



**T**hrough the years, we've focused on our little corner of the world, doing our best to build strong relationships and to share the passion we have for our heritage, our region, its unique products, and the pleasures of the table. But, to our surprise, Osteria La Gramola has connected with people in all parts of the globe. In a certain sense we've become ambassadors of authentic Tuscan cuisine. In fact, we feel a responsibility to carry forward with the traditions that otherwise might be lost.

Nowadays, in most families, it's unusual to do things in the kitchen by hand, to start from raw materials straight from the garden or producer, and to follow slow cooking methods. Modern life has impacted the average Italian family, as in many countries, but the thought of our traditions completely disappearing fills us with profound sadness. And so, we have made a pledge to do our part to preserve this part of our Tuscan culture.

Sometimes people say, “Oh, your dishes are so unusual!” But the irony is that most of our recipes are the tried-and-true recipes of the past, not new-fangled or invented. We’re committed to keeping what we serve unpretentious and genuine, avoiding the trend of the moment. Peposo needs the right, abundant amount of pepper, Tuscan bread is made without salt, tagliata all’aspetto calls for the artisanal vinegar our grandparents made. We refuse to give up on what we love and do best. The modern Tuscan cuisine that is generally taught in cooking schools and is more common in restaurants employs different methods of preparation and cooking compared to what we do. It’s not that one is better than the other, they’re simply different.

## FARROTTO CON I PORCINI (SPELT WITH PORCINI MUSHROOMS)

Soak the hulled spelt in plenty of cold water overnight. Mince the garlic, hot pepper and parsley with a mezzaluna. Carefully clean and slice the mushrooms. Lightly sauté the first three ingredients in some olive oil in a pan and then add the mushrooms. Before they take on too much color, drain the spelt and add it, mixing well. Add the wine and reduce. Cover with hot broth and allow to simmer for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding more hot broth if necessary. Adjust the salt and pepper.

Ingredients for 4 people

500 g (about 1 lb) spelt  
500 g (about 1 lb) porcini mushrooms  
2 cloves of garlic  
a bunch of fresh parsley  
1 small hot pepper  
1 glass of white wine  
Vegetable broth  
Salt and pepper  
Extra virgin olive oil



## IGNUDI D'ORTICA (NETTLE DUMPLINGS)

Ingredients for 4 people

400 g (14 oz) fresh ricotta  
200 g (7 oz) nettles, boiled  
80 g (3 oz) grated parmesan  
200 g (1 ¼ cup) flour  
2 eggs  
Salt and pepper  
Butter  
Fresh sage



**Ignudo:** what a strange word! It comes from archaic Tuscan as the adjective for nudo, meaning nude. It was used in the late Middle Ages to describe a person without clothes and can be found in writings by Giorgio Vasari to describe works of Renaissance art depicting nude figures. In Tuscany, and Florence in particular where language is full of imagery, the word took on a figurative meaning for something that was missing a usual component.

With their imagination and creativity, Chianti farmwives used the word for ravioli made with ricotta and spinach or nettles when they were served “undressed”, without pasta around them. In other words, **IGNUDI**.

Mix the flour and ricotta. Add the eggs, salt, pepper, parmesan and nettles minced using a mezzaluna. (Nettles are a medicinal plant appreciated since antiquity.) Mix well to form a uniform and compact dough. Let rest for 30 minutes then shape walnut-sized balls of dough. Boil the dumplings in plenty of boiling salted water: they’re cooked when they return to the surface. Remove gently with a slotted spoon.

Melt some butter in a saucepan and add the sage leaves, allowing them to sauté. Pour the hot flavored butter over the ignudi and serve with slivers of parmesan. The texture of the ignudi combines perfectly with the fragrance of the sage and particular flavor of the nettles.