



Cooking with
Viola Fuitoni

Italy by Ingredient: Burrata **5/26/2021**

If you know anyone who's not smitten with the utter sexiness of this fresh cheese, please invite them to this class and they'll be easily swayed.

It is said that burrata sees the light in the early 1900 when a pair of brothers from the province of Andria in Puglia made virtue out of necessity. When bad weather prevented them from delivering milk to the town, the Bianchinos transformed it into a sheet of mozzarella sealed around shreds of mozzarella making leftovers drowned in the milk's cream top. And the rest was burrata history.

The most prized burrata is still made in Andria and it has an IGP (Indicazione Geografica Protetta) from the Italian Ministry of Agriculture to safeguard its quality and the economy built around its production.

There are excellent burrata producers all over Puglia, and every chef has their favorite. Burrata pugliese is made from cow's milk, it ranges in weight from 100 grams to a whole kilogram. It is generally packed in a recognizable white bag held at the throat by green strings, though it is also common to find it in a hermetically sealed box in its whey to protect and prolong its freshness.

More recently burrata made from buffalo milk is produced especially in Campania and Lazio. It is still quite lovely, with a little tang and a rougher skin than the original cow's milk burrata.

Burrata is an experience in taste just as it is. But its delicate sweetness also makes it suited for a number of pairing that cross the food realm. I never cook burrata, it is an addition to a hot pasta or over a pizza just out of the oven. It also goes a long way on a salad and pairs with so many different vegetables, from winter root vegetables, to fall gourds, and spring greenery. And of course it is a heavenly match with tomatoes. It can also be lovely with fruit, I have enjoyed with peaches, blood oranges and watermelon. Many young Italian chefs pair it with fish. I had a particularly impressive dish last summer in Puglia of sagne 'ncannulate – a local rustic spaghetti – in a black garlic cream topped with raw purple shrimps from Gallipoli and burrata.

Today's recipes explore burrata's relationship with fish, truffles and tomatoes. Three use bread as vehicle, though they could stand by themselves. The third pairs it with another specialty of Puglia, cavatelli, and tomatoes coming from the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.



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Cavatelli con pomodori del Piennolo del Vesuvio e burrata

Cavatelli with roasted Piennolo del Vesuvio tomatoes and burrata

for 4 people

3 cups Piennolo del Vesuvio tomatoes packed in water (can be substituted with cherry tomatoes)

salt as needed

8 to 10 mixed herbs sprigs (thyme, oregano, marjoram, basil, mint all work)

1 or 2 garlic clove

black pepper to taste (or red chili flakes)

1/4 cup olive oil + some for final finishing

10 ounces cavatelli

150 to 200 grams burrata

Drain the tomatoes well and season them with 1 teaspoon of salt.

Pluck a few nice looking leaves for the final garnish of the dish and add the sprigs to the tomatoes. Smash and peel the garlic clove(s) and add to the tomatoes.

Toss the tomatoes well and place in a colander over a bowl to lose some moisture. Place in a baking sheet in one layer. Bake at 300° F degrees F for 25 to 30 minutes. Keep hot.

Bring 3 quarts of water to a boil and season it with 1 tablespoon of salt.

Drop the cavatelli in the water and cook until al dente – generally 1 minute shy of the time suggested on the package.

When the cavatelli are almost ready, transfer the roasted tomatoes into a warm serving bowl and eliminate the herbs and garlic. Mix in the olive oil then taste and adjust salt and pepper (or red chili flakes) to suit your taste.

Fish the pasta out of the water and transfer it into the bowl with the tomatoes. Toss and swirl well.

Open the burrata like a flower and place in the middle of the pasta. Drizzle with olive oil and garnish with the saved fresh leaves.

Each diner will get a portion that includes part of the burrata that they can mix into the hot pasta.



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Burrata e acciughe di Cetara

Burrata with Cetara anchovies

for 2 people

2 slices bread 1/2" thick
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 very thin slices of Meyer lemon
100 to 150 grams burrata
6 anchovy fillets

Toast the bread until crisp on the outside and still soft on the inside. Brush with olive oil while still hot.

Cut each slice of Meyer lemon in 4 wedges.

Divide the burrata in two and spread each half over the warm bread.

Line 3 anchovies on each slice and alternate with the lemon wedges. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil and serve while still warm.

Burrata e tartufo

Burrata with black summer truffles

2 slices bread 1/2" thick
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 small black summer truffle (about 1.5 ounces)
100 to 150 grams burrata
sea salt flakes

Toast the bread until crisp on the outside and still soft on the inside. Brush with olive oil while still hot.

Divide the burrata in two and spread each half over the warm bread. Slice some truffle over each slice. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil and sprinkle with salt flakes to taste.



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Burrata con pat  di tartufo alla spoletina

Burrata with Spoleto style black truffle paste

for 2 people

2 slices bread 1/2" thick
1/2 stalk green garlic (or 2 garlic scapes or 1 garlic clove)
1 small black truffle (about 2 ounces)
3 anchovy fillets
2 tablespoons parsley leaves + 6 to 8 for garnishing
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
red chili flakes to taste
salt as needed
100 to 150 grams burrata

Toast the bread until crisp on the outside and still soft on the inside. Brush with olive oil while still hot.

Roughly chop the green garlic and truffle. Place both in a small food processor. Add the anchovies, 2 tablespoons of parsley leaves, olive oil and red chili flakes to taste. Grind into a paste. Taste and add salt as needed to suit your taste – you may not need it at all because of the anchovies.

Divide the burrata in two and spread each half over the warm bread. Evenly drizzle the truffle paste over each slice, garnish with the whole parsley leaves and serve while still warm.



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Shopping List

Produce

- 1 or more herbs of your choice
- 1 green garlic stalk (or 3 cloves garlic)
- 4 or 5 parsley sprigs
- 1 Meyer lemon (regular also works)
- 1 or 2 small black summer truffles (depends if you are making both the 3rd and 4th dish or just one)

Dairy

- 2 to 4 100 grams burrata (depends on how many dishes you are making)

Pantry

- 1 box cavatelli
- 1 jar Piennolo del Vesuvio tomatoes (or 1 basket cherry tomatoes)
- 1 tin anchovies in oil
- bread (baguette or Italian or country all work)
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt
- pepper
- red chili flakes

Equipment List

- apron
- kitchen rags
- 1 big bowl for refuse
- 4 or 5 small bowls
- chef's, paring and bread knives
- bowl lined with colander
- sheet pan or shallow baking dish
- pot to cook pasta
- small food processor
- truffle shaver or peeler
- wooden spoons
- handheld strainer or spider
- serving bowl
- tasting spoons

Prepping List

- print recipes
- pull all ingredients and divide according to recipe
- pull all equipment and have within arm's reach