



Food and Wine



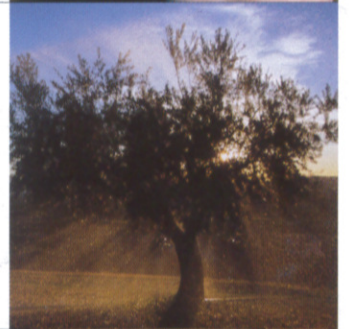
2

Gastro-tourism



6

Quality from A to Z



22

Itineraries for Gourmets



28

Find out more



30

Don't miss



32

Quality: a mutual aim



“Abruzzo, a new frontier for top quality gastronomy. Wine is now coming of age: in the wake of names that shine in the international oenology universe, there are solid wineries and bright new promises that promote Montepulciano and Trebbiano. Cuisine is represented by the opening of restaurants that make the most of generous, traditionally simple dishes, created from marvellous surf and turf ingredients ...”

Enzo Vizzari, journalist, editor of "Guide l'Espresso".



“This is a golden moment for Abruzzo, with its lovely varied territorial nuances, its unspoiled rural products, the revelation of its complex vigorous cuisine, traditional and rediscovered native vines. In brief, the region is a workshop for the smart, winning fusion of modernity and tradition, a thriving up-to-date reflection of today's gourmet sector”.

Alessandro Bocchetti, journalist, "Guide del Gambero Rosso"



Gastro-tourism



“I’ve always liked and appreciated the products of this splendid region, whose green hills of pastures are a contrast to the stunning majesty of Gran Sasso. Abruzzo is a place of authentic beauty and values, still to be made the most of and acknowledged in full (...). I think that Abruzzo, with its lovely landscapes and hospitable people will become a favourite venue with tourists worldwide”.

Heinz Beck, chef of La Pergola, a Hilton restaurant

“At the most recent ‘Identità Golose’ Milan event, held in late January, some UK chefs about to attend a course held by colleagues from Abruzzo, asked ‘Abruzzo? Where’s that?’ The reply was not long in arriving, as they listened to the various explanations, with the Abruzzese triumphant in the knowledge that – from Giulianova to the north, Vasto to the south, L’Aquila and Teramo and the mountains to the west, as well as Pescara and the Adriatic to the east – the Brits are the most numerous, loyal and cheerful visitors to a region that has many appealing facets, most of which are still to be revealed in full”.

Paolo Marchi, journalist, creator and curator of “Identità Golose”, an international gourmet cuisine meeting

“Known for its mountainous interior and splendid protected areas, Abruzzo also has a strong coastal identity. Its maritime gastronomy overflows with joyful simplicity and in those culinary traditions linked to sheep rearing, rural culture, festivities, it is able to make best use of a wide range of excellent raw materials”.

Antonio Attorre, journalist, editor for “Slow Food” publisher, professor of food and wine tourism.

“Why should an Italian choose Abruzzo? Because it evokes that Nature, that environment, that world now so irremediably compromised in much of Italy. Why should a gourmand choose Abruzzo? Because it is so easy to find lots of good things, lots of flavours that immediately express the character and fibre of this region. Great raw materials, like cheeses (I’m thinking of Scanno), like lamb and charcuterie (I’m thinking of Paganica), like sourdough bread (I’m thinking of Pacentro). The news is that these products are interpreted in interesting, modern ways. Which means that the new ranks of Abruzzo catering have realized that it is important to combine roots with new culinary tenets. It’s a charming, cheerful region. We think that those of us seeking real cuisine will continue to succumb to its charm.

Luigi Cremona, journalist, Touring Club, curator and creator of “Cooking for Wine”.



Gastronomy

Abruzzo cuisine is multifaceted simply because of how varied the region and its cultures are. On the one hand, there is the evolution of shepherding and farming recipes, those prepared by the “poor” folk of the mountain and foothill areas, a cuisine of simple yet tasty mutton dishes, soups and broths, cheeses and herbs; on the other, the “refined bourgeois” menus of Teramo, which enhance basic flavours to achieve more elaborate results: “timballo di scrippelle”, “mazzarelle”, “virtù”. Then there is a shoreline cuisine, less evocative of Abruzzo – perceived as a region of mountains and protected areas – but no less important, as there are 130km of coast that offer a variety of seafood in uncomplicated, tasty recipes, combined with the

range of vegetables grown on the hillsides shielding the Adriatic. Abruzzo cuisine continues to advance, taking cautious, measured steps in the direction of modernity – cooking methods, variations, presentation of the dish – without sacrificing its true identity, the “truth” of its flavours and tradition. A new awareness and deep pride in identity, as well as the desire to measure up and for positive emulation, are driving both “giant” and “new recruit” chefs to achieve increasingly significant goals. The byword? Quality: in the raw materials of a generous and varied region; quality in the milieu and welcome offered to clients and tourists. Then last, but not least, “appealing” prices both in restaurants and hotels.



Wine and Oil

From stowaway, the precious undeclared guest in prestigious wine cellars across renowned (and not so renowned) Italian areas, to national bestseller: 13 million bottles sold in 2006 and the first wine with vineyard identification on the label. Moreover (news hot off the press), now a record-breaker, alongside Chianti and Nero d'Avola, as the most popular in large-scale distribution, in those supermarkets with endless wine shelves and temperature-controlled cabinets for storing and offering the best nationals at their best, where none – or almost none – of the legendary Tuscan and Piedmontese labels are missing. A job “well done” as they might say in those countries where some very significant imports are arriving of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, the flagship wine for this area, from grapes that were once merely a stopgap for others. Today, wine produced here is playing on home ground, no longer an exile, but showing its cards and its labels. Not far behind,

although with not quite so much impetus, we find Trebbiano and, above all, new nice wines like some very convincing Cerasuolo, as well as the rediscovered Pecorino, now a top seller. Then there is oil, from olive trees that are a quality vine's hillside companion. Enthusiastic olive farmers boast a total of 45,000 hectares of groves, and are utilizing to the full local varieties like gentile di Chieti and rarer local cultivars like tortiglione, nebbio, intosso, alongside ultra classic leccino (most of all), and frantoio (some way behind). Certainly, Abruzzo's extra virgin oils need no introduction: if anything they have appreciated in value on the Italian market after their success worldwide. The sky's the limit for these oils, which are fitting partners for the excellent cuisine and for the new attitude shown by the restaurant scenario's best operators. A firmament where some Abruzzo wineries have been flying high for at least five years.

from A to Z

Sulmona red garlic (*Itinerary 4*)

One of the most renowned, popular cultivars of this herb is grown in Valle Peligna. "Solimo", Sulmona red garlic, is prized for the quality of its essential oils and the penetrating delicacy of its aromas. This truly unique garlic is unrivalled by the two other Italian cultivars (one pink, one white). The outside skin is actually white but the peel on the cloves is a near-purple red. It is generally planted in late autumn and is harvested in early summer.

Amatriciana

"What's your favourite Italian dish?" Heinz Beck, the great chef of the Hilton's La Pergola restaurant replies to the interviewer without hesitation: "L'amatriciana. Wish I'd invented that!" Certainly an Abruzzo recipe, given that the new province of Rieti was not instituted until 1927 and until then Amatrice had always been in Abruzzo, as well as being a fierce rival of L'Aquila. Spaghetti, bucatini, rigatoni ... and the simple ingredients of this rustic masterpiece: pork jowl, pecorino cheese, tomato (or perhaps without, in its original version) and then ... season with onion, pepper or chilli pepper (as preferred).

Arrosticini – mutton kebabs

Di grande diffusione in quasi tutta la regione sono gli arrosticini, sottili spiedini di carne ovina cotti sulla carbonella, da consumare bollenti: non c'è festa popolare, sagra o scampagnata che non li veda presenti, anche per la comodità di consumo che consentono. Molte le trattorie 'specializzate' e rinomate per la bontà di questo gustoso e socializzante cibo popolare. Si tratta di una preparazione di probabile origine balcanica, ma presente e diffusa sul territorio regionale da secoli, e oggi più che mai rappresentativa della tradizione alimentare locale.

Bocconotti (*Itineraries 1 and 3*)

No doubt about it of course, the best bocconotti are made at home, by expert female (and male, why not?) hands, continuing to following the same recipe handed down from mother (female this time) to daughter. The original bocconotto, which can be enjoyed in many patisseries and high-end cafés, is filled with toasted, ground quality almonds, unsweetened cocoa powder; sugar; lemon; cinnamon and - above all - must syrup, in amounts that produce a jam-like consistency.

Brodetti di pesce (*Itineraries 1 and 3*)

The most typical seafood dish in Abruzzo is "brodetto", a tasty tomato chowder that derived from the need to use the entire selection of various sizes of fish that went into the leftovers basket the fisherman kept at the end of the day. Nowadays this is a considered a lavish dish and can include all kinds of seafood, scampi, cuttlefish, cod, red mullet, scorpion fish, smooth dogfish, skate, grey mullet, great weever, sole and many other lesser species. Brodetto should probably be "brodetti" in the plural, as the dish is prepared in many different ways from north to south





along the region's coastline. In Abruzzo's 133km of coast we find brodetto Giulianova-style (alla giuliese), Pescara-style (alla pescarese) and Vasto-style (alla vastese), the latter probably the best known thanks to the "Brodetto di pesce alla vastese" week-long celebration in the summer. Perhaps the best way to understand the difference is ... to try them all!

Canestrato di Castel del Monte (*itinerary 4*)

This prized pecorino cheese is produced on the southern slope of the Gran Sasso range, in nine municipalities in the district of Castel del Monte, a town on the splendid Campo Imperatore plateau. The milk is processed raw and natural calf or lamb rennet is used. The curds are placed in small baskets called fuscelle, which give the cheese its unique surface ribbing. Ripening varies from at least two months up to 18-24 months for 15kg cheeses. The cheese is a typical product of transhumance, the transfer of flocks along sheep tracks to pastures in Apulia before the onset of winter. There is a producer consortium for its protection and promotion, and it is also a Slow Food Presidium.

