



Cooking with
Viola Fuitoni

Italy by Ingredient: Grana Padano 1/13/2022

Imagine living in a world that think of you as the lesser relative of considered just a cheaper alternative to Parmigiano Reggiano. I am here to dispel the myth. Grana Padano and Parmigiano Reggiano are fraternal twins, both wonderful and beloved, each with traits that guide a different path.

These are both grana style cheese – meaning the curd is reduced to the size of a rice kernel to achieve that somewhat crumbly, uneven texture. They are produced in the plains and valleys surrounding the Po river, Grana in the southern and Parmigiano in the northern areas. Both are PDO's (products of designated origin) and as such must adhere to a strict and almost identical protocol through every step of their production cycle. They are long lasting cheese whose extraordinary character is exalted by aging.

What then is the key difference? Fat.

While Parmigiano Reggiano uses whole milk, Grana Padano's milk sits through the night. In the morning the fat sediments are gathered and what is left behind is mixed with the milk collected in the morning to obtain a naturally skimmer milk.

Grana Padano's production is about 30% larger and leaves both whey and fat behind, generating more possibilities for crafting money making by-products.

Because of the lower fat content of the milk, Grana ages more quickly – it is ready to be certified at 9 months versus 12 for Parmigiano. The value of time impacts costs.

Last and by no means least, the lower fat content yields a cheese that, especially at its youngest, melts more easily in both the mouth and in food, with a sweet piquancy and a silky sensory experience.

The way that Grana Padano melts in a risotto is preferred in many areas. It is also wonderful for stocks and savory puddings. It works well with fresh summer fruit or rosé wines, with all those bright, vivacious flavors that would be overwhelmed by the assertiveness of Parmigiano.

My mother's refrigerator always had room for both, and to this day, so does mine.



Cooking with
Viola Fuitoni

Sformatino di Grana Padano

Grana Padano mini flan

for 3 individual size ramekins (4oz)

1 tablespoon softened butter
250cc heavy cream
2 eggs
75gr grated Grana Padano
white pepper to taste (black pepper also works)
grated nutmeg to taste
1.5 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Fill a small baking dish halfway with hot water. Heat the oven to 300 to 325° F.

Brush the ramekins with the softened butter.

Combine all the other ingredients in a pitcher and mix them well with a handheld blender until they are homogenous in color and somewhat foamy.

Pour the mixture in the buttered ramekins to about 1/2" from the rim.

Place the ramekins in the baking dish and bake for 30 minutes.

Run a small knife around the rim of each ramekin and tap on the counter a few times to loosen the bottom. Invert on a plate and shake gently to release.

Lift the ramekins and...voilà...a most flavorful and simple starter is ready.

You can serve your flan as is or with a light tomato sauce, or a vegetables cream (squash, spinach, corn). You could drip it with some traditional balsamic, or accompany it with some crisp bread slices.



Cooking with
Viola Fuitoni

Sablé di Grana Padano al pepe

Peppery Grana Padano shortbreads

2oz grated Grana Padano
2oz butter, diced and chilled
2oz AP flour
1.5 teaspoon cracked black pepper

Pulse all ingredients together in a food processor until you have pea sized pebbles. Turn out onto a piece of plastic wrap and quickly press together into a puck, preferably with cold hands. Enclose the puck, and push out the air by rotating the disk between your hands while running your thumbs from top to bottom along the edges.

Seal tightly and let rest in the refrigerator for at least half an hour and up to two days.

Line a sheet pan with parchment paper and turn the oven to 300° F.

To form the cookies, roll the dough into long cylinders of 1" diameter. Flatten slightly on top with lightly floured hands. Using a bench scraper, cut on the slant at 1-inch intervals to form diamonds.

Lay them on the sheet pan, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch between one cookie and the next. Place in the freezer for 10 to 15 minutes to harden, then bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until they are a lovely golden blond and slightly crumbly at the foot. Be mindful with the cooking time, as burnt parmigiano becomes quite bitter.

They are decadently crumbly when still warm, but try not to eat them all. Let them cool on a rack for your family and friends to enjoy. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.



Cooking with
Viola Fuitoni

Tagliolini beurre blanc e Grana Padano con tartufo nero

Beurre blanc and Grana Padano tagliolini with black truffle

for 4 people

1/4 cup dry white wine
6 tablespoon butter divided
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup grated Grana Padano
200gr dry egg tagliolini (or tagliatelle)
1 small black truffle

Reduce the wine by half in a wide saucepan and take off the heat. Whisk in 1 tablespoon of butter until it is completely melted. Return the pot to the stove over the lowest flame possible.

Gleefully whisk in the rest of the butter one tablespoon at a time – be mindful not to move on to the next tablespoon until the current one is completely melted and to not let the sauce come to a boil or the sauce will separate.

Cook the tagliolini al dente in 2 quarts of boiling salted water. Use tongs to transfer them to the sauce pan with the butter sauce and add 3 tablespoons of the Grana. Stir quickly over medium heat to melt the cheese. You can add a spoonful or two of starchy pasta water if the pasta appears too thick.

Divide on 4 warm dinner plates, shave with copious black truffle and serve right away with the remaining grated cheese on the side



Cooking with Viola Fuitoni

Shopping List

Produce

- 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

- 1/2 pint heavy cream
- 1.5 sticks butter
- 2 eggs

Pantry

- 1 small box egg tagliolini (or tagliatelle)
- nutmeg
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- flour
- salt
- pepper

Equipment List

- apron
- kitchen rags
- 1 big bowl for refuse
- 4 or 5 small bowls
- chef's, paring and bread knives
- small baking dish
- 3 4oz ramekins
- pot to cook pasta
- sauce pan for butter sauce
- cookie sheet with parchment paper (or non-stick)
- handheld blender
- food processor
- truffle shaver or peeler
- wooden spoons
- zester
- tongs
- 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