



Culinary Institute
of America

Italy



Learning Objectives

- List the different components included in a traditional antipasto.
- Identify a variety of Italian meats based on production methods, flavors, and textures.
- Identify a variety of Italian cheeses based on age, flavors, and textures.
- Describe the influences of geography and climate on Italian cuisine.
- Explain the flavor profiles in each part of Italy.
- List the main produce in each part of Italy.
- List and describe the staple dishes of each part of Italy.

Antipasto

Traditional Italian appetizer

- Variety of flavors, textures, ingredients
- Served as a platter or small portions

Cured Meats: Prosciutto, salami, mortadella, capicola

Cheeses: Mozzarella, Parmigiano-Reggiano, pecorino, ricotta

Vegetables: Roasted peppers, olives, sun-dried tomatoes, and marinated eggplant, mushrooms, artichokes

Breads: Crostini, focaccia, grissini (breadsticks)

Seafood: Anchovies, smoked salmon, marinated octopus



Salami

Covers a wide range of salt-cured, air-dried, smoked preparations

Seasonings: salt, pepper, garlic, fennel seeds, paprika, wine/vinegar

Three basic types: fresh, dry-aged, precooked

Two types of casings:

- Natural: bladder, intestines
- Artificial: animals skins, cellulose, polyvinyl



Prosciutto di Parma



Dry-cured ham (hind legs of pigs) from the Parma region.

Process:

- Salted, rested for 2 weeks
- Washed of salt, hung to dry
- Air dried for 12-36 months to naturally develop flavor.

Seasoning: Salt

Consorzio del Prosciutto de Parm

- Safeguards, protects, controls the process for quality

Capicola

Dry-cured meat made from the pork shoulder or neck

Texture: tender, melt in your mouth

Process: cured for weeks, tied into a compact shape, hung to dry for several months, aged

Flavor profile: rich, savory, slightly spicy, hint of sweetness

Spices: salt, black pepper, garlic, paprika, fennel seeds, red pepper flakes (optional).



Cheese



Fresh Mozzarella

- Process: curd dipped into hot whey, stretched and kneaded to desired consistency
- Texture: semi-soft, moist, slightly elastic
- Flavor: mild, milky, subtle tangy
- Low moisture varieties: aged 2 to 4 weeks

Cheese

Parmigiano Reggiano

- Aged at least 2 years
- Texture: hard, dry, granular
- Flavor: rich, sharp, nutty, savory

Pecorino Romano

- Aged 5 to 12 months
- Texture: Hard inside, firm rind
- Flavor: strong, tangy, salty
- Made from sheep's milk



Cheese



Fresh Ricotta

- Process: heat milk/cream, add acid, strain curds from whey
- Texture: fluffy, creamy, slightly grainy
- Flavor: mildly sweet



Ricotta Salata

- Aged for 30 days
- Texture: firm
- Flavor: salty



Ricotta Forte

- Fermented for 1 year
- Texture: soft and creamy
- Flavor: slightly bitter, spicy

The Northern Regions

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

Piedmonte

- **City:**
Turin

Liguria

- **City:**
Genoa

Trentino- Alto Adige

- **City:**
Trento

Friuli-Venezia Giulia

- **City:**
Trieste

Lombardia

- **City:**
Milan

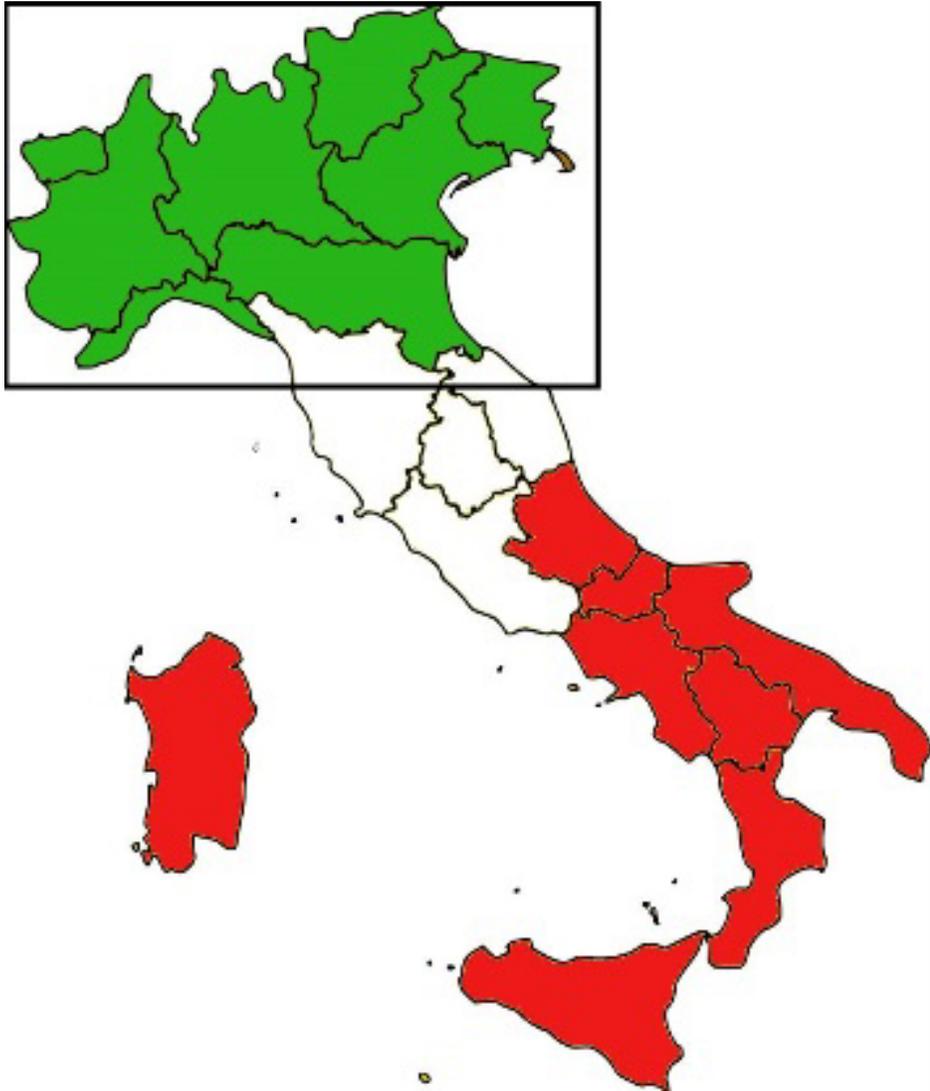
Veneto

- **City:**
Venice

Val d'Osta

- **City:**
Aosta

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 and hot, humid summers

- **Winter:** Hearty root vegetables, preservation

- **Summer:** seasonal vegetables

Main Produce

Grains: rice (Arborio, Canaroli), corn, wheat, barley

Meat: beef, pork

■ Cured: prosciutto, salami

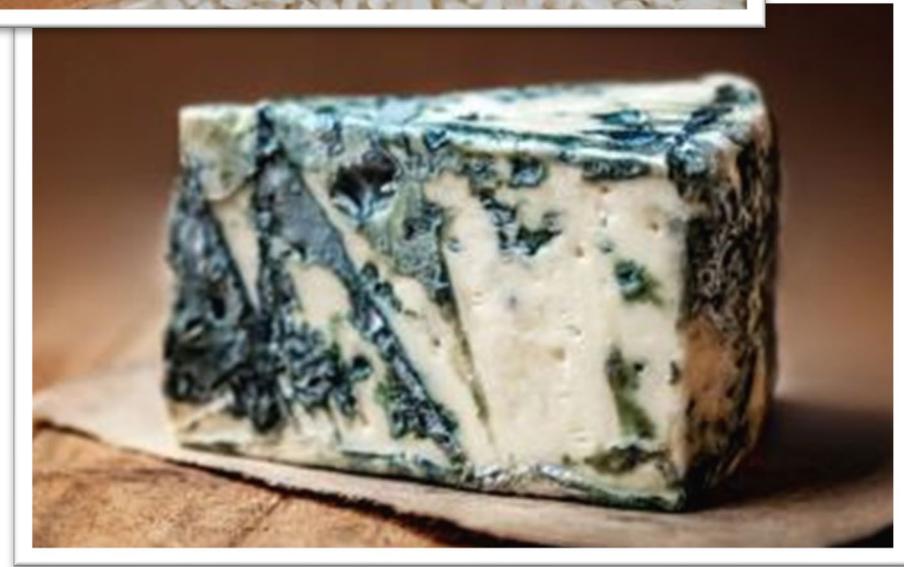
Fruits: apples, pears, grapes, citrus

Vegetables: asparagus, artichokes, potatoes, corn, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage

Dairy: milk, cheese (Gorgonzola, Fontina, Taleggio, Grana Padano)

Wine: Barolo, Barbaresco, Prosecco, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc

Olive oil



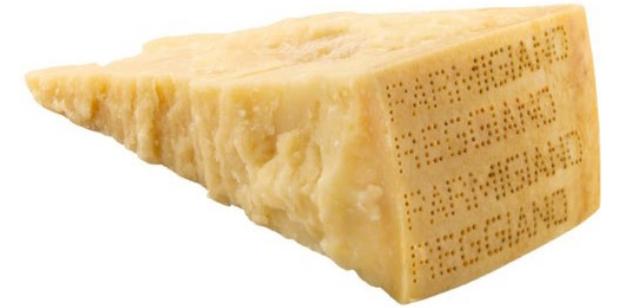
Flavors

- 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



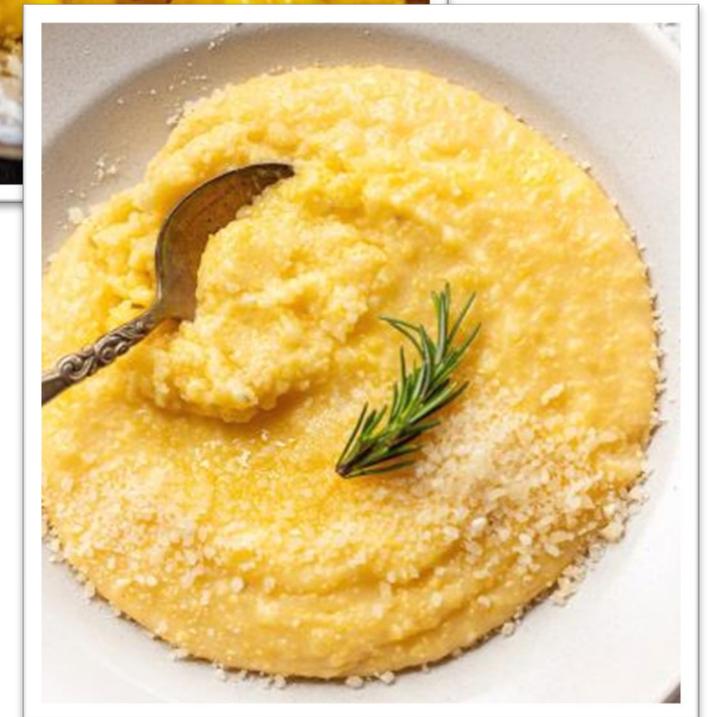
Staple Dishes

Risotto: creamy rice dish made with Arborio or Carnaroli rice

- *Risotto Milanese*: uses saffron for color
- **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



The Central Regions

- Known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes
- The heart of the Renaissance and the Papal States

Lazio

- Ancient Rome
- **City:** Rome

Marche

- Beaches, shoe making
- **City:** Ancona

Tuscany

- Beautiful country
- **Cities:** Pisa, Florence

Umbria

- Medieval hill towns, truffles
- **City:** Perugia

Abruzzo + Molise

- Ancient towns
- **City:** Pescara

Emiglia Romagna

- Art, history
- **City:** Bologna

Geography & Climate



Hills, woodlands:

Major rivers: *Arno, Tiber*

Major lakes: *Trasimeno, Bolsena, Bracciano*

- Freshwater fish

Apennines Mountains:

Climate: warm summers, mild winters

- Abundant produce: tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, eggplant

- Perfect for olive trees (olive oil), grape vines (wine)

Main Produce

Grains: wheat, barley

Meat: lamb, beef

- Cured: Prosciutto di Parma, capocollo, mortadella

Fruits: apples, pears, cherries, olives

Vegetables: tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, artichokes

Dairy: Parmigiano-Reggiano, Pecorino cheeses

Wine: Chianti, Montepulciano, Verdicchio



Flavors

- Long agricultural tradition with a focus on bold, earthy flavors
- Rich sauces, strong cheeses
- **Herbs:** rosemary, sage, thyme, parsley, bay leaves, oregano, mint
- **Spices:** black pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, saffron
- **Defining ingredients:** olive oil, tomatoes, cheese, garlic, vinegar, cured/ smoked meats, bread



Staple Dishes

Bistecca alla Fiorentina

- Traditional Tuscan steak grilled over high heat, served rare or medium-rare
- Ingredients: T-bone steak (*Chianina*), salt, pepper, olive oil, rosemary
- Typically served with cannellini beans cooked with olive oil and lemon

Ragù alla Bolognese

- Flat pasta paired with a rich, slow-cooked meat sauce
- Ingredients: Ground meat (beef, pork), onions, carrots, celery, tomatoes, wine, pasta



The Southern Regions

- Also called the Mezzogiorno
- “Heel of the boot”
- Culturally disconnected from the rest of Italy
- Rich archeological history, beautiful coastlines

Basilicata

- Historic villages
- **City:**
Potenza

Calabria

- Nature reserves
- **City:**
Cosenza

Campania

- Amalfi Coast
- **City:**
Naples

Apulia

- Med. coastline
- **City:**
Bari

Sicily

- Med. island
- **City:**
Palermo

Sardinia

- Med. island
- **City:**
Sassari

Geography & Climate



Beaches, coastlines

- Fresh seafood

Apennines Mountains: fruits, cheese, honey, herbs

Islands: Sicily, Sardinia, Capri

Mediterranean climate: Hot, dry summers and mild, rainy winters, higher humidity

- Reliance on vegetables: longest, most favorable growing season
- Olives, tomatoes, broccoli rabe, eggplant
- Dry climate → dried pasta

Main Produce

Grains: durum wheat, barley

Meat: lamb, sheep, buffalo

Fruits: lemon, orange, grapes, lychees

Vegetables: tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, zucchini, artichokes

Dairy: Mozzarella, Pecorino cheeses

Wine: Nero d'Avola, Primitivo, Falanghia, Aglianico del Vulture



Flavors

- Coastline brings fish, shellfish
- Olive oil over butter
- **Preservation:** salting, curing, brining capers, anchovies, olives
- **Herbs:** oregano, basil, mint, parsley, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves
- **Spices:** black pepper, saffron, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, carraway, coriander
- **Defining ingredients:** tomatoes, seafood, regional cheeses, lemon, chilis



Staple Dishes

Pasta alla Norma

- A rich and hearty pasta dish
- Ingredients: fried eggplant, ricotta salata, tomato sauce, fresh basil
- Named after the opera "Norma"

Caponata

- A sweet and sour eggplant stew
- Ingredients: eggplant, celery, olives, capers, and vinegar
- Served as a side dish or appetizer, usually with bread





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Any Questions?