



# Pollino National Park



MANGIA PARCO

# 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.

POLLINO

## ★ THE PARK ★

The ancient *Patriarca* (patriarch) represents the dean of a species which survives here and on Mount Olympus, where it keeps the memory of the Greek gods alive. We are talking about the *Pinus hel-dreichii*, better known as the Bosnian pine, *loricato* “with a cuirass” in Italian. It gets its name from its

characteristic corrugated plates which climb up its trunk, resembling the metallic bodice worn by Roman legionaries. This outpost of veterans resists on the peaks of Serra del Prete and Dolcedorme. They are living symbols of a long battle against natural enemies and occasional vandalistic attacks laboriously stemmed by the Pollino National Park.

The Bosnian pine is the symbol of an arching mountain chain which goes from the Tirreno sea to the Ionio sea: 191 thousand hectares which include the Pollino mountains (2248 metres going through the Basilicata and Calabria border), the Orsomarso mountains (with their rocky peaks over the beech valleys), and the Monte Alpi complex.

It is a landscape made of lava rocks and big rift valleys; plateau areas, with sinkholes, dolines, moraine deposits; deep gorges such as the spectacular one crossed by the fast Raganello river; placid ponds gathered in small clearings; impressive beech forests and mountain meadows. A wide variety of environments that hosts a wide variety of life forms: otters and wolves, diurnal and nocturnal raptors, deer and salamanders.

The Pollino - a clear biodiversity island - is also a bridge for different cultures, including food ones. It carries flavours which change with the transition between slopes and distant traditions (both in space and time), such as

the ones brought by Albanians who came to reside here centuries ago. The famous Pepper of Senise (a Lucan specialty) coexists with the Red Aubergine (typical of the Calabrian side), while the *Mischiglio* - a reinvention of the more traditional pasta made with chickpea flour, barley, durum wheat, beans and oats - is a specialty that seems to agree with all kinds of agricultural and gastronomic traditions.

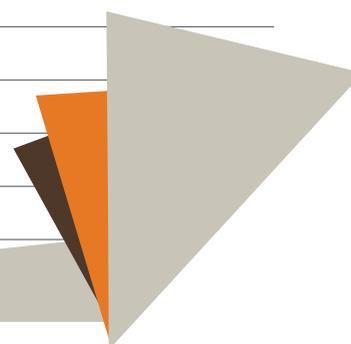


[www.parcopollino.gov.it](http://www.parcopollino.gov.it)



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## Pepper of Senise

It is among the best-known Lucanian specialties. Its bond with the land, its cultivation - which is made still today using natural methods - as well as its incredibly typical features have made it a product recognised all around Europe. For this reason, it has gained a PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) title in 1996. It is one of the main components of the Lucanian rural cuisine. It can have a pointed, truncated or hooked shape and is usually about 10-15cm long. Green or purplish red,



it is characterised by its small size and thin pulp (1.5 to 2.2 mm). The stalk is well soldered to the berry and doesn't come off even after the fruit has been dried. The dry product must be sold in necklaces of varying length (from 1.5 to 2 m). The flavour is sweet. It is sold fresh, dried and in powder form.

The production zone includes the areas around Senise which overlook the Sinni valley and the Agri river. As soon as this pepper arrived at Senise - between the 16th and the 17th Century - farmers were able to take possession of it. The variety selected by these farmers through the course of the centuries excels in markets so much that many have been the attempts to dishonestly sell other products as the original. Initially this solanacea grew and developed in a self-consumption based agriculture, later becoming a culture increasingly more specialised and therefore able to assure an income.

The drying of the Peppers of Senise is carried out according to local natural methods through indirect exposure to sunlight. The peppers are placed on long wreaths hanging in sunny and ventilated sites. The peppers are then quickly put in the oven in order to eliminate any moisture, therefore facilitating their eventual subsequent milling to obtain their famous powder. Many traditional dishes are made

with the Peppers of Senise. When fried in hot oil and salted, they are called "cruschi", meaning crispy, and accompany cheeses and fresh vegetables, such as beans or salads. The use of the powder obtained from these peppers enhances the preparation of many Lucanian meats, to which it confers taste, color and an excellent seasoning. It is produced in Senise and in twelve other small towns overlooking the valleys of the Sinni river and its tributary Serrapotamo. Sown between February and March and transplanted in May, it is harvested in the middle of summer, in the first fortnight of August.

## Biscotto a Otto ('Eight shaped' biscuit)

The *Biscotto a Otto* is a simple *scaldatello*, meaning a biscuit which is heated in boiling water and then baked. Its peculiarity is its eight shape: a magical symbol of infinity. The ingredients are plain flour, water and salt, but it is exactly the simpleness of these ingredients to make the biscuit so special. The flour must be of the ancient *Carosello* grain - a soft mountain wheat cultivated between 600 and 1000 meters above sea level, whose ear appears shaven, (*carosata* in dialect).

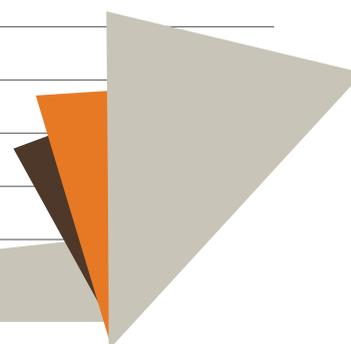


The characteristic water is taken from Calda, where the water is moderately sulphureous. Because of its uniqueness, the product will soon be inserted in the ALSIA (Lucan Agency of Development and Innovation in Agriculture) list. These typical biscuits are mostly used in a dish called "soup in the wine". The biscuit is crumbled and drenched in low wine glasses, for a yesteryear meal. It made up for a great appetizer while waiting for *rascatieddi* and *maccarune* to be cooked or as an after meal, since biscuits and wine were both home-made and cheap.



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## Cardoncelli in olive oil

This traditional preparation was used to store and preserve the mushrooms in pots throughout the year. The *cardoncelli* roasted in olive oil are a perfect accompaniment to roasted red meats and a full-bodied red wine.

### How to prepare:

Carefully wash the *cardoncelli* mushrooms: they have numerous sipes and therefore it is advisable to rinse them in cold running water, then continue with paper towels or a damp cloth. Air dry the *cardoncelli* on a towel and pat them gently.

Heat a grill and cook the mushrooms for about 4 minutes, first from the side of the cap and then on the other side (2 minutes per side). During this process, pass some rosemary soaked in oil over the mushrooms.

Once grilled, the mushrooms are cut into coarse cubes and seasoned with a mixture of olive oil, chopped parsley, garlic sliced and without the shoot, salt and pepper to taste. Leave the mushrooms to rest for a few minutes and either serve them still warm or store them in glass jars, soaked in the seasoning compound.

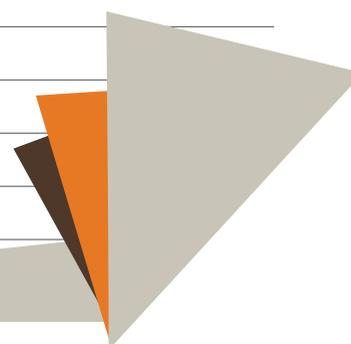
*Cardoncelli* mushrooms  
600 g.  
olive oil  
parsley  
1 clove of garlic  
rosemary to taste  
salt to taste





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## Mischiglio

This is the Queen of traditional pastries, served on the wealthiest tables even before the Unification of the country in 1861. However, some documents



show that the product already existed in the 16th Century. It is prepared with a flour which was originally made of four parts: chickpeas, barley, durum wheat and beans, sometimes with the subsequent addition of a fifth element, the oats. This mixture can be made into two kinds of pastry: *rasciateddi* and long

*strascinati*, known also as *tapparelle*. These can be stuffed with *cacioricotta* cheese and dry peppers, following a recipe which is still served in several restaurants in the Park: a mixture of modern and traditional. What makes this product unique is the fact that the vegetables are put directly in the dough. .

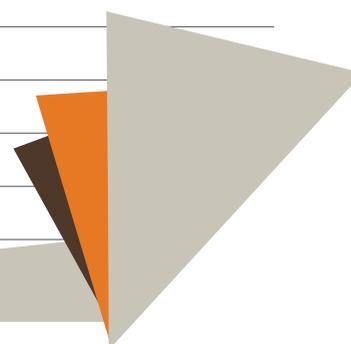






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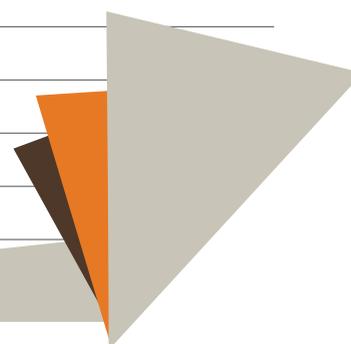






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POLLINO

★ THE PRODUCTS ★

## White Beans of Tondino and Poverello of Rotonda

These legumes are typical of the Pollino area, certified by the DOP (Protected Designation Origin) and grown mainly in Valle del Mercure. They are sown in the first half of June and need to be in areas 600 meters above sea level, preferably in places where the summer temperatures don't go over 30 degrees, making them rich in simple sugars. The sowing is done by depositing from 5 to 12 seeds in each of the traditional *postarelle*: small square containers put in straight rows. Because they are climbing crops, both the *Poverello* and the White Bean need to be supported by stakes. Farmers usually make them out of chestnut poles or special nets. Hand-picked in two or three steps between September and October, they are sold as fresh, green pods, which still need to be either shelled or dried. The seeds are oval and round, white yellowish, with no variegation.

These unique kinds of bean are a strong testimony of the past and carry old and delicious recipes: escarole and white beans, cabbage and beans, potatoes and beans, "*minesta mpastata*" beans and "skin" (pork rind), lagane and beans (homemade pasta). In recent years, their value has been recognised even outside the familiar nucleus it dominates, being used in farmhouses as well as local festivals.



## Red Aubergine of Rotonda

This particular vegetable, typical of Rotonda, is a Slow Food Presidium since 2002. It is small, about the same size as an apple, orange coloured while still unripe and more and more red as it ripens. More than an aubergine, it looks like a persimmon or a tomato, so much so that it is known as *merlingiana* a *pummadora* in the area.

It should be eaten as an appetizer or side dish to meat (roast and/or grill), in combination with light red wines. It is usually consumed pickled, not fresh,



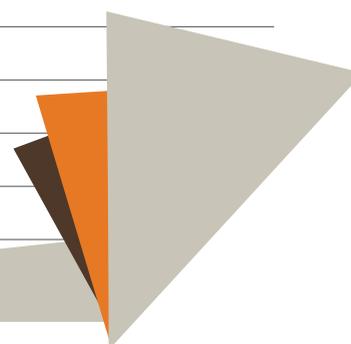
but its tasty and tender leaves - which differ markedly from those of the common aubergine, both in size and shape - are highly appreciated as well. Sought for its distinctive flavour, it has a intense fruity fragrance, a pleasantly spicy taste and a slightly bitter aftertaste. Another peculiarity is represented by its fleshy pulp, which

does not tarnish after cutting, as is the case for the common aubergine. This strange vegetables (*Solanum aethiopicum*) is native to tropical Africa and arrived in Italy towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, as evidenced by a study conducted in 1995 by G. Langhetti based on the testimonies of the elders. Despite its excellent organoleptic characteristics it is only known locally.



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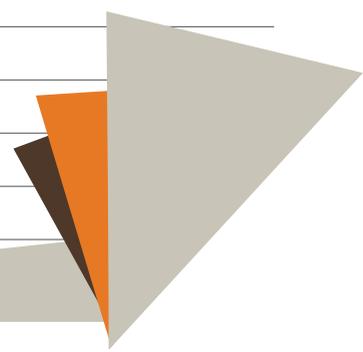






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## Fried dried peppers

Typical recipe of the Basilicata, which uses the sweet peppers of Senise, now mostly used as an appetizers or a cocktail dish, once a symbol of the feast and the arrival of summer.

### How to prepare:

Wash the fresh peppers, dry them thoroughly and sew them together from the stem with a needle and cotton thread. Arrange the peppers close together to form a necklace and let them dry in the sun for a few days, bringing them indoors after dark.

Once dry, divide each pepper in two halves and remove the stalk and the majority of the seeds (but not all, because they give it a distinctive flavour). Divide each pepper in half again and wipe gently with a dry cloth, never bathing them. Pour the oil in a pan and put the garlic in it while still cold. Heat the oil for a few minutes, until the garlic is golden. Take it off, turn off the heat and pour in 3 pieces of peppers at a time, making them fry for 3 seconds per side.

The fried dried peppers “*cruschi*” can be kept for several months in a sealed glass jar. Their cooking oil makes up for a tasty sauce, perfect for dressing pasta.

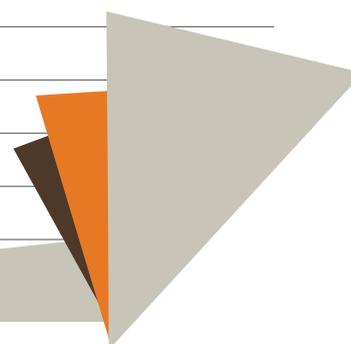
4 sweet peppers of Senise  
1 clove of garlic  
oil to taste  
salt to taste





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POLLINO

★ THE RECIPES ★

## Picciddat

Near the border with Calabria, in ancient times, this sweet bread shaped like a doughnut was born. It is an Easter period traditional dish.

Strong flour type 0 500 g.

flour for bread type 00 500 g.

lard 100 g.

11 medium eggs

caster sugar 250 g.

milk 125 ml.

grated zest of one lemon

dry yeast 50 g.

active dry yeast 5 g.

½ cup of vegetable oil

1 medium egg

2 raw eggs with the shell of  
the preferred size (for  
decoration)

### How to prepare:

Sift the flours in a large bowl, add the sugar and yeast and mix together. Arrange the flour on a heap, make a hole in the middle and add 10 eggs, the milk and the lemon zest. Start kneading and slowly add the lard (cut into pieces). Continue to knead for 25-30 minutes, until the dough is smooth.

Make a ball with the dough, put it in another bowl, cover it with a damp cloth and let it rest for a couple of hours.

After that, start working with the “bread folds”: spread the dough with your fingers in a rectangular shape, fold it like a wallet, turn it 90 ° and fold it again. After these steps, make a ball again and put it in a bowl covered with plastic wrap for long leavening (about 8 hours). Passed these 8 hours put the ball of dough in the fridge and leave it there for another 4 hours. After these 12 hours of leavening, take the dough and spread it on a board with your hands and then cut it into 4 equal wedges. Within each segment draw a rectangle, roll it up on itself along the larger side and form a long loaf of a diameter of 6-7 cm. Braid two loaves at a time, making them into a ring (you will get two “doughnut” braids) around a cylindrical

mold so that during baking the central hole does not close. Brush the surface with vegetable oil, place the bread in the oven and let it leaven for another five hours.

Passed the last few hours of leavening, preheat the oven to 180 °C after taking the two bread buns that will nearly triple in volume out of it.

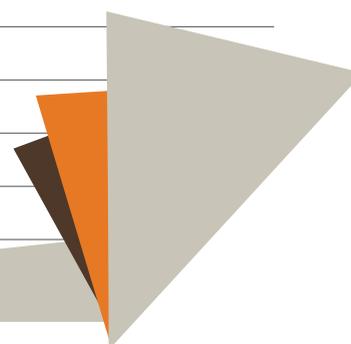
While the oven heats up prepare the compound to “paint” the *picciddat*: beat an egg with two tablespoons of milk and two tablespoons of sugar. After this, put a raw egg (with the shell) at the centre of each ring of bread and brush them with the mixture of milk, sugar and eggs.

Bake the bread for about 40 minutes. Remove it from the oven and serve the next day.



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POLLINO

★ THE PRODUCTS ★

## Lentil of Mormanno

This is a small lentil, which can vary in colour from pink, to green or beige, probably of Middle Eastern and Asian origins. The lentil of Mormanno was believed to be lost until a few years ago. The technicians of the Regional Agency for Agricultural Development Services of Calabria (ARSSA) have recovered a small amount of seeds from farmers that had kept them for their own consumption and has decided to promote the plant's re-cultivation. The lentils used to be planted in marginal, less fertile, shallow areas, which



were not intended for other crops more economically interesting such as wheat, barley, oats, corn and potatoes. They were sowed without any special care other than the occasional elimination of weeds. Nowadays, seeding is made following straight rows, for a better organisation during the harvesting process, but as before, no work

with special treatments, herbicides or chemical fertilizers is done. The seeds are sown in April - there used to be an Autumn plantation in the past -while the harvest takes place in August when the plants are already dried in the field. The lentil of Mormanno has been studied for a long time, based on its genetic characterisation and prior biochemical analysis. This data allows for a quick identification of the original seed, preventing counterfeiting. Cooking is fast: soaking isn't necessary and the lentils are made in thirty minutes.

## Bocconotto of Mormanno

These are delicious shortbread pastries, processed strictly by hand, typical of Mormanno. They are common in the territory of the Pollino National Park, a few kilometers away from Basilicata and from the coasts of Alto Tirreno Cosentino. According to tradition, their name (*bocconotti* or *bucchinotti* in dialect) derives from the word "bite", as their small size will allow the eater to consume them "in one bite", precisely.

They are oval, according to the traditional recipe; weight about a kilo and can be stuffed with mustard, cherry jam or apricot jam. However, there are also varieties with different shapes and fillings: round or scallop shaped, with almond paste, chocolate, nuts, raisins and honey. Their medium-long shelf life (they can last up to a few days outside the fridge) and their nutritional value have made them a crucial part of the confectionery tradition of Calabria. This pastry was also put in the PAT (Traditional Food Product) list by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.



## Pecorino cheese of Morano

Currently produced only in the town of Morano Calabro (CS), this cheese has ancient origins as evidenced by numerous documented accounts such as the quote contained in the “*Nuova Enciclopedia Agraria*”, written by Achilles Bruni (1859). At Morano Calabro, an ancient medieval village in the heart of the Pollino National Park, farming has always



played an important role in the local economy. In fact, since 1810 the sheep population, with a total of 12,300 heads, accounted for 16% of the animals present in the whole Hither Calabria.

According to researchers of the Inquiry of Agriculture 1877-1884, in the first decades after the unification of Italy Calabrian sheep’s cheeses were very appreciated in the market of Naples. The wandering nature of sheep farming and the lack of a proper processing structures in the area prevented the creation of a cheese industry, for the benefit of the artisanal methods that have been preserved to this day. There are also many other varieties of *pecorino* cheese produced in Pollino. They are made exclusively with raw milk from animals raised on pasture, even up to 1000 meters above sea level.



POLLINO

★ THE PRODUCTS ★

## Felciata

The *Felciata* cheese, in dialect: *'a filicèta*, has ancient origins and belongs to the traditions of pastoralism of Morano Calabro, a country that in 1810 had 12,300 head of sheep. The cheese takes its name from the

ferns from which it receives its unique aroma. It is made with goat's milk in the summer, with the addition of a small portion of sheep's milk, when the pastures give the best in aromas, scents and flavors. The milk is filtered with ferns and then heated in a copper vat (34 degrees). After that, the makers add goat or lamb's rennet, leave it to coagulate and, towards the end, arrange the sprigs of fern on the curd.

The latter, after about half an hour is collected with the *cucchiera* (typical tool made of maple wood) and is transferred in mulberry or walnut buckets, taking care to alternate between homogeneous layers of curd and ferns. Nowadays, glass and ceramic containers are often used instead. The *Felciata* cheese should be eaten fresh, just made, when it is still soft and warm. This delicious cheese has always enriched the tables of the nobility of the place, so much so that they used to call it Bread of Angels. Moreover, it is said that woodworkers would exchange a typical bucket in exchange for luscious cheese.



## Moscato di Saracena

*Moscato di Saracena* is a sweet wine made from *moscatello*, *guarnaccia*, *malvasia* and the fragrant *odoacra* grapes. The nectar is obtained through a particular process which can apparently be traced back to the Sixteenth Century, a time when even the Pope's cellars kept large stocks of it. The aromatic *moscatello* grape, harvested at the right point of ripeness, is hung on hooks for 15,



20 days. This helps concentrate sugars and flavourings through withering - operation which, in other grapes, is achieved by heating the juice obtained after a light pressing. The dehydrated berries then undergo a careful manual selection followed by a gentle pressing. The two musts are then assembled and begin their long fermentation process in wooden barrels. The

result is an intensely fragrant wine with bright amber colour. The resinous and aromatic notes join aristocratic hints of dried figs and exotic fruits, almonds and honey. To the palate it maintains elegance and finesse, good persistence, good balance, and a pleasant bitter note.

POLLINO

## ★ THE PRODUCTS ★

### Gruttazzo cheese

It is a soft cheese, produced mainly with raw goat milk mixed with small amounts of sheep's milk and obtained by the addition of liquid calf rennet. The shape is irregular and the crust is covered with a characteristic white mold. It can be eaten at the beginning of flowering, that is after about one month of maturing, when the taste is characterized by a slight acidic but delicate flavour. Or after a few months of aging, when it acquires a very intense flavour.



### Bread of Cerchiara

Although it is produced in very small quantities (only three bakeries make it every day), this bread is still an excellent baking product. The secrets to its preparation are yeast, wheat flour (60%), bran (40%), the right time to rise, the light mountain water (we are at about 700 meters above sea level) and the baking with wood, with the addition of the religious cross sign made with the baking pole once the bread is done. The bread of Cerchiara is also exceptional for its dimensions: it weighs between 2 and 3 kilos, the shape is round with a bulging side (*rasella*) obtained by folding the dough over itself. The forms rest in large wooden chests lying on a towel before being shaped and baked in, brought to about 300 degrees and fed with chestnut and beech wood. The result is a fragrant bread, never chewy, aromatic and pleasant even 10 days after its preparation.





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E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE

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Pollino National Park

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