



**TASTING ROME**  
DAY 2: ROMAN CLASSICS

# CARBONARA

- Most popular Roman dish?
- Simple, but all ingredients can vary (pasta, pepper, eggs, cured pork)
- Legendary origins
- Who were the carbonari?
- Rigatoni vs. spaghetti
- Adding pasta water





# CACIO E PEPE

- Even simpler
- The key is “an emulsified sauce of Pecorino Romano and black pepper that is bound by starchy pasta cooking water”
- Also, adding a pat of butter, while inauthentic, makes it work hugely better
- Key: pasta water





# ALLA GRICIA

- "sometimes described as *carbonara* minus the egg, or *amatriciana* without the tomato"
- Brought in by immigrants from the Apennines (central of the peninsula)
- Key technique: adding pasta water





# AMATRICIANA

- Typically made with onion, guanciale, black pepper, and canned tomatoes
- Almost no Italian recipe has both garlic and onion—either/or
- Roscioli (shallots, large cubes, bombolotti rather than bucatini)
- “summer” amatriciana, made with fresh tomatoes
- Key: pasta water







# GUANCIALE

- Home cooks can make their own cured meats, but there are (small, but real) risks
- pink salt
- The main point is to remove moisture until there's not enough for bacteria to easily grow



# PICCHIAPÒ

- Simmered leftovers
- Added leftover meat to a sauce made with onions, tomatoes, other vegetables, and cook slowly until everything is falling apart
- Salting meat well in advance



# POLLO ALLA ROMANA

- Associated with Ferragosto
- A summer dish, made in the mornings and eaten at room temp for lunch
- Now made with red and yellow bell peppers—but only if you side with Roma rather than with Lazio
- Fundamentally a political decision
- Salting early and “deglazing”







ROMA

1927









# AGLIO E OLIO

- “Ajo e ojo” in Romano, normally made with just three ingredients: garlic, olive oil, and pepperoncino (one may add pecorino at the end to taste)
- An obvious example of the “delicious poverty” of Roman cuisine
- Shockingly, the key is to create an emulsion using... pasta water



# THE FOOD WEEK

- “Things in Rome are unpredictable”
- “Weekends were once given over to labor-intensive dishes: *Trippa alla Romana* was a Saturday tradition, while Sundays were dedicated to *suppli* or fresh pastas like *fettuccine* and *lasagne*. Monday was the day for simmered meats, followed by Tuesday’s fish or pasta with chickpeas. Wednesday’s dishes were pasta with beans or *Coda alla vaccinara*, braised oxtail, which led to Thursday, when *gnocchi* might be dressed with deeply flavored oxtail sauce left over from the previous day.”
- Friday for fish: cod (*baccalà*)



## WHERE TO EAT IN ROME ON A MONDAY

open restaurants in the  
Eternal City

# GNOCCHI

- Made from potatoes (another New World ingredient)
- A little bit of nutmeg. Why?
- Made just like pasta (flour mound, wet ingredients worked into center)
- Like pasta, plate and serve immediately



# LAMB IN SAUCE

- *Agnello brodetto*
- A Spring dish. Why?
- Salt in advance
- Dredge in flour, brown in hot oil
- Remove, add your veggies (carrot, onion, celery – called a *soffritto*), cook until soft, deglaze
- then add liquid for a braise, a long, slow cook
- Ends with a thickening agent, here *tempered* egg yolks and a mix of herbs and lemon juice















## WHO COOKS IN ROME?

- Fantasy vs. reality
- Fantasy: armies of black-clad, almost square, benevolent nonnas
- Reality: men from South Asia and North Africa; immigrants are doing all of the work, and often churning out amazing results. Philippines and Morocco.
- Very similar to restaurants in the US, run by a variety of chefs and sous-chefs, but almost 100% of the labor below is done by Central and South Americans, especially Mexico



# INVOLTINI DI MANZO

- Cook once, eat twice – *cucina povera*
- Leftover meat, leftover sauce, anything left over from this can be used to dress a pasta, as a sauce
- About 35% of U.S. food is thrown away, about \$165,000,000,000 worth, per year. That's billion with a B.



# HOLIDAYS

- Year ends, Christmas (Natale)
- Christmas Eve is all seafood (anchovies, eels and salt cod!)
  - Eels in Rome can no longer be eaten; the Tiber is too polluted
- Christmas is: stuffed pasta in broth, capon, lamb, and salads. *Panettone* (a yeast cake filled with nuts and candied fruit).
- Easter: for Jews, who celebrate "pasqua ebraica" (Jewish Easter!), matzo-based desserts; Catholics, the hard-boiled egg.



# PORCHETTA

- Roast "suckling pig" (aka, baby pig)
- Massaged with salt, pepper, fennel pollen
- Requires, very much (!), that the skin still be there
- Also wants all the other Roman spices
- Served at roadside shacks, grand restaurants –but more the former







**Capocollo**

An air-dried, thinly sliced meat made from the neck and loin of a pig.



**Spalla**

Spalla is cured much like prosciutto, but it's leaner and made from the shoulder, not the thigh.



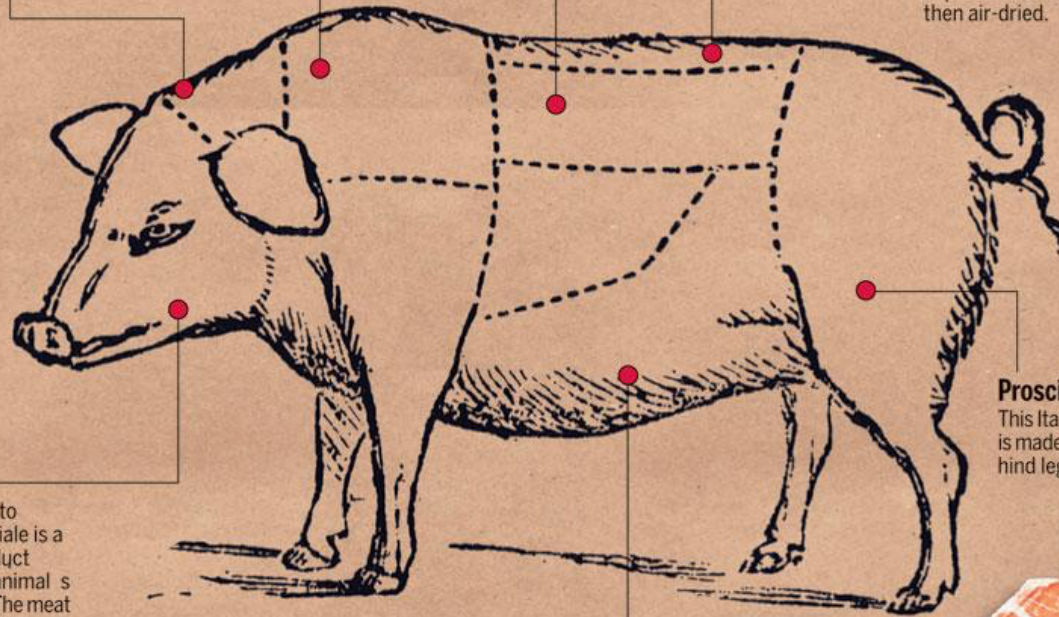
**Sopressata**

This dry, cured sausage and its cousin salsiccia is made from the pork loin and fat.



**Lardo**

This back fat resembles the creamy fat on a slice of prosciutto. It's salted, then air-dried.



**Guanciale**

Similar in flavor to pancetta, guanciale is a fattier pork product made from the animal's cheeks or jowls. The meat is buried in salt for a week, then air-dried for two months.

**Nduja**

A uniquely Calabrian dish, this spreadable, smoked pork is made from fatty pork meat and peppers.

**Pancetta**

Like bacon, pancetta is made from whole pork belly, cured in salt, then air-dried.

**Prosciutto**

This Italian cured ham is made from the pig's hind leg or thigh.

