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bon appétit

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Drink Like a Sicilian

For decades the island made sugary swill in plastic jugs for locals. Now Sicilian wine (the good stuff, in bottles) is sold at cool wine bars and shops. Seek out bottles from these regions. —BELLE CUSHING

Etna

Producers like Cantina Benanti and Grazi make high-acid reds that are elegant and complex; the grapes are grown on jet-black volcanic soil thousands of feet above sea level.

Cerasuolo di Vittoria

Ruby-red stunners from the island's southeast balance light Frappeto grapes with herby Nero d'Avola ones. Hunt down wines made by Arianna Occhipinti.

...and Everything Else

The chaotic island has 22 regions, so here's one easy way in: Look for labels that say DOC Sicilia, which ensures quality. Also, try any wine from Planeta, the family behind Sicily's wine renaissance.

Squid, Lemon, and Zucchini Blossom Fritto Misto

SERVINGS During summer months, find zucchini blossoms at specialty grocers, or at farmers' markets. Halved scallions can be used instead, and small shrimp can stand in for the squid.

- 2 large egg whites, room temperature
- Kosher salt
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2½ cups club soda
- Vegetable oil (for frying; 6–8 cups)
- 1 lb. baby squid, cleaned, bodies and tentacles separated, patted dry
- 1 lemon, sliced into very thin rounds, seeds removed, patted dry
- 8 zucchini blossoms, stamen removed (stems left intact)
- Olive Oil Aioli (see recipe) and lemon wedges (for serving)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A deep-fry thermometer

Whisk egg whites and a pinch of salt in a medium bowl until soft peaks form.

Whisk flour in a large bowl to remove lumps. Create a well in the center and gradually add club soda, whisking from the center outward to incorporate and blend, until batter is the consistency of heavy cream (you may have some club soda left over). Fold egg whites into batter; cover and chill 30 minutes.

Fit a large heavy pot with thermometer; pour in oil to 4" up sides and heat over medium-high until thermometer registers 350°. Working in 3 batches and returning oil to 350° after each, dip squid into batter, letting excess drip back into bowl. Fry, turning occasionally to brown evenly and separating pieces as needed, until golden and crisp, about 2 minutes (squid may spatter in oil, so be careful). Using a spider or slotted spoon, transfer to a paper towel-lined wire rack; season with salt.

Working in 2 batches for each, repeat process with lemon rounds, then zucchini blossoms. Serve fritto misto with aioli and lemon wedges.

Olive Oil Aioli

MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP A food processor takes the risk out of making an aioli, is faster, and yields an aerated, lofty dip.

- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup olive oil
- Kosher salt

Pulse yolk, garlic, and lemon juice in a food processor to combine. With the motor running, drizzle in oil, drop by drop at first, then increasing to a slow, steady stream; process until aioli is thick and light. Season with salt.

DO AHEAD: Aioli can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.

Zucchini, Potato, and Fontina Pizzezzas

SERVINGS We've included Gyngell's recipe for pizza dough, but if you prefer to use store-bought, we promise not to tell.

- 1 ¼-oz. envelope active dry yeast (about 2¼ tsp.)
- Pinch of sugar
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for surface
- 2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more

- 6 Tbsp. olive oil, divided, plus more
- 2 small red waxy potatoes (about ½ lb.), scrubbed, very thinly sliced
- 1 red onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 medium zucchini, very thinly sliced
- 4 oz. Fontina cheese, grated (about 1½ cups)
- Flaky sea salt
- Coarsely ground black pepper

Whisk yeast, sugar, and 3 Tbsp. warm water in a large bowl. Let sit until surface is foamy, about 5 minutes. Add 1½ cups room-temperature water, then add 1 cup flour, whisking until smooth (mixture should be the consistency of pancake batter). Add 2½ cups flour and 2 tsp. kosher salt and mix with a wooden spoon until a shaggy dough forms.

Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead with your hands, adding more flour as needed to prevent it from sticking, until dough is smooth and supple, 5–10 minutes (it will be very soft). Transfer to a large oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let rise in a warm, draft-free spot until doubled in size, 1–1½ hours.

Divide dough into 4 equal pieces and form into balls. Place on an oiled rimmed baking sheet and cover with plastic wrap; let rise in a warm, draft-free spot until balls of dough are nearly doubled in size, 40–50 minutes.

Meanwhile, place potato slices in a colander and rinse with cold water. Drain, season with kosher salt, and let sit, tossing occasionally, until softened, 10–15 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and toss with onion, zucchini, and 2 Tbsp. oil; set aside.

Preheat oven to 450°. Working with 1 ball of dough at a time and keeping remaining dough covered while you work, roll out dough on a lightly floured surface into 10" rounds.

Heat a dry large cast-iron skillet over medium. Pour 1 Tbsp. oil into skillet and cook a dough round until bottom is golden brown and top looks dry, about 1 minute. Flip and cook just until bottom is lightly golden, about 1 minute. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet and repeat with remaining 3 Tbsp. oil and rounds of dough (you should be able to fit two pizzezzas per baking sheet if you overlap them slightly).

Top pizzezzas with Fontina cheese and reserved potato mixture; season with kosher salt. Bake, rotating baking sheets once top to bottom and back to front,



until crusts are golden brown and crisp and cheese is bubbling, 10–15 minutes. Remove pizzettas from oven, season with sea salt and pepper, and drizzle with oil.

Roasted Red Peppers and Cherry Tomatoes with Ricotta

SERVINGS This high-summer salad hits every note on the sweet (red pepper), sour (tomato), salty (ricotta and anchovy), and bitter (olive) scale.

- 4 red bell peppers, halved, seeds and ribs removed
- 6 oil-packed anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 cup basil leaves, divided
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. plus ½ cup olive oil
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ cup fresh ricotta
- ¼ cup pitted small black and/or green olives
- Flaky sea salt

Preheat oven to 375°. Place bell peppers, skin side down, in a shallow baking dish and top with anchovies and garlic. Tear ¼ cup basil leaves over top, season with kosher salt and black pepper, and drizzle with 2 Tbsp. oil. Bake until peppers are tender but still hold their shape and are slightly charred around edges, 35–45 minutes. Let cool.

Meanwhile, blend remaining ¾ cup basil and remaining ½ cup oil in a blender until smooth; season basil oil with kosher salt and black pepper.

Arrange bell peppers on a platter. Top with tomatoes, ricotta, olives, and more basil, then drizzle with basil oil and season with sea salt and black pepper.

Dorade with Potatoes and Burst Tomato Sauce

SERVINGS Dorade is also known as sea bream and orata; you can substitute with red snapper or black bass.

TOMATO SAUCE

- 3 Tbsp. pine nuts
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt
- 3 Tbsp. golden raisins
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- ¼ cup chopped mint
- 3 Tbsp. drained capers
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

DORADE AND ASSEMBLY

- 2 lb. small waxy potatoes
- Kosher salt
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced, seeds removed
- 4 sprigs mint
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 6 bay leaves
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 8 6–8 oz. dorade filets

TOMATO SAUCE Preheat oven to 350°. Toast pine nuts on a rimmed baking sheet, tossing once, until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Let cool.

Toss tomatoes and 1 Tbsp. oil on a another baking sheet; season with salt. Roast until softened, 25–30 minutes; let cool slightly.

Meanwhile, place raisins in a medium bowl and pour in boiling water to cover. Let sit until plump and softened, 8–10 minutes. Drain and return to bowl.

Add pine nuts, garlic, mint, capers, vinegar, red pepper flakes, and remaining 2 Tbsp. oil to raisins and mix well. Gently mix in tomatoes; season with salt.

DORADE AND ASSEMBLY Increase oven temperature to 425°. Cook potatoes in a pot of boiling salted water until fork-tender, 15–18 minutes. Drain; let cool, then slice lengthwise ¼" thick. Toss potatoes with lemon, mint sprigs, garlic, bay leaves, and ¼ cup oil in a shallow 3-qt. baking dish; season with salt and pepper. Pour wine over.

Season filets with salt and pepper. Place, skin side up, on top of potato mixture and drizzle with remaining 2 Tbsp. oil. Roast until filets are cooked through, 12–18 minutes.

Transfer filets to a platter, placing skin side up, and tent with foil to keep warm. Continue to roast potatoes until edges are browned, 10–15 minutes. Serve dorade with tomato sauce and potatoes.

Ricciarelli

MAKES ABOUT 12 These traditional almond cookies hail from Tuscany; their texture is chewy, similar to macarons.

- 1¼ cups slivered almonds
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup powdered sugar, divided, plus more for dusting
- 1 large egg white
- Pinch of kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°. Toast almonds on a rimmed baking sheet, tossing once, until golden, 5–8 minutes; let cool.

Pulse almonds, lemon zest, and ¼ cup powdered sugar in a food processor until finely ground. Whisk egg white and salt in a large bowl to medium peaks. Whisking constantly, gradually add ¼ cup powdered sugar; whisk until egg white is very stiff but not dry. Fold in almond mixture and vanilla. Drop heaping tablespoonfuls of batter onto a parchment-lined baking sheet; using wet hands, flatten tops and press sides to make rounded diamond shapes. Chill 30 minutes.

Bake ricciarelli until edges are lightly golden and firm and centers are still a little soft, 10–12 minutes; let cool on baking sheet. Dust with powdered sugar.

Frozen Peaches with Strawberries and Mint

SERVINGS Poached frozen peaches eat like fruit-shaped sorbet and look like a three-dimensional sunset.

- ¼ cup sugar
- 6 large ripe peaches (about 3 ½ lb. total), halved, pits removed
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 3 sprigs spearmint or mint
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup small strawberries, halved lengthwise

Sprinkle sugar evenly across bottom of a large straight-sided skillet or Dutch oven and place peaches, cut sides up, in a single layer on top. Scrape in vanilla seeds and add pod; scatter spearmint over. Pour in water to come halfway up sides of peaches. Bring to a very gentle simmer over low heat, stirring once or twice just to dissolve sugar. Cook peaches, turning once, until tender but not falling apart, 5–10 minutes. Let cool.

Pluck out vanilla pod and spearmint from pot; discard. Stir in lemon juice. Remove skins from peaches (they should slip off easily). Transfer peaches, cut side down, to a 3-qt. shallow baking dish and pour poaching liquid over. Freeze until peaches are icy all the way through but still soft enough to cut with a spoon, 45–60 minutes (poaching liquid should be semifrozen and break into shards when scraped with a fork, just like granita).

Scatter strawberries over peaches just before serving.

DO AHEAD: Peaches can be poached 1 day ahead. Let cool in poaching liquid; cover and chill.

