



Eat like an Italian...

RECIPES FOR LIFE, HEALTH & HAPPINESS

Lizzie Kamenetzky travelled to a magical place in Tuscany to visit La Vialla estate, a farming haven where the fruits of the land are nurtured into the finest examples of Italian cooking



RECIPES **LA VIALLA** PHOTOGRAPHS **CRAIG ROBERTSON**
FOOD STYLING **LIZZIE KAMENETZKY** STYLING **LA VIALLA**

ESTATE AGENTS
The Lo Franco
brothers, owners of
La Vialla farm in the
Tuscan countryside



Onion frittata, p65



mix-and-match menus.



Once upon a time...



The day I first saw Fattoria La Vialla, an estate in the middle of Tuscany, is etched in my memory. It's a fairy-tale place that casts a spell on all who visit. Set on 1,342 hectares of farmland in the hills near Arezzo, this is a place where the air seems that bit fresher, colours a shade or

two brighter – and the food tastes sublime.

La Vialla belongs to the Lo Franco family and is run by three brothers: Gianni, Antonio and Bandino. "We do everything ourselves," they told me. And they do, growing grapes, olives and vegetables organically and biodynamically (that ancient, mysterious system that follows the phases of the moon). The estate produces everything from award-winning wines to exquisite pecorino cheese and olive oil. I feasted on deep yellow sunflower honey, nutty pasta made from an ancient wheat called farro, and chunky cantucci biscuits dipped in the estate's elixir, vin santo.

For those visitors who book one of the pretty converted cottages dotted around the farm there are home-cooked meals to enjoy under the giant fig tree at the main farmhouse. The simplicity of Tuscan cooking, using only the best and freshest ingredients, shines through in these fabulous recipes from La Vialla's kitchens. There's a lot of olive oil, a lot of family heritage and a lot of sun-kissed passion in these dishes – and they taste good... »



UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
Everything on the estate is picturesque: the animals, the produce – even the truck



TUSCAN MIX-AND-MATCH MENU FOR 4-6

After the aperitif and antipasti, choose whichever first course, main course and dessert you want

Giuliana's strawberry sparkler

ANTIPASTI

Pecorino and rosemary crostini [v]

Peperotta (red pepper pesto) [v]

Olive pâté [v]

Onion frittata [v]

FIRST COURSES

Risotto with young red wine

Fusilli with ricotta and tomato sauce [v]

MAIN COURSES

Roast lamb

Chicken with sweet peppers

DESSERTS

Tiramisù della Vialla

Grandma Amelia's olive oil jam tart

Giuliana's strawberry sparkler

SERVES 6; MAKES 350ML

TAKES 5 MINUTES TO MAKE, PLUS
1 HOUR MARINATING

This is from the matriarch of the Lo Franco family, and it's a winner.

LA VIALLA'S TIP The sparkling wine tends to foam when it comes in contact with the strawberry mixture, so keep the carafe tilted at an angle when you pour. Mix gently to keep as much fizz in the wine as possible.

400g ripe strawberries (plus 6 strawberries, sliced – optional)

2 tbsp sugar

Squeeze of lemon juice

1 bottle chilled dry sparkling wine, such as prosecco

1. Hull the strawberries, cut into pieces and put into a bowl. Add the sugar and the lemon juice, then mix well. Chill in the refrigerator, covered, for at least 1 hour, then whizz to a pulp in a liquidiser or with a stick blender. Pass through a food mill or sieve, discarding the pips. Chill the mixture for a few hours (but no longer) until ready to serve.

2. Pour the cold strawberry mixture into a large carafe. Gradually pour in the sparkling wine, keeping the carafe tilted to one side (see tip). Gently mix with a large spoon, without agitating too much, so the wine doesn't lose its fizz. Serve immediately. Garnish the glasses with sliced strawberries, if you like.

PER SERVING 133kcal, 0.1g fat (no saturated), 1g protein, 16.3g carbs (15.5g sugars), trace salt, 1.1g fibre

Pecorino and rosemary crostini [v]

SERVES 4-6

READY IN 10 MINUTES

12 slices baguette or other bread

Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling

1 garlic clove, peeled

12 thin slices young pecorino

2 fresh rosemary sprigs, leaves stripped and roughly chopped

1. Preheat the grill to medium high. Put the bread on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Grill for 1 minute on each side until golden. Rub lightly with the garlic.

2. Top each with a slice of pecorino, then grill for 1 minute until the cheese melts. Mix a little of the chopped rosemary with some seasoning and olive oil, then spoon over the melted cheese and serve.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

227kcal, 7.4g fat (2.3g saturated), 8.5g protein, 34g carbs (1.7g sugars), 1.1g salt, 2g fibre

Peperotta (red pepper pesto) [v]

MAKES APPROXIMATELY 2 X 250G JARS

TAKES 10 MINUTES TO MAKE, 45 MINUTES TO COOK

LA VIALLA'S TIPS Before adding the garlic, soak it in water for half an hour and remove any green sprouts from inside the cloves. This will give the sauce a gentler flavour.

You could also use this as a sauce with pasta or rice, a topping for bruschetta, or as a side to add flavour to vegetable or meat dishes.

800-900g red peppers (about 6 large)

2 garlic cloves (see tip)

20 fresh basil leaves

30g pine nuts

30g pecorino

40g parmesan

4 tbs extra-virgin olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Put the peppers on a baking sheet in the oven and bake for 30-45 minutes, turning once or twice, until the skin begins to char. Transfer the hot peppers to a plastic bag, then seal (or put in a heatproof bowl and cover with cling film). When cool enough to handle, peel off and discard the skin and remove the seeds, then roughly chop the flesh.

2. Transfer to a food processor with the rest of the ingredients and whizz to a paste. Alternatively, pound in a large pestle and mortar or chop finely on a large chopping board. Serve as an antipasto on fresh crusty bread. »



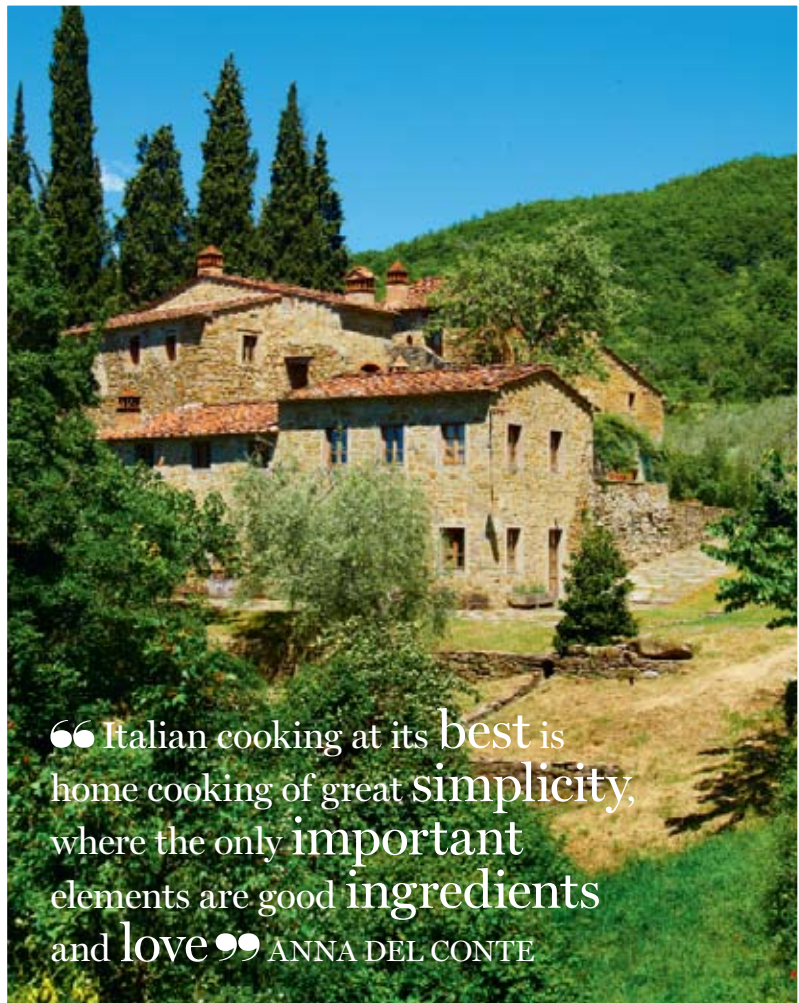
Giuliana's
strawberry
sparkler with
pecorino and
rosemary crostini

“The passion of the **Italian** is to produce something you like, that you can **share** with others. Making **food** is an act of **love**. Making it good is **respecting** that love, then enjoying it **together**”

ANTONIO CARLUCCIO

Olive pâté, p65, and
peperotta (red
pepper pesto)





PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

36kcal, 2.7g fat (0.7g saturated),
1.2g protein, 1.8g carbs
(1.6g sugars), trace salt, 0.6g fibre

Olive pâté [v]

MAKES 140-150G

READY IN 5 MINUTES

This simplicity of this recipe is the secret of its success and it's irresistible as an appetiser on fresh crusty bread, or on grilled or oven-warmed bread. It goes well with a glass of chilled prosecco.

120g pitted black olives
5g fresh parsley leaves
2-3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp balsamic vinegar

1. Whizz the black olives and parsley in a mini blender or in a bowl, using a stick blender. Stir in the oil and balsamic vinegar. Taste and stir in a pinch of salt if necessary.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

13kcal, 1.4g fat (0.2g saturated),
trace protein, 0.1g carbs
(0.1g sugars), 0.1g salt, 0.2g fibre

Onion frittata [v]

SERVES 4-6 AS AN ANTIPASTO

TAKES 5 MINUTES TO MAKE, 40 MINUTES
TO COOK, PLUS COOLING

4 (about 500g) large onions
5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
7 medium free-range eggs

1. Peel and thinly slice the onions. Heat 3 tbsp of the oil in a non-stick, ovenproof frying pan (about 20cm measured across the base), then add the onions. Season with a little salt and cook over a low heat for 30 minutes until translucent but not browned (you may need to add a couple of tablespoonfuls of water if the onions look dry). Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

2. Preheat the grill to medium-high. Crack the eggs into a measuring jug and beat gently with a fork, then add the cooked onions and stir through. Clean the onion pan, then add the remaining oil and place over a medium-high heat.

3. Once the oil is hot, pour the frittata mixture into the pan. Reduce the heat, then move the pan back and forth with small shakes, gently spreading the mixture with a wooden spoon, pushing the uncooked egg to the edges of the pan. Leave for 4-5 minutes.

4. Once the frittata looks like it is beginning to solidify, transfer the pan to the grill and cook for another 3-4 minutes until puffed up, golden and cooked through. Remove and leave to stand for 30 seconds. Cover with an upside-down plate, then carefully flip the pan over to remove the frittata. Serve as part of an antipasto platter.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

214kcal, 17.1g fat (3.4g saturated),
9.8g protein, 6.6g carbs (4.5g sugars),
0.3g salt, 1.6g fibre

Risotto with young red wine

SERVES 4-6 AS A STARTER

TAKES 15 MINUTES TO MAKE, 20-30 MINUTES
TO COOK

We use Vino Novo for this, La Vialla's Tuscan version of Beaujolais Nouveau – a young, fruity wine that gives an interesting flavour. This risotto is also unusual in that it uses olive oil instead of butter. Italians always serve risotto as a first course (primo piatto).

DELICIOUS. TIP This risotto tastes amazing, but the redness from the wine has a tendency to dull slightly on cooking, so sprinkle over some chopped parsley or extra grated cheese before serving.

3 medium onions, finely sliced
5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, peeled and left whole
4 good quality pork sausages, skin removed
400g risotto rice (arborio or carnaroli)
Glass (175ml) of red wine, such as Chianti (choose a recent vintage or one that has minimal oak-ageing)
1 litre chicken stock, hot
30g finely grated mature pecorino

1. Put the onions and 3 tbsp oil in a heavy-based frying pan, then fry over a low heat with the whole garlic

cloves for 8 minutes until softened. Add the skinned sausages and break them up using a wooden spoon.

2. Once the sausage pieces are lightly browned, add the rice, mixing well but delicately with a wooden spoon. Cook briefly, then remove the garlic cloves. Add the red wine, then let it bubble away over a higher heat for a couple of minutes until absorbed.

3. Keep the hot stock over a low simmer in another pan and add a ladleful at a time to the risotto, stirring gently all the time. When each ladleful has been absorbed, add another ladleful, still stirring. When the rice is almost ready (after about 20 minutes), season to taste with salt and plenty of black pepper.

4. The risotto is cooked when the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is soft and not too dry. Drizzle the risotto with 2 tbsp oil, sprinkle with the grated pecorino, then stir again gently. Rest the risotto for 3-4 minutes before serving.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

499kcal, 17.3g fat (4.6g saturated),
12g protein, 59.4g carbs (3.3g
sugars), 1.2g salt, 1g fibre

Fusilli with ricotta and tomato sauce [v]

SERVES 4-6 AS A STARTER


TAKES 10 MINUTES TO MAKE, 20 MINUTES
TO COOK

At La Vialla we call the ricotta and tomato sauce rosolina (because of its rosy colour). It has a wonderfully delicate flavour and is a kitchen staple on the estate. It's excellent for pasta gratins (with a cheesy béchamel sauce), and a spoonful of the sauce on a pizza gives it a creamy, fresh flavour. You can also use rosolina sauce to fill crêpes or omelettes.

4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
500g fresh (or tinned) cherry tomatoes
Small handful of fresh basil leaves
200g fresh ricotta, beaten lightly with a fork
2 tbsp grated pecorino
300g fusilli pasta »

AND TO DRINK...

After the fizz, crack into a cold, refreshing, unoaked Italian white such as Gavi or fiano to go with the antipasti. Another option here is a very dry rosé (Italian if you can find it, otherwise one from Provence). These wines will also be great with the pasta and chicken, but for the risotto choose a lively red such as a dolcetto. The lamb needs a chunkier, richer red like a Sicilian syrah, and for the desserts, serve small shots of delectable, sweet and sticky Marsala.



Roast lamb,
Tuscan style

“Olive oil is the most interesting **ingredient** in Italian cooking, produced from north and south, in **gardens** and on farms. It is a **condiment** that changes the taste of a dish. The **power** of Italian cooking is the **simplicity** of it and the use of simple ingredients”

FRANCESCO MAZZEI

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat, then fry the garlic for 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes and a pinch of salt, put the lid on, then cook for 10 minutes or so. Uncover, then crush the tomatoes with a fork, letting them bubble away for another 2-3 minutes. When the sauce is cooked and thickened, add half the basil leaves, then quickly mix in the ricotta and pecorino. Remove from the heat immediately – you don't want to cook the ricotta.

2. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in boiling salted water according to the packet instructions, drain, reserving some of the pasta's cooking liquid, then stir through the ricotta sauce. If needed, add a couple of spoonfuls of the reserved liquid to give it a better coating consistency. Top with the rest of the basil and serve.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

487kcal, 20.6g fat (6.8g saturated), 17.6g protein, 62g carbs (6.2g sugars), 0.3g salt, 4.8g fibre

Roast lamb

SERVES 4-6

TAKES 10 MINUTES TO MAKE, 1 HOUR 30 MINUTES TO COOK

In Italy, this dish is made with a thigh joined to the loin, with the kidney still attached, but for home cooking we recommend visiting a good butcher and buying a mix of separate cuts – perhaps half a leg, half a shoulder and half a rack of lamb.

2 garlic cloves

1 small fresh rosemary sprig, leaves stripped

1 tbsp salt

1kg mixed cuts of lamb (such as half-leg, half a shoulder and ribs)

4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

800g potatoes, quartered

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C/fan130°C/gas 2. Finely chop the garlic and the rosemary leaves, then mix with the salt and a good grinding of black pepper. Rub the lamb well with this seasoning, then tie the meat together with string so all the pieces fit snugly next to each other. Put in a

roasting tin, drizzle over the oil, then cook in the oven for 45 minutes, basting every 20 minutes or so.

2. Increase the heat to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4, then tumble in the potatoes, tossing well in the cooking juices. After 20 minutes, pour the vinegar over the lamb (this will give it a lovely brown colour) and cook for a further 5-10 minutes. Remove from the oven, then transfer the meat to a carving board to rest. Return the potatoes to the oven to crisp up for 15 minutes. Slice the lamb, then serve with the crispy potatoes.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

429kcal, 21g fat (6.8g saturated), 36.4g protein, 24.6g carbs (1.9g sugars), 2.8g salt, 2.4g fibre

Chicken with sweet peppers

SERVES 4-6

TAKES 30 MINUTES TO MAKE, 1 HOUR

10 MINUTES TO COOK

If you like your food spicy, add 1-2 red chillies, chopped with the garlic. This is excellent served with rice or pasta for a complete, one-course meal.

1.2kg free range chicken, jointed into 8 pieces (see deliciousmagazine.co.uk/how-to-joint-a-chicken)

5 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

4 garlic cloves, crushed

Glass (175ml) of dry white wine

4-5 tbsp passata

3 large red or yellow peppers, sliced

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C/fan 140°C/gas 3. Season the chicken pieces well with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large, shallow casserole over a high heat and brown the chicken pieces all over – you may need to do this in batches. Put all the chicken in the casserole with the crushed garlic, stir carefully for 30 seconds or so, then pour over the white wine, allowing it to bubble away and reduce by half.

2. Add the passata and the sliced peppers. Transfer the casserole, uncovered, to the oven for 1 hour, stirring carefully halfway through, until the chicken is tender and cooked and the sauce is thickened. Season to taste, then serve. >>



Chicken with sweet peppers – simple but wondrous



Tiramisù della Vialla, p68

mix-and-match menus.



Grandma Amelia's jam tart is legendary



The Lo Franco family show Lizzie proper Tuscan hospitality

THANK YOU

to the Lo Franco family for hosting the **delicious.** team at La Vialla. For more information and to order a catalogue featuring the wonderful food from the estate, visit la-vialla.com.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

288kcal, 12.6g fat (2.3g saturated), 33.4g protein, 5.9g carbs (4.6g sugars), 0.2g salt, 1.8g fibre

Tiramisù della Vialla

SERVES 4-6 WITH LEFTOVERS
READY IN 20 MINUTES

LA VIALLA TIP This is a lighter version of the classic dessert, made with ricotta instead of mascarpone and eggs. For a variation, try dipping half the biscuits in strong coffee,

half in vin santo or Marsala, then alternate the layers.

DELICIOUS. TIP Vin santo is a golden dessert wine from Tuscany, with flavours of nuts, caramel and toffee. It's available from Italian delis and online wine merchants.

500g fresh ricotta (ideally sheep's ricotta, available from natoora.co.uk)
150g golden caster sugar
200ml vin santo or sweet, golden Marsala
40 cantucci biscuits (from Italian delis and online), plus extra to serve
Small piece of dark chocolate to garnish

1. Beat the ricotta with a fork, then slowly whisk in the sugar and half the vin santo or Marsala (or to taste). Pour the remaining wine into a bowl, then quickly dip the cantucci, one by one, into it (see tip).
2. Cover the bottom of a serving dish (or divide equally among 6 individual dishes) with half the biscuits, then cover them with half the ricotta cream. Continue with another layer to finish the ingredients (the ricotta should be abundant).
3. Grate the chocolate over the top to decorate, then serve with extra cantucci biscuits.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

440kcal, 18.5g fat (6.2g saturated), 11.4g protein, 31.5g carbs (49g sugars), 0.2g salt, 0.1g fibre

Grandma Amelia's olive oil jam tart

SERVES 4-6 WITH LEFTOVERS

TAKES 30 MINUTES TO MAKE, 45-50 MINUTES TO COOK, PLUS COOLING

FROM THE LA VIALLA KITCHEN...

The preparation of a jam tart would usually involve using butter in the pastry. At one time, in Tuscan homes, butter was relatively unknown and was considered too costly and 'heavy'. Instead, olive oil was used in every dish, sweet or savoury. The pastry here, prepared with olive oil, doesn't need chilling and tastes of times past – a more intense and authentic flavour, yet still as crumbly and light as a butter pastry.

75ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing

350g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
150g sugar

½ tsp baking powder

3 medium free-range eggs

Zest of 1 lemon

1 tbsp vin santo (see previous tip)

300g of your favourite fruit jam

3-4 tbsp icing sugar (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C/fan 140°C/gas 3. Grease and line a 25cm tart tin, then set aside. In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar and baking powder with a pinch of salt. Make a well in the centre, then beat 2 of the eggs and add with the oil, lemon zest and vin santo. Mix, using a wooden spoon, until it comes together, then transfer to a floured work surface. Cut a third off the pastry and set aside, then form the rest into a ball.
 2. Carefully roll out the pastry to a circle the thickness of a pound coin, then carefully line the greased tart tin, making sure the pastry fits snugly and any excess overhangs the sides. You may need to use quite a lot of flour when rolling as the oil makes it a little sticky.
 3. Cover the pastry with an even layer of the jam (in this part of Tuscany it's usually fig or blackberry. You could even cover half of the tart with one flavour and half with another).
 4. Roll out the smaller bit of pastry into a circle the thickness of a pound coin. Cut into 2cm wide strips using a sharp knife or fluted pasta cutter, then lay out on top of the tart in a lattice. Place the last few strips around the edge to finish off the decoration. Remove the overhanging pastry with a sharp knife. Beat the remaining egg, then glaze the pastry all over with it.
 5. Bake for 50 minutes until biscuit-brown. If the pastry browns too soon, cover with foil. When cooked, transfer to a cooling rack and leave to cool completely. If you like, dust with icing sugar before serving.
- PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)**
606kcal, 15.1g fat (2.6g saturated), 9.6g protein, 115g carbs w(66.4g sugars), 0.3g salt, 2.4g fibre 