

# Traditional food and wines in Ferrara

## Ferrarese Cappellacci with pumpkin

“Cappellacci di zucca ferraresi”, also named “Tortelli di zucca”, were mentioned for the first time in recipe books dating back to the Renaissance period when these delicacies were prepared for members of the Este family. The word ‘cappellacci’ comes from their vague resemblance to the shape of straw hats worn by local peasants during that period.

When the pumpkin has been baked in the oven or steamed, Parmesan cheese is added along with salt, pepper and nutmeg. The filling is then ready to be wrapped in a hand-made pasta (‘tortello’). This dish is currently awaiting the IGP mark (Protected Geographical Identification).



## Cappelletti with broth

“Cappelletti in brodo” are filled with pork meat. Their characteristic shape comes from the Greek mythology: they look like a belly button, and they are referred to the Venus's navel. Cappelletti are a typical Christmas dish. Their shape and substance are slightly different from those of the more common ‘tortellini’ (typical in Bologna).

## Pasticcio ferrarese di maccheroni

It has noble origins dating back centuries. Its preparation is rather complicated, and the result gives a very singular taste due to the conjunction of flavourings used. It is sweet pastry filled with ragout, béchamel sauce, mushrooms, nutmeg and truffle.

## **Salama da sugo**

The undiscussed symbol of Ferrara's gastronomy is always present on the table of gourmets. The first records on the salama da sugo date from the 15th century, with a letter by Lorenzo il Magnifico to Ercole II d'Este. A short poem written in 1722 and entitled "Salameide" was dedicated to this delicious dish.

The salama is an unusual mixture of pork meat with spices and red wine, sometimes enriched with Marsala wine or Brandy, and acquires its unmistakable taste after a long seasoning period, during which it remains either hanging from the ceiling or 'resting' under the ashes in a cool, airy and dark room.



## **Ferrara's bread - IGP mark (Protected Geographical Identification)**

Before the 12th century bread in Ferrara had the classical shape of a bun. The "Statuta Ferrariae", dating from the year 1287, stated strict rules for the preparation of bread. Then the "twisted" or "twined" bread, the ancestor of today's 'coppia', appeared in 1536 during a dinner party offered by Messer Giglio in honour of the Duke of Ferrara.

The famous 'coppia' of Ferrara has a central body, called knot or ribbon, with two twisted pointed breadsticks attached. Either crusty or soft, with or without olive oil, the bread of Ferrara is a great pride for Italian gastronomy.

Its secret is in the quality of the water and the ingredients, as well as the air humidity, the manufacturing and leavening method, and the correct temperature of the oven. The food specialities of Ferrara, and the coppia above all, always meet great success in international gastronomic events.

## **Pampapato cake or Pampepato cake**

During the 1600s, the nuns of the Corpus Domini convent in Ferrara created a cake to be sent to the great personages of the age. Cocoa had only recently arrived in Europe, thanks to Cortes. It was expensive, a luxury commodity, reserved only for the few and added as if a jewel, a precious powder.

In the form of a small pumpkin, the dough enriched with fine almonds or hazelnuts and tasty candied fruit, flavoured with the most fragrant spices and all covered with plain chocolate, the rich cake was ready and became the Pan del Papa (Bread of the Pope). But through the time, poetics or some lost aspect of language, the name was transformed into “Pampapato” and “Pampepato”, although it's really not pepato (peppered) at all. It is the Ferrara's Christmas cake.



## **Tenerina pie**

Famous since 1900s as Montenegrina Pie or Queen of Montenegro Pie, this pie was created for Elena Petrovich, Queen of Montenegro, wife of Vittorio Emanuele II the King of Italy. It has a sweet and creamy heart of chocolate, is very flat and is served with an icing sugar topping.

## **Ferrarese Ciambella**

A country shortbread with a lemon flavour, best served with local wines. It was called "Brazadela" in dialect (braccio destro) because it was served with right hand, while left hand served wine. This ancient recipe comes from 1250, and was prepared for very special events.

## **Bosco Eliceo wines - DOC (Controlled Designation of Origin)**

Over the centuries, wine growing in Ferrara has always meant the Uva d'Oro vine, whose origins can be traced back to the Etruscans in Spina, a flourishing city near Ferrara. The vine was probably grafted in **the Valli di Comacchio region** in 1528, when the Duke Ercole II d'Este married Renata di Francia (daughter of Louis XII). As a dowry, she brought a vine from Burgundy, the Côte d'Or (Uva d'Oro in Italian), which found the perfect habitat in the Dune Sabbiose (sandy dunes) of the **river Po Delta** and on the rises in the **Bosco Eliceo**, among holm-oaks and bushes.

The particularly damp and foggy environment, the strongly salty air and land, the constant proximity of the sea contributed to the formation of a grape with a very strong character. **The Bosco Eliceo wines (Fortana, Merlot, Bianco del Bosco, Sauvignon)**, with their light and aromatic taste, slightly pungent, whether red or white, perfectly combine with meat dishes, fish dishes, marsh game and eel.



**River Po Delta :  
The Valli di Comacchio**