



AT THE TABLE:
Emilia-Romagna

The birthplace of Parmigiano-Reggiano, balsamic vinegar, prosciutto and filled pastas, this northern Italian region is home to the food meccas of Parma, Modena and Bologna, and takes great pride in its delicious cuisine based on local, seasonal produce.



Strozzapreti con zucca
e pancetta (strozzapreti
with pumpkin and bacon),
recipe page 69

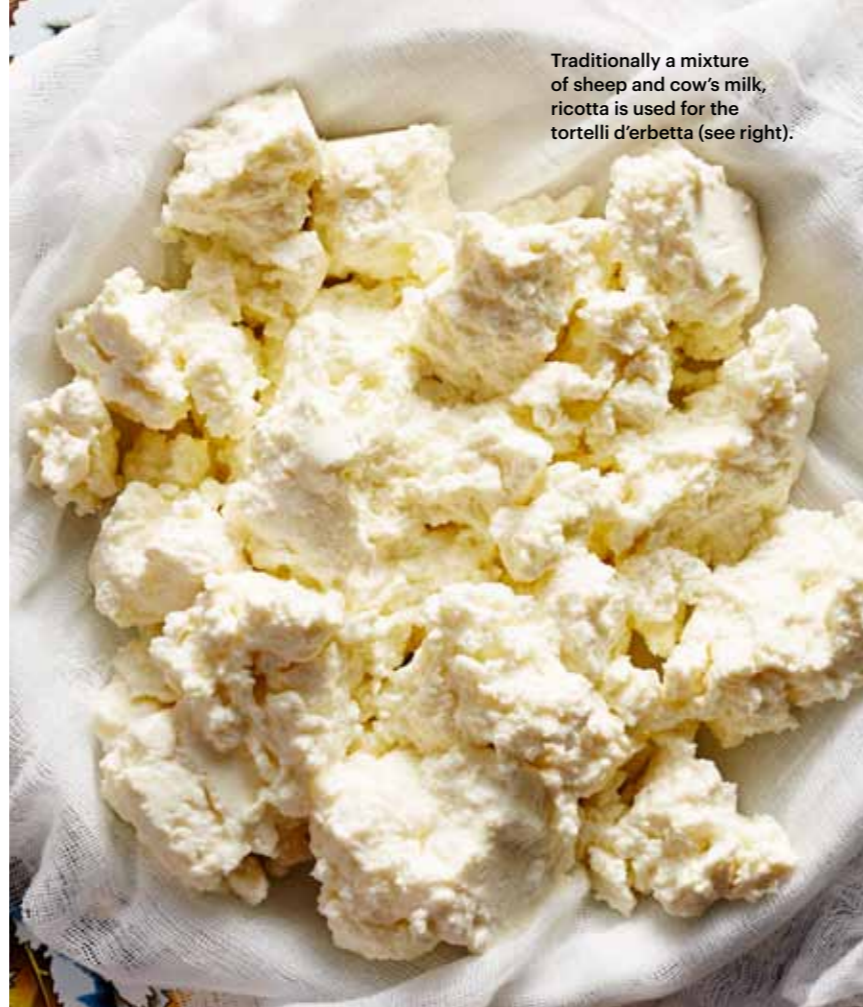


**BRAISED VEAL CHEEKS
WITH GRILLED POLENTA**
*Polenta is perfect for soaking up
the rich sauce, while red cabbage
adds freshness and crunch.*

[recipe page 70](#)



Piadina Romagnola
con prosciutto crudo
(Romagnan flatbread
with prosciutto),
recipe page 70



Traditionally a mixture
of sheep and cow's milk,
ricotta is used for the
tortelli d'erbetta (see right).



Garganelli al ragù di coniglio
(garganelli with rabbit ragù),
recipe page 70



Stinging nettle is often
used in soups, pasta
fillings and to flavour
pasta in Emilia-Romagna,
especially around spring.



Tortelli d'erbetta
(tortelli filled with
greens and ricotta),
recipe page 72



THE MAKINGS OF A GREAT CUISINE

There are few regional cuisines in Italy that can lay claim to the produce pedigree of Emilia-Romagna. Matteo Carboni, a proud native of the region and co-owner of the Barossa Valley Casa Carboni cooking school in South Australia, agrees. “Everything there is based on good ingredients – you don’t have to be a magician to create a great dish in Emilia-Romagna,” he says.

Some of the ingredients that make this cuisine so special include the mortadella, salami and wines of its capital, Bologna; the Parmigiano-Reggiano and prosciutto of Parma; and the balsamic vinegar made in Modena since the Middle Ages.

The region is also renowned for its love of pasta, particularly filled pastas like *tortelli d'erbetta* (see page 72). Similarly, pork and cured pork products feature heavily in pastas and braises or piled into soft and pillowy *piadina* (see page 70).

“Emilia-Romagna actually represents two different regions – one richer, one poorer. That’s apparent in the classic food of the region,” says Matteo. “Romagna has always been a poor place, with simple food made from simple ingredients. In Emilia, you’ll find more extravagant dishes, such as *tortellini* filled with meat.”

Here, Matteo shares a few of his favourite recipes from home.

SABADONI CHESTNUT PASTRIES WITH VINO COTTO

Serves 6 • Prep 45 mins, plus 15 mins soaking
• Cooking 40 mins

500g (3½ cups) plain flour, sifted
2 eggs
25g unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 tsp baking powder
150ml milk
Vanilla ice-cream, to serve

Chestnut filling
500g chestnuts*
200g unsweetened chestnut purée*
80g (½ cup) icing sugar, sifted, plus extra, to serve
1¼ tbs vino cotto*, plus extra, to serve
1 tbs Marsala
1 lemon, zested
1 egg, lightly beaten

1 Mound flour on a clean work surface and make a well in centre. Break eggs into well, then add butter, baking powder and milk. Using a fork, draw in flour, working from the centre outwards, then using your hands, work in remaining ingredients. Knead dough for 6 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Enclose in plastic wrap and rest for 30 minutes.
2 Meanwhile, to make chestnut filling, soak chestnuts in warm water for 15 minutes. Using a sharp knife, make a small horizontal slit in each chestnut and peel off skin, then place in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Cook for 20 minutes or until very soft. Drain, then cool. Place in a bowl with chestnut purée, icing sugar, vino cotto, Marsala and lemon zest, mashing until smooth.
3 Preheat oven to 180C. Roll out dough on a lightly floured work surface until 2mm thick, then cut into 10cm squares. Place 1 tbs filling in centre of each square, then brush edges with beaten egg. Fold squares over to form triangles, enclosing filling, and crimp edges to seal. Place pastries on an oven tray and bake for 20 minutes or until golden.
4 Dust chestnut pastries with extra icing

sugar, drizzle with extra vino cotto and serve warm with vanilla ice-cream.
* Fresh chestnuts are from select greengrocers. Substitute vacuum-packed or frozen chestnuts from delis and specialist food shops.
* Unsweetened chestnut purée is available from select delis and specialist food shops.
* Vino cotto is a sweet and tangy condiment made from cooked grape must. It is from delis, specialist food shops and select greengrocers.
DRINK 2006 Pizzini Per Gli Angeli, King Valley, VIC (375ml, \$65)

STROZZAPRETI CON ZUCCA E PANCETTA STROZZAPRETI WITH PUMPKIN AND BACON

Serves 4 • Prep 1 hr • Cooking 20 mins
Literally ‘priest choker’, *strozzapreti* pasta has many stories behind its name. Some believe its popularity among churchmen meant it was devoured to the point of choking, while others say it was a form of payment to the church who owned most of the farmland at the time. Or it could just describe the twisting or ‘choking’ action used to shape the pasta.

300g butternut pumpkin, thinly sliced, pulp reserved, skin discarded
1 onion, finely chopped
100g bacon, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 rosemary sprig, leaves picked
2 tbs chopped flat-leaf parsley
Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, balsamic vinegar and extra virgin olive oil, to serve

Strozzapreti
200g (1½ cups) ‘00’ pasta flour*, sifted
50g (½ cup) fine dried breadcrumbs
2 egg whites

1 To make strozzapreti, mound flour and breadcrumbs on a clean work surface and make a well in centre. Combine egg whites with 60ml water, then pour into well. Using a fork, draw in flour, working from the centre outwards, then using your hands work in remaining flour. Knead dough for 6 minutes

or until smooth and elastic. Enclose in plastic wrap and rest for 20 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, place pumpkin trimmings and onion in a saucepan over medium heat and season with salt. Add enough water to just cover, then cook for 20 minutes or until very soft. Transfer to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Set aside.

3 Using a rolling pin, roll out dough until 5mm thick and about 12cm wide – nearly the width of your pasta machine. Set your pasta machine at its widest setting, then feed through dough, narrowing the settings one notch at a time until you reach the middle setting. To make strozzapreti, cut pasta into 3cm-wide strips, then cut each strip lengthwise into 7cm pieces. Lightly roll each piece between the palms of your hands into a cylinder. Cook strozzapreti in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain.

4 Meanwhile, heat a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon. Add sliced pumpkin and cook, turning occasionally, for 3 minutes or until tender. Season with salt and pepper, then add garlic, rosemary and reserved pumpkin purée, stirring to combine. Cook for a further minute or until warmed through.

5 Add strozzapreti to pumpkin mixture, tossing gently. Transfer to a platter, scatter over bacon, parsley and Parmigiano-Reggiano. Serve drizzled with balsamic and olive oil.

** '00' (or doppio-zero) pasta flour is a super-fine Italian grade that's traditionally used for making pasta. It is available from select supermarkets and delis. Substitute plain flour.*

DRINK 2012 Coriole Fiano, McLaren Vale, SA (\$25)

GUANCIA DI VITELLO CON POLENTA ALLA GRIGLIA BRAISED VEAL CHEEKS WITH GRILLED POLENTA

Serves 4 • Prep 35 mins • Cooking 5 hrs

4 veal or beef cheeks, trimmed
100ml olive oil, plus extra, to grease
250ml (1 cup) dry red wine
1 onion, finely chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 sprig each rosemary, sage and thyme,

leaves picked, finely chopped
2 bay leaves
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tbs tomato paste
500ml (2 cups) beef jus*
1L chicken stock
4 red cabbage leaves, to serve

Grilled polenta

500ml (2 cups) milk
500ml (2 cups) chicken stock
170g (1 cup) instant polenta
40g (½ cup) finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

1 Preheat oven to 160C. Season veal cheeks with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tbs oil in a large, heavy-based ovenproof pan over high heat, add veal and cook, turning, for 4 minutes or until browned all over. Remove and set aside.

2 Add wine to same pan and simmer rapidly for 4 minutes or until reduced by half. Pour into a jug and set aside.

3 Add remaining 80ml oil to pan, then add onion, celery and carrot, and cook, stirring, for 4 minutes or until softened. Add herbs, garlic and tomato paste, and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until fragrant. Return veal to pan with jus, stock and reduced wine. Cover, transfer pan to oven and bake for 4½ hours or until veal is meltingly tender.

4 Meanwhile, to make grilled polenta, lightly grease a 20cm square pan and line with plastic wrap. Place milk and stock in a saucepan over medium heat. Pour in polenta in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until thick. Season, stir in Parmigiano-Reggiano, then spoon into lined pan. Smooth out surface and refrigerate for 3 hours or until firm.

5 Remove veal from pan and set aside to keep warm. Place dish over high heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until liquid has thickened.

6 Meanwhile, turn out polenta onto a clean board and cut into 4 pieces. Preheat a chargrill pan over medium-high heat and lightly grease. Cook polenta for 2 minutes each side or until charred and warmed.

7 Divide polenta squares among shallow bowls and top with veal and cabbage leaves. Serve drizzled with reduced braising liquid.

** Beef jus is from select delis and specialist food shops. Substitute good-quality beef stock.*

DRINK 2011 Dal Zotto Barbera, King Valley, VIC (\$25)

PIADINA ROMAGNOLA CON PROSCIUTTO CRUDO★ ROMAGNAN FLATBREAD WITH PROSCIUTTO

Makes 6 • Prep 25 mins, plus 1 hr chilling

• Cooking 25 mins

“When I go home, the first thing I want to eat is piadina with prosciutto. Luckily, there’s a shop about 50 metres from my place. You can eat the breads with anything like rocket or all kinds of cheeses,” says Matteo.

500g (3½ cups) plain flour, plus extra, to dust

250ml (1 cup) milk

100g lard* or duck fat*, melted

3 tsp baking powder

Thinly sliced prosciutto and extra virgin olive oil, to serve

1 Combine flour, milk, lard, baking powder and 2 tsp salt in a large bowl. Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for 5 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

2 Divide mixture into 6 balls and, using a lightly floured rolling pin, roll out each ball on a lightly floured work surface until 2mm thick.

3 Heat a large frying pan or chargrill pan over medium heat and cook each flatbread for 2 minutes each side or until golden.

4 Place a pile of prosciutto onto one half of each flatbread, drizzle with olive oil and fold over to serve.

** For the best flavour, it's worth buying lard direct from butchers.*

** Duck fat is from select greengrocers, butchers and delis.*

DRINK Carpenne Malvolti Prosecco NV, Veneto, Italy (\$20)

GARGANELLI AL RAGU DI CONIGLIO GARGANELLI WITH RABBIT RAGU

Serves 4 • Prep 35 mins, plus overnight

marinating • Cooking 3 hrs 25 mins

Garganelli is a type of ridged, tubular pasta that's traditionally made by rolling squares of dough around a wooden stick, known as a *bastoncino*, along a grooved board or *pettine* (see Bite-Size Pieces). While you can substitute *penne rigate*, garganelli is more delicate with a visible seam. Matteo usually serves this pasta with wild hare ragù, but we've substituted rabbit, which is more readily available. »

400g rabbit, deboned*
 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
 1 small carrot, finely chopped
 1 garlic clove, crushed
 1 bay leaf
 1 sprig each sage and rosemary,
 leaves picked, finely chopped
 ½ tbs tomato paste
 100ml dry white wine
 2 cloves
 2 juniper berries
 Finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, to serve

Marinade

500ml (2 cups) dry red wine
 1 onion, chopped
 1 celery stalk, chopped
 1 carrot, chopped
 2 garlic cloves
 1 sprig each rosemary and sage
 1 bay leaf
 2 black peppercorns
 2 juniper berries
 2 cloves

Garganelli

300g (2 cups) plain flour
 3 eggs

1 To make marinade, combine all ingredients in a large, non-reactive bowl. Add rabbit, tossing to coat, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight to marinate.

2 Drain rabbit, discarding marinade, and cut into 3cm pieces. Heat oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, celery, carrot, garlic and herbs, and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until vegetables start to soften. Add rabbit and cook, turning, for 2 minutes or until browned all over. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring, for 1 minute, then add wine and simmer for 3 minutes or until evaporated. Add enough water to just cover mixture, then add cloves and juniper berries. Cover and simmer for 3 hours or until rabbit is very tender.

3 Meanwhile, to make garganelli, place flour on a clean work surface. Make a well in centre and break eggs into it. Using a fork, draw in flour, working from the centre outwards, then using your hands, work in remaining flour. Knead dough for 6 minutes or until smooth

and elastic. Enclose dough in plastic wrap and rest for 20 minutes.

4 Using a rolling pin, roll out dough until 5mm thick and about 12cm wide – nearly the width of your pasta machine. Set your pasta machine at its widest setting, then feed through dough, narrowing settings one notch at a time until you reach the thinnest setting. Cut pasta into 2cm squares, then wrap each square around the handle of a wooden spoon, pressing edges to seal. Roll a small fork lightly dusted in flour around pasta to create the ridges, then slide pasta off the handle.

5 When ragù is almost ready, cook garganelli in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain, add pasta to ragù and season with salt and pepper, tossing gently to combine. Serve scattered with Parmigiano-Reggiano.

* Rabbit is available from select butchers.

Ask your butcher to remove the bones for you or see *Cooking Notes* to do it yourself.

DRINK 2012 Tar & Roses Sangiovese, Heathcote, VIC (\$22)

TORTELLI D'ERBETTA

TORTELLI FILLED WITH GREENS AND RICOTTA

Serves 4 • Prep 60 mins, plus 20 mins chilling

• Cooking 15 mins

This filled pasta dish is a speciality of Parma. It is often enjoyed on San Giovanni Day on 24 June to celebrate the summer solstice.

Traditionally, a mixture of sheep's and cow's milk ricotta is combined with Parmigiano-Reggiano for a balance of salty, savoury and sweet flavours. The greens in the filling can vary from young Swiss chard to spinach, but here, Matteo uses stinging nettle.

300g (2 cups) plain flour
 3 eggs
 300g stinging nettle* or English spinach,
 stems discarded
 250g fresh ricotta, drained
 1 egg
 150g grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus extra,
 to serve
 ¼ tsp grated nutmeg
 Semolina, to dust
 100g unsalted butter
 ½ cup sage leaves

1 Mound flour on a clean work surface, make a well in centre, then break eggs into it. Using

a fork, draw in flour, working from the centre outwards, then using your hands, work in remaining flour. Knead dough for 6 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Enclose in plastic wrap and rest for 20 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil and blanch stinging nettle for 1 minute. Drain, refresh in cold water, squeezing out any excess liquid, then finely chop. Combine in a bowl with ricotta, egg, Parmigiano-Reggiano and nutmeg. Season with salt and pepper, then set aside.

3 Divide dough in half and, using a rolling pin, roll out each piece until 5mm thick and about 12cm wide – nearly the width of your pasta machine. Set your pasta machine at its widest setting, then feed through dough, narrowing the settings one notch at a time until you reach the thinnest setting.

4 To make tortelli, place 1 pasta sheet on a lightly floured work surface. Place 2 tsp ricotta filling at 5cm intervals on pasta sheet to make 20 tortelli. Dampen edges around each portion of filling and carefully top with second sheet of pasta, pressing around filling to remove any air pockets. Press edges to seal. Cut into squares and place on a tray scattered with semolina to absorb excess moisture. Cook tortelli in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain.

5 Meanwhile, cook butter in a frying pan over medium heat for 2 minutes or until light brown. Add sage leaves and cook for a further minute or until crisp. Remove from heat.

6 Add tortelli to butter and sage, tossing gently to combine. Serve scattered with extra Parmigiano-Reggiano.

* Order stinging nettle from select greengrocers.

DRINK 2011 Chrismont La Zona Arneis, King Valley, VIC (\$22) 72