



Culinary Institute
of America

Regional Italian Cuisine: Northern Regions



Learning Objectives

- Understand the influences of geography and climate on Northern Italian cuisine.
- Describe the flavor profiles of Northern Italian cuisine.
- Explain the common cooking techniques used in Northern Italy.
- Identify the staple dishes of Northern Italian cuisine.
- Explain the different characteristics of each region's cuisine in Northern Italy.
- List the popular dishes particular to each region in Northern Italy.
- Prepare a variety of dishes representative of the Northern Italian regions using standardized recipes.



Regions

- Borders France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia
- 46% of the population Italian population, Po Valley holds the majority

Piedmonte

- Scenic lakes
- City: Turin

Liguria

- Villages of Cinque Terre, clear water beaches
- City: Genoa

Lombardia

- Hub for art/fashion, home to *The Last Supper* painting
- City: Milan

Veneto

- St. Mark's Bassilica, Venice Carnival
- City: Venice

Trentino-Alto Adige

- Mountain landscapes, apple orchards
- City: Trento

Val d'Osta

- Medieval castles, Roman hertiage
- City: Aosta

Friuli-Venezia Giulia

- Coastal towns, beaches, seafood
- City: Trieste





Geography & Climate



Location lends itself industry, trade

The Alps: ideal for hardy crops, livestock farming

The Po River Valley, Po and Venetian Plains: fertile area; rice, wheat, fruits, vegetables

Ligurian Coast: fresh seafood

Hills, slopes: ideal for vineyards

Climate: long, cold, damp winters; hot, humid summers

- **Winter:** hearty root vegetables, preservation
- **Summer:** seasonal vegetables



Flavors

- Milder, subtle flavors; rich, creamy textures
- Seasonal ingredients; balance, simplicity
- Game meat inland, seafood on coast

Herbs: basil, rosemary, thyme, sage, parsley, bay leaves, chives

Spices: nutmeg, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, saffron

Defining ingredients: corn, rice, cheese, balsamic vinegar, garlic, butter, white wine, mushrooms, root vegetables, leafy greens



Cooking Techniques

- Creamy, rich, slow-cooked, dishes

Cooking fat: butter, cream, sometimes lard

Braising: for tougher meats like beef, pork, game

Steaming: for delicate dishes (*canederli* in Trentino-Alto Adige)

Sautéing: often done with butter + flavor base, used in meat sauces (*ragù alla Bolognese* in Bologna)



Northern Specialties

Risotto: creamy rice dish made with Arborio or Carnaroli rice

- Common additions: butter, white wine, Parmesan Reggiano

Polenta: slow-cooked porridge made from cornmeal, stock, butter, cheese

- Creamy, grilled, fried, baked; style changes ratio of liquid
- Served with meats, stews, sauces



Pasta

Fresh egg pasta: typical pasta used

Colder, wetter, humid climate: soft wheat grown for flour

- Has less protein, eggs need to be added to bind the dough

Texture: softer, more delicate, tender bite, slight elasticity

- Pairs well with popular rich, creamy, buttery sauces

Flavor: richer, egg forward

Cook time: 3-4 minutes

Popular varieties: ravioli, tagliatelle, pappardelle, gnocchi, bigoli



Veneto Cuisine

- Greek, Austrian, Arab influences
- Rice + polenta preferred over pasta
- Combination of sweet and savory spices

Seafood: fish, shellfish, squid

Vegetables: artichokes, asparagus (from *Bassano del Grappa*), onions, garlic

Cheese: *Asiago, Monte Veronese, Piave*

Fruits: apples, pears, cherries

Herbs/Spices: basil, oregano, thyme, saffron, pepper, nutmeg

Wine: *Prosecco, Amarone, Soave*



Popular Dishes



Calf liver & onion
(*Fegato alla Veneziana*)



Squid ink risotto
(*Risotto al nero di seppia*)



**Udon-like pasta
in anchovy sauce**
(*Bigoli in salsa*)

Piedmonte Cuisine



- French, Swiss influence
- Butter over olive oil
- Importance of appetizers (*antipasti*)
- Famous production Superfino rice

Dairy: *Robiola* cheese, butter

Meats: beef, veal, sausages, cured meats

Seafood: tuna, anchovies, cured fish

Wine: *Barolo*, *Barbaresco*, other reds

Produce: hazelnuts, apples, white truffles

***Tajarin*:** thin, egg-based pasta





Popular Dishes



Veal and tuna sauce
(*Vitello tonnato*)



**Braised beef in
Barolo wine**
(*Brasato al Barolo*)



**Anchovy garlic
butter dip**
(*Bagna cauda*)



Val d'Osta Cuisine



- Heavy French, Swiss influence
- Hearty, warming foods: soups, stews, gnocchi, polenta

Cheese: *Fontina*

Meats: pork, beef, wild game, cured meats

Fruits: apples, pears, walnuts, chestnuts

Vegetables: pickled vegetables, jams, potatoes, mushrooms

Herbs: rosemary, thyme, sage, and bay leaf from Aosta Valley

Popular Dishes



Red wine beef stew
*(Carbonade
Valdostana)*



**Cabbage, bread,
and fontina soup**
*(Zuppa à la
Vapelenentse)*



**Veal chop, fontina,
and ham**
*(Cotaletto al
Valdostana)*



Lombardia Cuisine

- German, Swiss influence; hearty and comforting dishes
- Rice/stuffed pasta over dry pasta
- Both butter and olive oil for cooking
- Superfino rice production

Meat: beef, pork, cured meats

Cheese: *Gorgonzola, Grana Padano, Taleggio*

Produce: Valtellina apples, lettuce, cabbage, onions, corn, pumpkin

Wine: *Franciacorta, Valtellina Superiore*



Popular Dishes



Pumpkin stuffed pasta
(Ravioli di zucca)



Braised veal shank
(Ossobucco)



Saffron infused risotto
(Risotto Milanese)

Trentino-Alto Adige Cuisine

- Heavy German, Austrian influence: seen with use of sauerkraut
- Stale bread is a common ingredient

Dairy: cheeses (*Puzzzone di Moena, Alta Badia*), butter, yogurt

Meats: *Speck, carne salada*

Produce: cabbage, carrots, potatoes, other root vegetables, Adige Valley apples, berries

Wine: whites from Trentino, reds from South Tyrol



Popular Dishes



Smoked cured ham
(*Speck*)



Blueberry risotto
(*Risotto ai mirtilli*)



Rye bread pasta
(*Tagliatelle di schüttelbrot*)



Friuli-Venezia Giulia Cuisine

- Austrian, Slavic influence; land and sea
 - Seen with use of sauerkraut
- More use of tomatoes than other regions

Meat: pork, beef, wild game, cured meats

Cheese: *Montasio*

Seafood: sardines, anchovies, calamari, shellfish, freshwater fish, sea bass (*branzino*)

Wine: *Pinot Grigio, Friulano*

Produce: corn, peppers, cabbage, tomatoes, apples, walnuts, hazelnuts



Popular Dishes



Dry-cured ham
(*Prosciutto di San Daniele*)



Bean and sauerkraut stew
(*Jota*)



Cheese and potato pancake
(*Frico*)



Liguria Cuisine

- Mediterranean influence: freshness, seasonality
- Birthplace of basil sauce (*pesto*)
- Preserved foods: jams, honey, salted/brined foods

Focaccia: staple at every meal

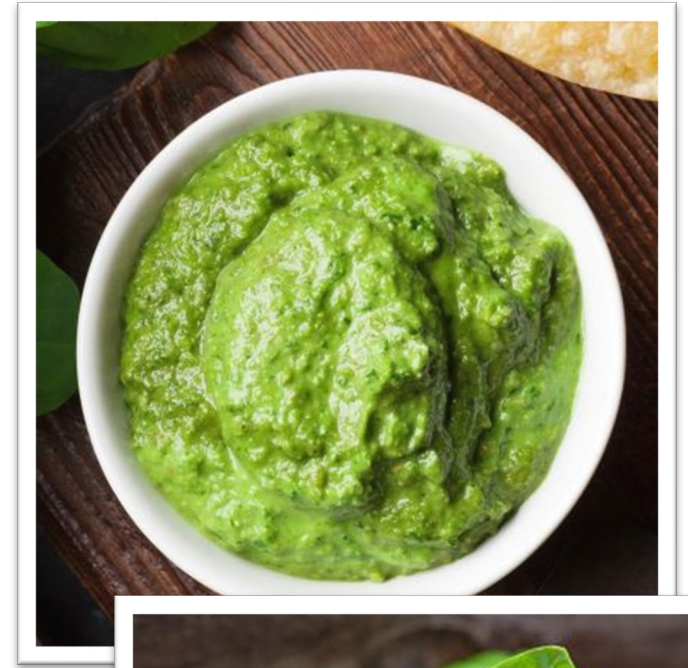
Produce: tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, beets, corn, apricots, grapes, lemons, chestnuts, pine nuts

Seafood: sea bass, mussels, cuttlefish (*seppie*)

Olive oil: primary fat used, Taggiasca variety

Herbs: basil, rosemary, fennel, marjoram, sage

Wines: Vermentino grape white wines





Popular Dishes



**Basil sauce with
fresh pasta**
(*Pesto Genovese*)



**Pie filled with ricotta,
spinach and eggs**
(*Torta Pasqualina*)



Chickpea flatbread
(*Farinata*)





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Any Questions?