



## APPETIZERS

### CROSTINI AND BRUSCHETTA

Almost every meal in Tuscany begins with a selection of toasted bread topped with delicious seasonal spreads--in spring based on fresh vegetables, in winter reverting to such staples as a liver spread and lard with sausage, in January reverting to the simplicity of the peppery new olive oil. Bruschetta refers to a slice of regular Tuscan bread, toasted (preferably over an open flame), rubbed with garlic, anointed with olive oil and topped with whatever is handy. Crostini are small rounds from a "frusta," or a baguette-like long, thin bread, toasted and topped, generally with more spreadable concoctions like olive paste or goat cheese. Perhaps Bruschetta is more rustic and Crostini are more refined, but both are delicious--and their variations are endless. Here are a few suggestions:

#### Bruschetta al Cavolfiore (Castello Banfi)

1 head cauliflower  
1 clove garlic  
Extra-vergine olive oil  
salt & pepper to taste

Remove the large leaves from the cauliflower and boil it in salted water--careful not to overcook to the point that it falls apart. Remove from water, drain, and break into pieces to be placed on top of slices of bread that have previously been toasted and rubbed with garlic. Douse generously with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and abundant black pepper. Optionally, you can also sprinkle on some peperoncino. Suggested wine pairing: Serena Sauvignon Blanc

#### Bruschetta or Crostini ai Fegatini (Castello Banfi)

1 lb (400-500 grams) chicken liver  
1 lb (500 grams) ground veal  
parsley  
1 medium onion  
1/2 veal spleen  
2-3 teaspoons tomato concentrate  
chopped capers  
anchovy paste or finely chopped anchovy

Fry the parsley and finely chopped onion in olive oil, when the onion is golden add the ground veal and cook until browned. Separately, boil the livers in water for a few minutes, then mix with the cooked ground veal and the spleen in a blender to make a spreadable consistency. Return to the frying pan and brown again, adding a splash of white wine. Stir in the tomato concentrate which was dissolved in a bit of warm water, the capers and anchovies, and finish cooking for 1-2 minutes more.



### Crostini agli asparagi (Castello Banfi)

2 lbs (1 kilo) asparagus  
olive oil and butter for frying  
warm water  
salt & pepper to taste  
1/4 cup (50 grams) heavy cream

Finely dice the asparagus, and fry in butter and olive oil. Add some warm water to soften, season with salt and pepper. Once the asparagus are tender, add cream and then mash the asparagus with a fork to a spreadable consistency. Bruschette Miste (Ristorante Boccon di Vino, Montalcino)

### Bruschette Miste (Ristorante Boccon di Vino, Montalcino)

Goat cheese and tomato (self explanatory)

### VEGETABLE PUREE - FOR 10 PEOPLE:

8-1/2 oz (250 grams) Lentils  
8-1/2 oz (250 grams) Chick Peas  
8-1/2 oz (250 grams) Cannellini beans  
salt, extra vergine olive oil, tomato concentrate--to taste  
2 cloves garlic  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary  
1 peperoncino

Boil the vegetables and drain them; meanwhile fry the garlic, rosemary, and some of the peperoncino in the olive oil and then add the vegetables with a bit of their water. Add salt to taste and tomato concentrate for a touch of color. Pass through a food mill and add a bit of oil. Place on top of the toasted bread slices with a piece of bacon on each. Suggested wine pairing: San Angelo Pinot Grigio or Fontanelle Chardonnay.

### SALSA BALSAMICA ETRUSCA IN CUISINE

In the use of Balsamica in cooking two main rules should be considered: unprocessed, it is very "individualist" (it easily covers other condiments), whereas on cooked foods, tradition calls for Balsamica almost always last in the sequence of the ingredients foreseen in a recipe. Balsamica enhances the flavors of the single ingredients and enriches the following dishes which are superbly accompanied by our wines. Your own imagination will provide the rest! I Sapori del Castellano (the lord of the castle's dressing). Recommended as a vegetable dip, and as a dressing for green and mixed salads, mushroom salads, vegetable salads

1 Tbsp. Salsa Balsamica Etrusca  
3 Tbsp. Castello Banfi "Extra-Vergine" olive oil  
1 Tsp. olive paté

Mix the three ingredients in a terracotta bowl. Stir with a wooden spoon until a smooth blend is obtained. Combine with vegetables just before serving. Suggested wine pairing: Le Rime Pinot Grigio/Chardonnay



### Fiori di Zucca Fritti (fried zucchini flower)

1/2 cup (100 grams) flour  
1 Tbsp. Castello Banfi "Extra-Vergine" olive oil  
1/2 cup (100 grams) soft bread crumbs  
1 cup (250 grams) milk  
20 zucchini flowers, still closed  
5 anchovy fillets  
1 Tbsp. chopped parsley  
Salsa Balsamica Etrusca  
Salt and pepper

Combine flour and oil with enough water to obtain a not-too-liquid batter. Soak the bread crumbs in the milk and strain it. Shorten the stem of the zucchini flowers, take out the pistil and stuff with the bread crumbs mixed with the anchovy fillets and parsley. Coat the flowers with batter and fry in boiling oil. Season with salt and pepper. Drain on kitchen towel. Sprinkle generously with Salsa Balsamica and serve immediately, hot and crispy. Suggested wine pairing: Principessa Gavia.