similar to DOC, these are legal designations of products that are typical of a particular geographic region. IGP stands for **Indicazione Geografica Protetta** (literally, protected geographical designation) and IGT stands for **Indicazione Geografica Tipica** (literally, typical geographical designation).

L

Luganega: A variety of mild pork sausage that comes in different regional versions but with a common shape or form. Rather than the typical links, luganega is in a long narrow sausage that is coiled and sold by weight.

Continued on reverse.

M

Margherita: One of the most popular pizzas. It is topped with tomato, mozzarella and basil. The toppings are the three colors of the Italian flag, and this pizza is said to have been invented in Naples in 1889 in honor of Queen Margherita di Savoia.

N

Noce: Literally "nut", the term is used for many kinds of tree nuts as well as coconuts (**noci di cocco**) and nutmeg (**noce moscata**). The term is also used as an approximate measurement for cooking recipes, for example: **noce di burro** (literally a nut of butter) to indicate a nut-size piece of butter. Additionally, the term is also used to indicate a cut of veal hindquarter used for scaloppe (see S), roast and steaks.

O

Orecchia di elefante: Literally "elephant ear", this is a fanciful name used for a **milanese** (large, flat breaded veal cutlet with bone) typically found in a restaurant menu.

P

Panettone: This is the traditional Italian Christmastime cake. Panettone is a dome-shaped, more or less cylindrical, raised buttery cake with pieces of candied fruits and/or raisins. It is widely used and always made commercially.

Q

q.b. (quanto basta): An abbreviation used in recipes. **Quanto basta** literally means "as much as it is enough". Equivalent to "as needed" or "to taste".

R

Risotto: Rice dish used as a pasta dish would be used in the course of an Italian meal. It consists of rice slow-cooked in broth to a creamy consistency and additionally flavored with a variety a ingredients and/or sauces.

S

Scaloppa or **scaloppina** (plural, **scaloppe** or **scaloppine**): A slice of meat, typically thin and pounded.

T

Tartufo: Truffle, with the same range of meanings as in English. **Tartufo d'Alba** is a white Piedmontese tuber that is sliced fresh and very thinly as a topping, for example on risotto.

U

Uccelletto, all': Literally "like little birds", this term usually indicates something cooked with sage or laurel. **Fagioli all'uccelletto** is a Tuscan dish of beans slow-cooked in olive oli, sage, and tomato.

V

Valdostana: In the style of Valle d'Aosta indicates dishes that include as an ingredient fontina cheese. The **costoletta alla valdostana** is a veal chop with fontina cheese and prosciutto.

Z

Zuppa inglese: Literally "English soup", this is not a soup at all but a dessert subject to a wide range of interpretations and/or variations. The basic ingredients, however, always include sponge cake and custard soaked in liqueur.



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