

A reasoned guide to Venetian cuisine

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This is only a short description of some features of Venetian cuisine. A book-length treatment of Venetian cuisine containing a complete history of its development and many recipes is in Rorato (2020). A shorter account is in Zorzi (2009), first published in 1928. At last, Touring Club Italiano (1931, pp. 103-117), reprinted in 2003, contains an organized list of dishes.

1 A Preliminary Remark

What unifies Italian cuisine across the country is the so-called *soffritto* (or *battuto*), *desfrito* in Venetian, a mixture of chopped ingredients (onion, sometimes celery, carrot, garlic and other herbs, more rarely bacon) in varying proportions, browned in a fat until soft, and used as a basis for most dishes. Analogs exist in other Mediterranean countries, like the Spanish *sofrito*, the Catalan *sofregit*, the Portuguese *refogado*, the French *mirepoix* and the Filipino *ginisá*, but they are not so omnipresent as in Italy. The first systematic use of soffritto can be found in the 1324 anonymous Catalan cookbook “Libre de totes maneres de potatges de menjar” or “Libre de Sent Soví” or “The Book of Sent Soví”. It is used as an intermediate step in the preparation of other dishes under the name of *sosenga* (see the note in Santanach i Suñol and Vogelzang, 2014, p. 31); while the modern Catalan *sofregit* contains tomatoes and peppers, the one used in the book matches more closely the Italian *soffritto*. (Paradoxically, the recipe called *sosenga* in the book does not correspond to a *soffritto* but to a meat sauce.) A *suffritto* is also present, for example, in Maestro Martino da Como’s “Libro de Arte Coquinaria” (circa 1450).

Venetian cuisine uses *soffritto* even when other Italian regional cuisines do not, e.g., in the basis of soups. Touring Club Italiano (1931, p. 108) attributes to this the deliciousness of many a Venetian dish and declares the Venetians “maestri” of the “tecnica del soffritto”.

2 *Aperitivo*

In other countries the aperitif is only an alcoholic drink taken before a meal to stimulate appetite, sometimes with nuts or crackers. In Italy the *aperitivo* is generally a drink accompanied by some sort of food. Two drinks for *aperitivo* are especially notable in Venice.

The first one is the *ombra* (i.e. shadow), the name attributed to a glass of wine in Venice. It is generally consumed in a *osteria* called *bàcaro* or *bàcareto*. The *giro d’ombre* is the equivalent of a pub crawl. Here are some wines from Venetia:

- A typical *ombra* is *Prosecco*, a sparkling white wine from Glera grapes. Despite it never reaches the heights of other sparkling wines and quality can be highly variable, it is generally a pleasant drink. A similar wine is *Durello* from Monti Lessini.
- The area called Valpolicella produces four notable red wines: *Valpolicella* is characterized by a certain acidity and very variable in its quality; *Amarone* is obtained by withering the grapes of *Valpolicella* before producing the wine, in a process called *appassimento*, and is one of the greatest Italian wines; *Ripasso* is obtained by putting into contact the wine with the pomace, i.e. the fermented skins, of *Amarone*, thus endowing the wine with lower acidity and greater structure; *Recioto di Valpolicella* is a sweet wine obtained by withering.
- *Raboso* is an interesting red wine, produced from grapes very rich in tannines, and therefore acidic and tannic when young, and gaining structure and bouquet (cherries, violets) when aging.
- *Malvasia* was historically a very important wine for Venice. The name comes from Monemvasia, a port on the coast of Laconia in the Peloponnese, that acted as a trading center. Venetians spread the grapes all across Europe, especially in Candia (now Crete), from where two varieties called *Malvasia di Candia* take their name.

- Other wines from Venetia are *Vespaiolo*, *Soave* and *Tai*, among the white ones, and *Bardolino*, *Friularo*, *Tai Rosso*, among the red ones. (*Vespaiolo e Tai Rosso* are especially good pairings for *baccalà alla vicentina*.)

Apart from the wines of Venetia, also white wines from Trentino–Alto Adige and Friuli–Venezia Giulia, two neighbouring regions forming the so-called Triveneto, are especially prized.

The second *aperitivo* drink is *spritz*, a mixture of *Prosecco* (originally still white wine), soda water (*seltz*) and bitter/vermouth. It originated in Venice or Padua from the habit of the occupying Austrian army in the 19th century of spritzing (from German *spritz*, hence the name *Spritzer*) their white wine with soda water. Several variants exist according to the choice of bitter/vermouth that is added. The most typical one in Venice is the one with Select, but other versions exist with Aperol (the sweetest and most diffuse), Campari, Cynar (an artichoke liqueur), Hugo, etc.

Another tradition of Venice is in the food that accompanies the *aperitivo*. *Cichéti* are small portions of food that, like Spanish *tapas*, are consumed alongside the *ombra*. (Beware: in the rest of Italy a *cicchetto*, with double “c” and double “t” is a small glass or its content, aka a shot!) Almost any main course (and not only!) can become a *cichéto*, therefore it is senseless to try and make a list of them.

Tramezzini are small sandwiches, whose paternity is disputed between Turin and Mestre, the main mainland district of Venice. The evidence points to an advantage of Turin over Venice, but it is rather difficult to see what was the difference between the Turinese *tramezzino* and the sandwich, apart from the name. It was introduced by Gabriele D’Annunzio as a replacement of sandwich during the purge of foreign words under the Fascist regime. The poet proposed it as a diminutive of *tramezzo*, i.e. *intermezzo*, intended as a meal in between breakfast and lunch, like *Gabel Frühstück* in Germany, elevenses in the UK, second breakfast in the USA, *formiddagste* in Denmark. While *tramezzo* didn’t stick, *tramezzino* did. However, if Turin may have the edge over Venice for the paternity, it is undoubtable that Venetian *tramezzini* are a world apart because of the milk-based Pullman bread and their very rich stuffing that differentiates them from sandwiches and from other *tramezzini*.

3 *Primi*

Primi are courses that are served in between *antipasti* and *secondi*, i.e. main courses. They are generally soups, pasta or rice dishes.

As correctly remarked in Touring Club Italiano (1931), pasta is underrepresented in Venetian cuisine with respect to other *primi*:

Le paste alimentari - che formano l’orgoglio di altre regioni - non hanno gran parte nelle minestre asciutte di marca locale[.] (Transl.: Pasta, which is a source of pride in other regions, does not play a significant role among the local dry *primi*[.]) (Touring Club Italiano, 1931, p. 109)

This is not generally apparent from the menu of restaurants, both because pasta is more popular than rice with tourists and because rice dishes are more difficult to prepare. Two popular fish-based sauces are:

- *sugo alla busara*: pasta sauce made with *scampi* stewed with tomatoes, originally introduced in Fiume, Istria, and appropriated by the Venetians;
- *salsa*: sauce typical of the whole Venetia made with onions and sardines under salt, generally served with a pasta called *bigoli* under the name *bigoli in salsa*.

Another pasta dish is the classical soup made with pasta and beans, that in Venice takes the name of *pasta e fasiòi*.

If pasta is less common than on the mainland, it’s because rice is more common. Rice can be consumed in soups, by adding it to a broth that is already cooking, as a thickener or an extender (by adapting the expression of Perry, 1981, p. 44). In Venice these soups generally start from a *soffritto*, a characteristic that make them especially tasty and hearty. But the most interesting way of preparing it is *risotto*, a course in which rice, generally together with other ingredients, is *tostato*, *sfumato* with wine, *tirato a cottura* and *mantecato* (see Figure 1 for an early recipe). First, a *soffritto* with oil, lard or butter, often with onion and sometimes

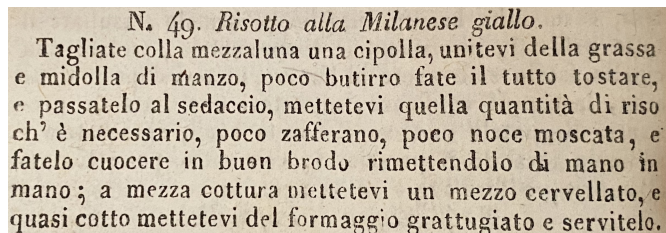


Figure 1: One of the earliest recipes of *risotto alla milanese* (i.e. risotto with saffron) from Luraschi (1839, p. 20) (copy of the author).

other ingredients is prepared, and rice is slightly fried (*tostato*) in it. Second, the rice is sprinkled (*sfumato*) with wine, generally white, a procedure, now largely useless, that aimed to counterbalance the greasiness of the mixture when the most easily available fat was lard. Third, the rice is *tirato a cottura*, i.e. broth or water is added gradually until the rice is ready. At last a fat, generally butter and grated cheese, is added to the rice, i.e. the rice is *mantecato*; sometimes other fats are used, like shrimps' frying oil in Mantuan *risotto coi saltarelli* (i.e. with shrimps). In the tradition of Venetia, ingredients are already part of the soffritto to which the rice is added, while in the tradition of Piedmont and Lombardy, they are cooked separately and added to the rice while it is cooking. The result hinges on the variety of rice (with Vialone Nano, Carnaroli, Sant'Andrea, Arborio, often chosen as the best ones). The final texture must be creamy because of the starch (*all'onda*) but the kernels must be firm (*al dente*).

The degree of acceptable firmness and moistness depends on the region; as an example, several recipes in Venetia, among which the most prominent one is *risi e bisi* (i.e. rice and peas), are very *all'onda* and rather recall a soup than a risotto. Moreover, the fact that in Venetia rice is added to the ingredients and that these ingredients can be quite substantial implies that the *risotto* is often quite akin to a rice soup or to a boiled rice. This permeability is rather typical of Venice and Venetia cuisine. Indeed, Elio Zorzi in his “Osterie Veneziane”, first published in 1928, wrote:

In genere le minestre in brodo si usano fare dense (*fisse*), ed i risotti invece piuttosto fluidi, cosicché il divario di densità tra le due specie di minestre non è molto grande. (Transl.: Generally, [in Venice] soups are thick, while risottos are rather fluid, so the density difference between the two types of *primi* is not very significant.) (Zorzi, 2009, p. 31)

Here are some examples (you will find more throughout the document):

- *risi e bisi*: a (very runny) *risotto* with peas, almost a rice soup, prepared for the Festa del Bocolo and Festa di San Marco, 25 April;
- *risi e ua*: rice with grapes;
- *risi in mascara* o *risi mascarai*: rice soup with vegetables and beans, so called because the latter mask the former;
- *bazàri*: rice soup from Chioggia with beans, cource, flour, lard, oil and spices;
- *risotto (in brodo) di gò*: *risotto* cooked in a broth prepared with goby, an extremely spiny fish that can't be eaten but can be used for broth;
- *riso zalo*: *risotto tostato* in duck fat and spiced with marjoram and saffron, of probable Ashkenazi Jewish influence (because of the use of duck fat instead of lard, see below);
- *risi e figadini*: *risotto* with chicken liver; the version from Padua, known under the name *risi coi rovinassi*, also contains *rigaglie*, i.e. giblets; other variations are *risi in sbirraglia* e *risi in peverada*.

4 Fish Cuisine

Given the importance of the sea to the city of Venice, it's surprising that two of the most representative fish in the cuisine are not locally caught.

This is the case with eel, known in Venice as *bisato*. The most peculiar recipe, typical of the island of Murano known for its artistic glass productions, was *bisato su l'ara*, which involved cooking the eel in earthenware located near the kilns where glass was worked. Other dishes are *risi e bisato*, a *risotto* with eel, and *bisato in tecia*, cooked with tomatoes in a earthenware pot. *Bisato* often came from Polesine, i.e. the delta of the Po, or Livenza, a river north of Venice.

The other fish is cod, often coming from the North Sea. In Italy, this fish is preserved in two ways: salted cod of the species *Gadus morhua* is called *baccalà*, while dried cod of the species *Gadus macrocephalus* is called *stoccafisso*. In Veneto, these two names are often interchanged. For this reason, recipes based on dried cod are referred to as *bacalà*. One of the most emblematic dishes is *bacalà mantecato*, made by emulsifying boiled *stoccafisso* with oil; the final result resembles neither fish nor oil. There are numerous other dishes based on *bacalà*, often shared with the rest of the Venetia.

Despite these two examples, a lot of fish was (and some still is) sourced locally in the lagoon. One of the most typical ingredients in Venice, without equivalent in the rest of Italy and probably in the world, are *moteche*, male

green crabs that are caught during their molting period. The animal is usually marinated while still alive in beaten eggs and then deep fried and eaten whole, including its (soft) shell. *Masanete* are female crabs eaten at the end of the summer, when they are full of eggs. Other examples of seafood are *capesante* (scallops), *capelunghe* (razor-shells or -clams), *caparossoli* (*vongole*, i.e. clams), *bevarasse* (small clams), *folpeti* (in Italian *moscardini*, i.e. eledones), etc.

A street food diffused in the past centuries was the so-called *scartosso de pesse*, i.e. fried fish in a paper cone, first sold in disreputable shops called *furatole* and, starting from the 19th century, in more acceptable ones called *fritolin*. They have almost disappeared.

5 Meat Cuisine

Despite being the primary example of a city living in the water and by the water, meat has always been important for Venice.

It is easy for us to underestimate the importance that meat commerce had in the past (in Paris the butchers even had their own dialect, the *louchéhem*, whose origin is disputed). The reason had more to do with the difficulties of transportation and conservation than with the wide diffusion of the ingredient. Venice was no exception. The slaughterhouses were first in the area of Rialto (remaining in the name Campo de le Beccarie) and later they were moved to San Giobbe in Cannaregio, where the Department of Economics of the university is now located.

The butchers, called *bechèri*, formed a powerful guild hosted in the church of San Mattio (now destroyed). From the guild, several schools (*scuole*) depended: *calegheri* (shoemakers), *pittori* (painters and, among them, producers of leather upholstery), *conciacurami* (tanners of ovine leather), *varoteri* (furriers), *vagineri* (producers of leather cases), *scorzeri* (tanners of cattle leather and producers of parchment), *pestrineri* (cheesemongers and sellers of milk) and, especially for us, *luganegheri* (sellers of pork meat and cattle offal). Once the meat was removed and sold, the rest of the animal was dispatched to the other schools.

What remained is often called *quinto quarto*, fifth fourth: the *quarti* were the parts of the animal corresponding to the four legs; the *quinto* was the rest. This peculiar arrangement between the guilds created in Venice a culture of the *quinto quarto* that is unparalleled in Italy (with the exception of Rome). Some recurring names are *trippa rissa* (tripes), *spienza* (spleen), *rumegal* (rumen), *nerveti* (gristle).

Among the dishes, *riso coe secole* is a dish of boiled rice with small pieces of meat extracted from the carcasses of slaughtered animals (compare with *bruscitti* from Busto Arsizio). *Squassetto a la bechèra* was a soup composed of tripes, lungs, spleen, and veal trotters (or beef tail), boiled together with aromatic herbs. It remains in the form of *risotto a la bechèra*. *Fongadina in tocio* is a stew made with lungs, heart, spleen, esophagus, trachea, and liver of calf. But the most famous dish of this type is *fegato alla veneziana*, a dish in which veal liver is cooked together with vinegar and a large amount of onion from Chioggia. The recipe first appeared in Leonardi (1790, p. 181) under the name of *fegato di mongana alla veneziana*, where *mongana* was the suckling calf (see Figure 2).

6 Vegetables

From the XVI century, the island of Sant'Erasmus, in the Venice lagoon, became a large vegetable garden. It has even given its name to a kind of artichoke, the *carciofo violetto di Sant'Erasmus*. Locally *carciofi* are called *articiochi*, a name that echoes the English one more than the Italian. They can be deep fried, prepared *col garbo*, i.e. stewed with a *soffritto* and lemon or vinegar, *alla grega*, i.e. stewed and served cold with lemon. *Castraure*, i.e. the first small tender apical shoots which are cut to allow the more vigorous growth of the other shoots, are a delicacy. Other vegetables came from Venice inland: as an example, *bisi* in *risi e bisi* came from Lumignano, near Vicenza,

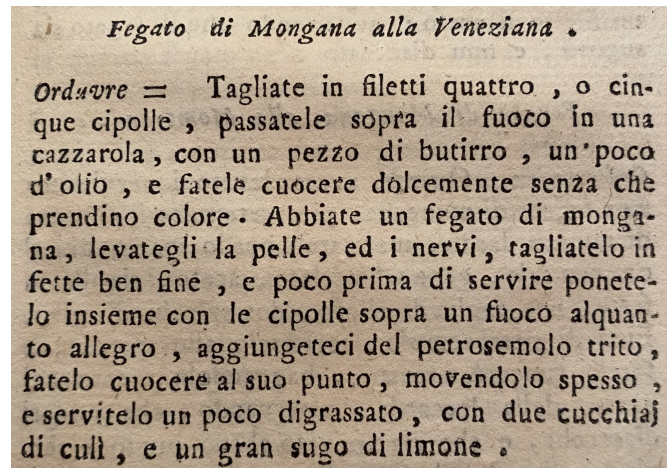


Figure 2: The earliest recipes of *fegato alla veneziana* from Leonardi (1790, p. 181) (copy of the author).

fasiò in *pasta e fasiò* from Lamon, onions in *fegato alla veneziana* from Chioggia, where a kind of courge, called *suca baruca*, was (and still is) grown.

7 Bread and *Polenta*

The typical bread of Venice and Venetia is the *ciopa*, a term obtained by metathesis of *coppia*, i.e. pair. It was apparently obtained by the habit of breaking in two parts the *bina*, an old Venetian bread, still existing in Trentino, composed of four lumps of dough called *piccie*. It is a hard bread with a compact central part, a characteristic that turns out to be useful in Venice's moist climate. It is produced in several different forms, among which the most common one for which the name is used nowadays is the round one with four or six spikes obtained by scoring a cross in the lump of dough. Another very common form is the *mantovana*, often described as resembling a shell and so-called because it recalls bread produced in Mantua, a city with which Venice always had strong ties. The smaller *mantovanina* is often used to prepare sandwiches in bars. Other forms are the *foglia* and the *giraffa*.

But Venice knew many kinds of bread in the past, whose story witnesses the profound exchanges that characterized its history. The *bovolo* (i.e. snail) was a kind of bread, older than the *bina*, that is rarely produced today. The *montasù* is a variety of bread of German origin containing milk or butter. The *rosetta* is a kind of empty bread that exists in many Italian cities under different names (*rosetta* in Rome, Trieste and Venice, *michetta* in Milan), probably inspired by Austrian *Kaisersemmel*. The mekhitarist community of Armenian origin that settled on the island of San Giorgio degli Armeni brought with them two kinds of bread that in their language are called *hatz*, a white flat bread, and *chorek*, a sesame seed loaf. So did also the Jews installed in the *ghetto* with the unleavened *mazzà* (*matze* in Yiddish) and the leavened *hamz* (*chamets*). For more details on Venetian bread, see Zorzi (2009); Matvejević (2009).

Polenta is a cornmeal porridge, i.e. cornmeal cooked for a long time in salted water (more rarely another liquid), until it forms a thick cream. Thickness depends on the region: while in Bergamo it is generally very thick, in Venice it has an almost gelatinous consistency. *Polenta* can be eaten as is, with cheese (*polenta onta*), with meat sauce (*polenta impastisada*), with beans (*polenta infasiolà*) or brought to room temperature and then grilled (*polenta grigliata*). While most cornmeal in Italy is yellow, in Venetia it is customary to pair fish dishes with white cornmeal, that is slightly less tasty. It replaces at the same time the side dish and the bread. The first written evidence of corn cultivation in Italy points to the territories around Venice around 1550 (Cazzola, 1991, pp. 112-113), but it is evident that at the beginning the term was also used for porridge obtained from other cereals, see Tanara (1665, p. 168) in Figure 3.

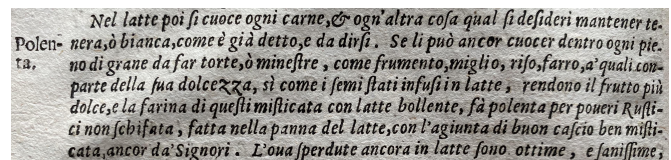


Figure 3: A mention of *polenta* from the 1665 edition of Tanara (1665, p. 168) printed in Venice (copy of the author).

8 Oriental Influences

Castradina (prepared for the Festa della Madonna della Salute, 21 November) is a hearty soup or stew that features, as its primary ingredient, *castrato*, a lamb that is castrated before reaching sexual maturity. The meat, coming from Albania and Dalmatia, was salted, smoked and matured in the original production areas, then transported to Venice where it was cooked for a long time with Savoy cabbage and onion. The first mention of *castradina* is in the *calmiere* (an edict imposing price ceilings) “Statutum domini Sebastiani Ziani de edulis vendendis, et de ponderibus et mensuris” by the Doge Sebastiano Ziani in November 1173 under the name *sicce vero carnis de romaniam et de slavania* (see Cecchetti, 1862, p. 49).

Similar dish were *risi rabaltai cola castradina* (boiled rice with the remains of the *castradina*) and *risi in cavromàn* (*risotto* with *castrato* stew). In the second case, the name witnesses an oriental origin as *cavromàn* comes from the Turkish *kavurma*.

Other oriental influences are in the spices. In the Middle Ages, Venice was the crossroads of spice commerce in Europe. This is reflected by the presence of several spices that elsewhere were considered rare and expensive. Cinnamon was often added to *riso coe secote* and saffron is the central ingredient of *riso zalo*. Some spices, like pepper that the Venetians used to buy in Egypt and sugar, made their way in Europe through Venice.

An example can show the pivotal role that Venice had in diffusing oriental influences across Europe. One must first consider that cookbooks and medical handbooks, that under the humoral theory were often coincident, were

very common in the Arab world starting from the IX century, while they appeared in Europe only from the XIII century. The Baghdad physician Ibn Jazlah¹ (d. 1100) wrote an encyclopedic handbook on pharmacology with 2170 entries entitled “Minhāj al-bayān fimā yasta‘miluhū al-insān” or “The clear path on what [drugs] people use” (BL Or. 7499, copied in 1096, during the author’s lifetime, and checked by recitation). A part of this book, 83 recipes, was translated into Latin around 1300 by Giambonino da Cremona as “Liber de ferculis et condimentis traslatus in Veneciis a magistro Jambonino cremonesi e arabico in latinum extractus ex libro Gege filii Algazael intitolato de cibis et medicinis simplicitis et compositis” or “The book of dishes and condiments” (see the acephalous BNF Ms. Lat. 9328, cc. 157v-161r, discovered by Novati, 1900, the transcription in Carnevale Schianca, 2002 and the Italian translation in Carnevale Schianca, 2001, as well as the book-length treatment in Martellotti, 2001). Rodinson remarked that the way in which the book was translated pointed at the existence of an audience for it:

It is significant that it was in Venice that a translation was made[. ...] Jambobinus judged it useful to translate eighty-three of these recipes into Latin in his book on dietetics, though keeping the names of the dishes themselves in the original Arabic. This demonstrates that the dishes in question must have been more or less known and more or less used. Why otherwise would anyone be interested in translating a book in which it says that such and such a dish, *rotamia* for example, causes stomach-ache or does not; is effective for such and such a thing, or such and such a disposition? Were it completely unknown, the answer is no one. (Rodinson, 2006, p. 206)

At the beginning of the XV century, the manuscript was translated into Old Bavarian under the title “Daz púch von den chósten” or “The book of dishes” (Ms. Cgm 415, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München, see also Friedl, 2013); this manuscript differs from the previous one as it contains also the parts missing in the former and it is adapted to the internal use of the monastery in which it was translated.

9 Jewish Cuisine

Despite its etymology is still debated, it is common knowledge that the word *ghetto* (in Venetian *ghèto*) originates in Venice in the XVI century. Indeed, starting from 1516 the Jews of Venice were compelled to live in an enclosed district. A common theory, unfortunately unsupported, is that the name comes from the fact that the district was near to the location of some foundries (in Venetian *gèto*). What is sure is that the name spread and on 27 February 1562 the papal bull *Dudum a felicis* of Pius IV already called *ghectus* the enclosure assigned to the Jews in Rome:

[V]obis permittimus quod possitis tenere apothecas extra ghectum seu septum hebraicum[.] (Transl.: [W]e allow you to keep warehouses outside the ghetto or Jewish enclosure[.]) (AAVV, 1857, p. 169)

Evidence of the Jewish presence in Venice remains in the cuisine.

Several dishes involving goose are of Jew origin, as goose replaced pork that is not kashrut. An example is *fugazza cole gribole*, a *focaccia* (a flatbread) containing small pieces of fried duck skin; another one is *frisensal* or *hamin*, a noodle pie with goose meatballs, pinenuts and raisins; *luganegotto* was a salami made with the skin and the rest of goose meat from carcasses; but the most famous one is *riso zalo* (see above), a *risotto* involving goose fat.

Sarde in saor (prepared for the Redentore) are of probable Jewish origin: *saor*, i.e. flavour, is a mixture of onion, vinegar, oil, pinenuts and raisins and has the same main ingredients as *carpione*, in the northern part of Italy, and *scapece*, in the southern part (the latter also exists in Spain as *escabeche*).

Other dishes are *cugoli* (from German *Kugel*, i.e. ball), *gnocchi* made with breadcrumbs, *sfoietti* (otherwise called *sfoglietti* or *foglietti*), noodles made with flour and eggs (no water), quickly baked in oven and served in soup or with sauce, *scacchi*, squares of matzah that in Venice were cooked in a pan on top of the stove. Note that all these dishes point to a permeability between bread and pasta that is typical of Jewish cuisine: indeed, in its most basic form, pasta is only unleavened dough that is boiled instead of being baked or fried. The first clear mention of boiled dough (and probably the first description of pasta, see Perry, 1981) is in the Talmud Yerushalmi, written in the late IV or early V century AD: in Ḥallah Chapter 1, Halakhah 6 Guggenheimer (2014, p. 270), it is explicitly mentioned that the same dough could be used for bread and *itry* (noodles),² while in Beṣah Chapter 1, Halakhah 9 Guggenheimer (2003, p. 516),³ it is stated that noodles can be used while fresh or dried.

Some Jewish sweets, of Sephardic origin, are:

¹Complete name: Sharf al-Dīn Abū ‘Alī Yaḥyā Ibn ‘Isā Ibn Jazlah; known in Occident as Buhahylyha Bingezla.

²“A woman asked to Rabbi Mana: Since I want to make itry in my kneading-trough, may I take from it so that it should be free from ḥallah [i.e. part of the bread dough set aside as a tithe for the priest in ancient Judaism]?”

³“Rebbi Nahum said, Rebbi Samuel bar Abba asked about noodle dough. To let it dry is forbidden, for the pot it is permitted, part and part is questionable.”

- *àpere* (prepared for Pèsach), cookies made with flour, eggs and sugar,
- *bise*, i.e. snakes, S-shaped lemon flavoured cookies,
- *anezini*, aniseed cookies,
- *sucarini*, donut-shaped cakes sprinkled with sugar,
- *impàde*, elongated cookies filled with marzipan,
- *recie de Aman* (prepared for Purim), triangle-shaped cookies flavoured with jam and spices.

10 Desserts

Venice doesn't really have a tradition of pastry like many other Italian cities. There is no cake or dessert that is universally recognized as Venetian, as *panettone* for Milan (even the *pan dei dogi* was created in Rovigo!). A notable exception is *fugassa*, a sweet brioche topped with frosting, generally called *veneziana* outside Venice.

However, Venice offers a large selection of biscuits, often consumed with wine or *zabaglione*:

- *zaeti*, cookies containing cornmeal,
- *bussolà* and *esse*, respectively donut- and S-shaped hard cakes or cookies,
- *baicoli*, very thin *biscotti* (i.e. twice baked),

and some sweets prepared for Carnevale:

- *fritole*, balls of dough that are fried and often filled with cream (custard cream, *zabaglione*, etc.),
- *galani*, long strips of dough that are fried and served sprinkled with sugar,
- *castagnole*, small fried balls of dough, much harder than *fritole*.

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