



Alta Murgia National Park



EXPO and REGIONS

FROM THE PROTECTION
OF BIODIVERSITY
TO THE QUALITY PRODUCTIONS

Paddaccio, cacioni, tritico and lampascioni. And more, lucanica, pappaluni, giuraje, farrate, solina, gruttazzo. Strange names, often ancient and mostly unknown, but hiding extraordinary cheeses, delicious desserts, rare vegetables, exquisite sausages, old cereals. In other words one of the most precious treasures of Italy: our excellent food.

What few people know is that many of these delicacies are produced and guarded in the Italian's Parks, where protected nature and human labor have been inextricably linked since thousands of years. Some of these products were already part of the typical regional cuisines, others have been saved from extinction and are back on the tables thanks to the tenacity of expert farmers whose work has been promoted and supported by their own parks and local administrations.

What comes out is a scenario characterized by tastefulness, healthy food and local agricultural traditions which are perfectly bound together with natural landscapes and flora and fauna conservation.

From the protection of biodiversity to quality productions: **Expo and Regions** is an initiative designed to discovery Italian gastronomic delights and to connect Milan Expo with small villages, fields and kitchens of Italian families. A journey across the places where food is produced, across our

cultural and natural heritage, across Italian traditions and warm hospitality. But it is also the story of the connection between each local product with its territory: history, art, lifestyle. This initiative will allow us to discover over 80 high quality products, many different flavors and many different regions, all rich in beauty and valuable natural diversity.

The initiative is coordinated by the President of the Council of Ministers - Department for Cohesion Policies and performed with the operational support of Invitalia, the National Agency for inward investment and economic development. The project involves all the Italian regions which have conceived a local package, and five ministries: Foreign Affairs; Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies; Heritage, Cultural Heritage Activities and Tourism; Education, Universities and Research; Environment and Protection of Land and Sea.

ALTA MURGIA

★ THE PARK ★

The dinosaur footprints seen in an abandoned pit by the gates of *Altamura*, the solemn towers of *Castel del Monte*, the grazing flight of the lesser kestrel searching for prey. These are three of the main landmarks used to build a map of *Parco dell'Alta Murgia*, which from the coast of Barletta and from

the olive trees of *Andria* rides up to the *Basilicata* border.

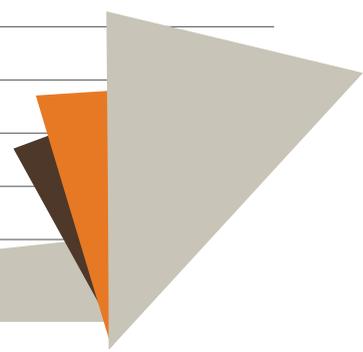
The park consists of 68 thousand hectares of an Apulia dominated by plains, a landscape of rocky ridges, dolines, sinkholes, karst caves, forests of oak and pine trees which tell stories of wandering shepherds, of stewards engaged in the processing of milk and wool, or in the production of grain, almonds, wine. For millennia, in this area, Nature's actions blended with men's, who built fortified farmhouses to defend themselves from the attack of raiders, dug graves in stones, made grand constructions such as *Castel del Monte* - one of the most important marks left by Federico II, the philanthropic Emperor who spoke six languages and loved to hunt with hawks on these highlands. But *Castel del Monte* is far from being the only artistic masterpiece found in the park. One can still admire the *Altamura* cathedral, which has a typically gothic face and two 16th century bell towers. The *trulli* which, in addition to giving the territory an extra appeal, represent a lesson in bioclimatic architecture, which has become even more relevant nowadays because of our climate change. The ravines between *Matera and Taranto*: around thirty limestone gorges on which were built architectural gems such as the rupestrian churches.

This has also been known as the land of the 'yellow gold', the wheat which covered massively extensive fields. And even though this culture is now a lot smaller in area and economical value, the wheat's scenic mark - as well as the

production of the excellent bread made from it - remains one of the key features of the park. Also important are the olive groves, which distinguish the *Murgia's* landscape which, with their ancient plants with tormented outlines, give the area a fine variety of oil. Finally, the sheep farms continue to produce an assortment of local cheeses.



www.parcoaltamura.it



Lampascioni (Tassel hyacinth)

The *pampasciuni* (Apulian dialect word for *lampascioni*) is a distant relative of the garlic, but it differs from it in both shape and taste. It is a herbaceous plant (*Leopolia comosa* is its scientific name) common in the mediterranean territory. It is distinguishable for its mauvish flowers which bloom in spring and last until the end of summer. This plant's most appreciated feature in *Alta Murgia's* culinary tradition, however, is its bulb. Said bulb is found underground and harvested four years after it's been planted; it resembles a small onion and has a bitter taste. These plants are primarily (and almost exclusively) eaten in the regions of Apulia and Basilicata, they are harvested by hand and serve in the preparation of many traditional recipes. They also possess a multitude of health-restoring properties.

Valued since the times of the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans, the *lampascione's* virtue have been celebrated by the famous Greek doctor Galeno as well as many other scholars of the antiquity, who believed this plant to be aphrodisiac. It is rich in flavonoids, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, iron, copper, manganese and magnesium, vitamins and mineral salts, and a substantial amount of water and fibers. In addition to having low calories (ideal for keeping in shape), it has diuretic, laxative, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and softening properties. It also helps lower blood pressure and percentage of fat in the blood, increases appetite and stimulates digestion. Furthermore, a peculiar feature of the *lampascioni* is the mucilage, a substance which - when in contact with water - inflates, producing softening and refreshing effects to the intestine. They can be served raw in salads, pickled as appetizers and cooked, as ingredients for making traditional sauces.

Cardoncelli mushrooms

Famous since ancient times, the *Cardoncello* (*Pleurotus eryngii*) can be found throughout the Murgian territory and is considered one of its most exquisite mushrooms. It is dark, fleshy, firm and of unmistakable taste. During Medieval times it was particularly valued and was considered a powerful aphrodisiac. So much so that it was banned by the Roman Inquisition for allegedly leading Christians away from the idea of penance.

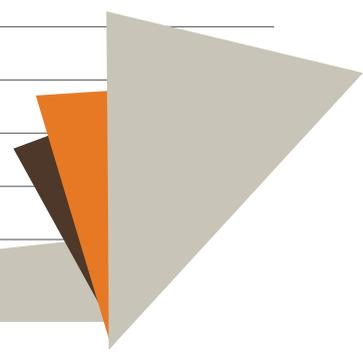
The *Murge* - in particular its highlands - are where this mushrooms grows the most (be it planted by men or not) because this poor grassy territory is its ideal habitat, growing on top of its natural host, the *Eryngium campestre* and *maritimum* (another kind of mushroom). It is considered an "honest" mushroom for it can't be mistaken for any poisonous species; "discreet", because its fragrance isn't piercing but soft and elegant; and "democratic", because with its balanced scent it doesn't overpower but complement different flavours. For its qualities it has gained the interest of the best chefs in the world.

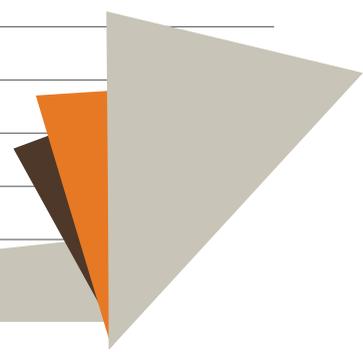
The *Cardoncello*, in addition to being a delicacy, is important from a dietetic stand. In fact, the mushroom when fresh consist between 85 and 90% of water, 4-5% of sugar, 3,8-4% of protein, 0,4-0,7% of fat, amino acids and vitamins. It is also used in hypocaloric diets for its low content of fat and energy (28 calories every 100 grams). Furthermore, scientific research has recently shown that the mushroom might have benefits such as lowering the cholesterol and increasing body immunity.



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Cicerchie (*Lathyrus sativus*)

Until a few years ago, the *cicerchia* was barely ever used. Recently this vegetable has regained its role as a typical peasant dish. Its taste is similar to the ones of the broad bean and the chickpea. It has found its ideal habitat in *Alta Murgia* and has shown itself to be valuable in the grain rotation, increasing its quality. The *cicerchia* started being harvested in ancient Egypt, and was used in the production of different breads and soups. The seed - which is different for every kind of plant and resembles a small rock - grows in hard soil and adverse conditions. It resists droughts and low temperatures. This vegetable is harvested at the end of July but can be grown all year long.

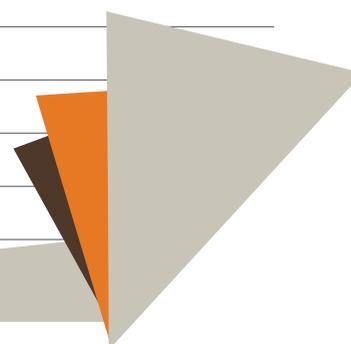
Rich in calcium and phosphorus, the *cicerchia* shows a bitter, stodgy taste, which makes it necessary for it to be soaked in salt water for a minimum of twelve hours and then boiled accurately. It is a very beneficial bean, it contains protein and starch, vitamin B1, B2 and PP and dietary fiber. Because of this it is recommended in various practices of alternative medicine, including nutritional oligotherapy for memory loss and brain exhaustion in students and elderly people. The *cicerchia* is also great for soup, flour and vegetarian dessert recipes, but is also very present in traditional cuisine. It is particularly good in traditional Murgian peasant broths and soups.





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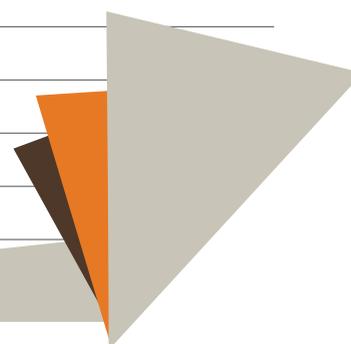
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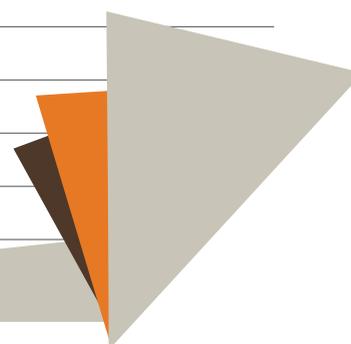
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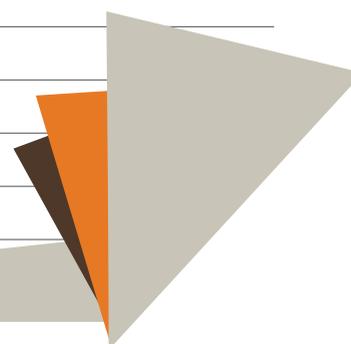
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Tagliolini with lentils

How to prepare:

Soak the lentils for at least two hours in cold water. Wash and finely chop celery, carrot and onion. Sauté the vegetables in a pan with a bit of oil and after a few minutes add the diced smoked bacon. Brown the bacon and add the drained lentils, rosemary and tomato sauce.

Mix thoroughly and cover it up with the vegetable broth. Cook it all in a closed pot for about 40 minutes, until the broth is almost completely evaporated. Towards the end of cooking remove the rosemary and add a couple ladles of boiling water. Add salt and the tagliolini, which will cook in this mixture.

Cook the pasta, adding, if the compound dries up, more boiling water.

Tagliolini 350 g.
4 tbsp tomato puree
lentils 200 g.
smoked bacon 80 g.
1 carrot
½ onion
1 stalk celery
vegetable broth 600 ml.
rosemary (add to taste)
olive oil (add to taste)
salt (add to taste)
black pepper (add to taste)



ALTA MURGIA

★ THE PRODUCTS ★

Apulian Canestrato cheese

The Apulian *Canestrato* is a mature cheese with low water levels, obtained from sheep's whole milk (*Gentile di Puglia*). Its name comes from the straw baskets (*canestri*) in which it is left to mature. It so happens

that these baskets called *fiscelle*, are also one of the most traditional artisanal products in Apulia. The processing of the *Canestrato* cheese is made through the use of a characteristic technology derived from Apulian tradition. It can be a very long process depending on the size of the cheese, which can weight between seven and fourteen kilos. During processing the molds are put inside the baskets, which provide the crust's unique wrinkled and rough aspect. They are then pressed to eliminate the humidity. The salting - crucial part in the production of the cheese - is made by spreading sea salt from Margherita di Savoia's salt flats around the cheese. Once out of the baskets, the cheese is left to mature for at least 90 days in a cool place and is turned over and brushed multiples times. After this period the rough and thick crust is soaked in extravirgin olive oil. The total maturing period lasts a minimum of three months for a fresh product and ten for a grating cheese. The flavour is strong and slightly spicy, but every *Canestrato* has its own unique features because its fragrance changes depending on the kind of pasture and milk, and on the lamb's rennet (which is left to dry with orange and lemon peelings and nettle leaves).

Pallone di Gravina cheese

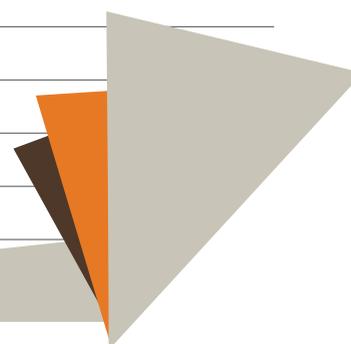
The *Pallone di Gravina* cheese is made with fresh cow's milk and has a round shape and a spicy flavour. The name comes from its ball-like shape, ideal for tying and transporting it by donkey during transhumance. Nowadays, at Gravina, only a few cheese factories and farms can guarantee a constant production and the high-quality milk necessary for it.

In 2012, the local Slow Food 'chapter' and the *Murgiamadre* association created the so-called Slow Food Presidium for the *Pallone di Gravina* cheese. It is processed from January to March. The cheese is obtained by coagulating raw whole cow's milk with liquid veal rennet or, in some cases, kid rennet. After being broken into grains the size of a hazelnut, the curd is left to deposit. Subsequently the mass is collected and deposited on a work surface where the phase of the acidification, the most delicate part of the process which lasts approximately 12 hours, begins, after which the dough is sliced and heated with boiling water to create the right consistency. Once the typical round shape is created (through a slow process of manipulation), the cheese is left in brine for 24-36 hours, depending on its weight, and then dried. After that the *Pallone* is left to mature in natural cellars, where it develops piercing fragrances. After three months, it becomes spicy and the cheese turns golden and the scent shows hints of caramel which get mixed with the herbal small typical of the area. Its weight varies from one to ten kilos.



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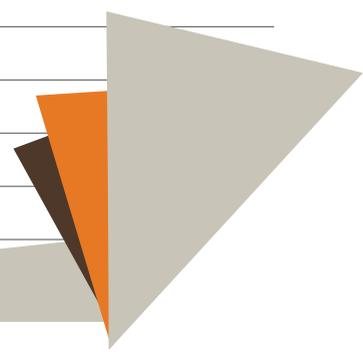
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ALTA MURGIA

★ THE RECIPES ★

Fried Lampascioni (Tassel hyacinth)

The *Lampascione*'s authentic traditional recipe, which has been handed down from generation to generation.

Lampascioni 400 g.

extra virgin olive oil (add to taste)

salt (add to taste)

black pepper (add to taste)

How to prepare:

Clean the *lampascioni* eliminating their bottom where you find the rootlets and wash them thoroughly. To remove their bitter taste it is advisable, after they are cleaned, to leave them to soak in cold water overnight.

Before frying, make a deep cross-shaped cut from the tip of the *lampascione*, being careful not to cut it completely. Dip them in boiling oil and take them out once they start opening, taking on the appearance of a blossoming flower.

Serve still hot with salt and black pepper to taste.

Broad beans and chicory

How to prepare:

If you use dried beans, after being rinsed, leave them to soak in cold water for at least six hours.

For fresh beans, proceed as usual, peeling and washing them with running water.

Cook the beans slowly over low heat in lightly salted water for about two hours, until they become soft. On the side, clean and boil the chicory.

After two hours add to the pan with the beans two tablespoons of olive oil and stir vigorously in order to make it a creamy puree.

Transfer the chicory onto a pan with garlic and olive oil, and sprinkle it with chili. Toast the slices of bread (one for each diner) on a plate or in the oven. Fill four earthenware bowls with two tablespoons of broad bean puree, putting a good amount of chicory in the middle, add a drizzle of olive oil and serve with the toasted bread.

Dried broad beans 300 g.
(or 600 g of fresh beans.)

chicory 600 g.

olive oil (add to taste)

salt (add to taste)

pepper (add to taste)

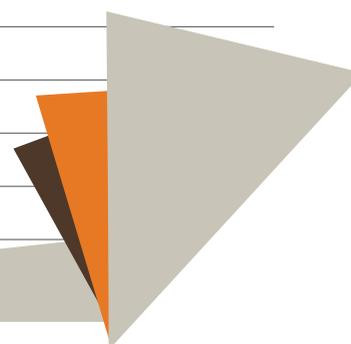
chili (add to taste)

crusty bread (sliced)



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MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE

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EXPO
E TERRITORI



parco nazionale*
dell'**alta murgia**

Alta Murgia National Park

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