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The Italian Farmer's Table

Authentic Recipes and Local Lore from Northern Italy

By Matthew Scialabba and Melissa Pellegrino

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Two years ago Matthew Scialabba and Melissa Pellegrino quit their jobs, sold their cars, and moved all of their belongings into storage, to leave for Italy and pursue their dream of writing a cookbook about the agriturismo (working farms with accommodations and restaurants) of northern Italy. For four months they traversed the eight most northern regions of Italy, visiting thirty agriturismo and cooking in their kitchens, to learn authentic farm to table regional Italian cuisine.

The Italian Farmer's Table is the result of their efforts. A 300 page cookbook brimming with over 150 transcribed recipes, packed with photographs, anecdotes, and the pulse of agriturismo life. Its exploration into rural Italy is truly unique with original recipes that represent an Italian cuisine forged from the seasons and what can be grown locally. In writing *The Italian Farmer's Table*, Matt and Melissa adapted each recipe for the home kitchen, to ensure ease in recreating these wonderful dishes with readily available ingredients accessible to the home cook.

Matthew and Melissa are a husband-and-wife cooking and writing team, who met while living in Italy. Their shared passion for Italian food and culture led them to embark on many culinary journeys throughout the country. These experiences include apprenticing at a Roman bakery, studying winemaking at a Ligurian vineyard, graduating from a professional culinary school in Florence, and working and cooking together at several Italian agriturismo. They now live in Guilford, Connecticut, where Melissa works as assistant food editor at *Fine Cooking*, and Matt

works for an Italian wine importer that represents only high quality, limited production estates. In their free time they like to take long walks with their dog Japhy.

I would love to send you a copy of Matt and Melissa's new book for review consideration. Please let me know if you are interested. Kindest regards, Andrea

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Below, please find a few of Matt and Melissa's recipes taken from their book. Please also be sure to visit their website and blog at www.theitalianfarmerstable.com They are available for interviews.

Roasted Pork Tenderloin with Grape Sauce Filetto di Miale con Sugo d'Uva

Piemontese grapes tend to go toward making one thing: wine. But here the sweet delicate flavors of the grapes pair perfectly with the tenderness of the pork. Just don't forget to wash it down with a crisp white wine.

Ingredients:

- o 4 tablespoons (2 oz. / 60 g) unsalted butter
- o 1 tablespoon (1/2 fl. oz. / 15 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- o 2 pork tenderloins, 1–1 1/4 pounds (500–750 g) each
- o Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- o 1 cup red or green grapes (or a mixture of the two), cut into quarters
- o 1 tablespoon honey mustard
- o 1 tablespoon (1/2 fl. oz. / 15 ml) warm water
- o 1 tablespoon chopped thyme

Heat the oven to 350°F (180°C).

In a large ovenproof sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of butter with 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Season the pork tenderloins with salt and pepper. Sear the pork on one side until golden brown, about 5 minutes, then flip over. Place a few pats of butter on top of pork and finish

cooking in the oven, 25 to 30 minutes, or until a meat thermometer reads 140°F (60°C). Remove pork from the oven and place on a cutting board. Let the meat rest for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the sauce: Place the sauté pan, with the juice from the pork, back over medium heat. Add the grapes, and a pinch of salt and sauté until they release their juices, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the mustard, warm water, and thyme to the pan. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Cut the pork into medallions, and spoon the grape sauce over the pork. Serve immediately.

Serves 4–6

Radicchio with Horseradish, Apples and Asiago Cheese

Radicchio con Rafano, Mele e Asiago

The nose-tingling bite of fresh horseradish is much appreciated at the Friulian table. This warm salad highlights its ability to bring ingredients together, mellowing the chicory's bitterness and enhancing the natural sweetness of the apples. La Subida prefers the elongated, thinner radicchio di Treviso for a more elegantly plated dish, but feel free to use the more commonly found, round radicchio di Chioggia.

Ingredients:

- o 2 tablespoons (1 oz. / 30 g) unsalted butter
- o 3 heads radicchio Treviso, cut into quarters
- o Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- o 3 tablespoons (25 g) grated fresh horseradish
- o 2 Pink Lady apples, peeled, cored, and grated
- o 1/2 cup shredded Asiago cheese

Heat a heavy sauté pan over medium heat. Melt the butter in the pan and add the radicchio. Cook on one side until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes, then flip over, season with salt and pepper, and continue to cook, covered, until the radicchio is tender, 3 to 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, mix together the horseradish, apples, and cheese, and season with salt and pepper. Mound 2 tablespoons of the mixture on each individual plate. Place two wedges of radicchio over the apple mixture.

Serves 6

Polenta Gnocchi with Rabbit and Porcini Mushrooms Gnocchi di Polenta con Sugo di Coniglio e Porcini

In the polenta-eating world of northern Italy, these gnocchi take the grain to a higher level of sophistication. They are the perfect carrier for the rabbit ragu, absorbing and retaining the juices and flavors of the sauce.

Ingredients:

- o 1 recipe polenta (see page x)
- o 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- o 3 large eggs

- o 1 ounce (30 g) dried porcini mushrooms
- o 1 cup (8 fl. oz. / 240 ml) warm water
- o 1/4 cup (2 fl. oz. / 60 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- o 1 rabbit, cut into 8 pieces (about 2 pounds / 900 g)
- o Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- o 1 yellow onion, cut into fine dice
- o 2 stalks celery, cut into fine dice
- o 1 carrot, peeled and cut into fine dice
- o 1 cup (8 fl. oz. / 240 ml) white wine
- o 2 cups (16 fl. oz. / 480 ml) homemade chicken broth (see page xi) or canned low-sodium broth
- o 1 tablespoon chopped rosemary, plus more for garnish
- o 1/2 tablespoon chopped marjoram
- o 1 bay leaf
- o 12 ounces (340 g) cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters

Pour the polenta out on a sheet pan to cool slightly, about 15 minutes. In a large bowl mix the polenta with the flour and eggs to form a soft dough. Cut the dough into four even pieces. Roll each piece out into a 1-inch-thick rope, and then cut each rope into 1/4-inch gnocchi with a pastry cutter or knife.

Soak the dried porcini mushrooms in the warm water for 30 minutes, strain through a fine mesh sieve, and reserve liquid.

Meanwhile, in a heavy bottomed casserole pan, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium-high heat. Season the rabbit pieces with salt and pepper and sear on all sides until golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Remove from the pan and set aside on a plate.

Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to the pan, then the onion, celery, and carrot, and cook until they become tender and slightly caramelized, about 12 minutes. Add the white wine to the pan, bring to a boil, and reduce by half. Add the reserved mushroom liquid and the chicken stock and bring to a boil. Place the rabbit, rosemary, marjoram, and bay leaf in the pan, cover, and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for about 45 minutes, then remove the breast pieces. Continue to simmer the rest of the meat, covered, another 20 minutes. Remove the legs from the pan and put them with the breasts.

When cool enough to handle shred the meat, removing it from the bones. Strain the sauce through a fine mesh sieve, discard the vegetables, and skim the fat from the liquid and reserve.

Meanwhile, bring 6 quarts of salted water to a boil. Add the gnocchi and cook until they are tender and rise to the surface of the pot, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain well.

In a large sauté pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the porcini mushrooms and cook until they begin to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the cherry tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, and sauté until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the rabbit meat with 1/4 cup of the reserved cooking liquid and heat through, Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the gnocchi to the sauté pan and coat with the sauce, pour out into a large serving bowl, and garnish with chopped rosemary.