

MANDILLI DE SAEA  
presents

# Ligurian Tastes and Cooking Traditions



A savoury collection of recipes  
from Ligurian cuisine



# Mandilli De Saea



When I moved from Milan to this corner of Liguria called Tigullio Gulf to run my B&B in my private house, I couldn't imagine what would eventually happen. I found myself opening my own horizons so widely that the Ligurian traditions filled me with curiosity. I listened stories about the past told by the locals and they fascinated me with their tales about the way people lived in this area in the old days.

I discovered, for example, that this part of Liguria in particular has an important historic story to tell. It is the story of the waves of people who left their homes to go abroad; especially turning to the Americas in a massive emigration to California, Argentina and Chile during the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. This history attracts many American relatives who are returning back to this area, new generations of relatives of the original emigrated people are coming over here looking for their roots, often wanting to experience the places where their ancestors lived and worked.

I also began, quite accidentally, to get involved with the local cooking traditions and habits, and following my curiosity, I discovered that many practices are still so unchanged because the people are intimately connected here to their environment. Liguria is generally known by the tourists as a seaside resort area, but there is so much more to the Ligurian culture. The Ligurian people are very much attached to their land, cultivating every inch of soil, despite being poor in usable land for cultivation. Held between sea and mountains, in fact, and fully populated, Liguria has always taught its inhabitants how to use every centimetre of territory, mostly arranged in hilly terraces, tending the land within its stone walls.

The local cuisine exploits every edible element supplied either by the sea and the land, and the food here is varied and quite regional. The absence of large breeding of cattle and pigs has favoured a traditional "low in fats" cuisine rich in flavours. This is due to an excellent production of olive oil and the ample presence of herbs such as borage, rosemary, marjoram, sage and, most importantly, the local type of basil, principal ingredient of this cuisine.

In such a scenario I developed a great pleasure to be able to welcome visitors to my B&B, and to this part of Liguria, offering an opportunity to share my knowledge of Ligurian traditions with them, so to make them feel at home in my home.

The idea to entertain them by showing how to cook Ligurian style made me gradually start another business and I named it after what I thought was the most significant recipe of the old times. I made the name of my logo: Mandilli de Saea

Mandilli de Saea means "Silk handkerchiefs" in the dialect from Genoa and it is the local name given to the popular dish Lasagne with Pesto. Heavenly and flavourful, the thinnest home made squares of pasta are the best, the measure of how well this dish turns out.

I found this comparison between a layer of pasta and a silk handkerchief a refined and subtle concept, well explained by the dialect, giving the right sense of the spirit of the local people through their language.

As a result of my studies, cooking research and my own personal experience throughout the area going from Portofino to Sestri Levante and inland, I'm pleased now to present this collection of traditional Ligurian recipes. I believe that they will bring a clear taste of the cuisine from this corner of Liguria, and I'm sure they will remind many people of their grandmothers' dishes, familiar to those Americans who have Ligurian origins.

In the near future I'll add a further project, a real web site telling you more stories ranging widely about this area and its traditions, which I called "My corner of Liguria". It will be a site where I'm going to show and write about my discoveries of this area and its past, its people and beauty, in arts and landscapes. Everything will be described. Since I discovered it as an outsider, I wish to convey my surprise and my emotions about this area to readers, and why not, I want to create the enthusiasm to attract as many people as possible to visit this "corner of Liguria".



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# Lemon-Soaked Anchovies

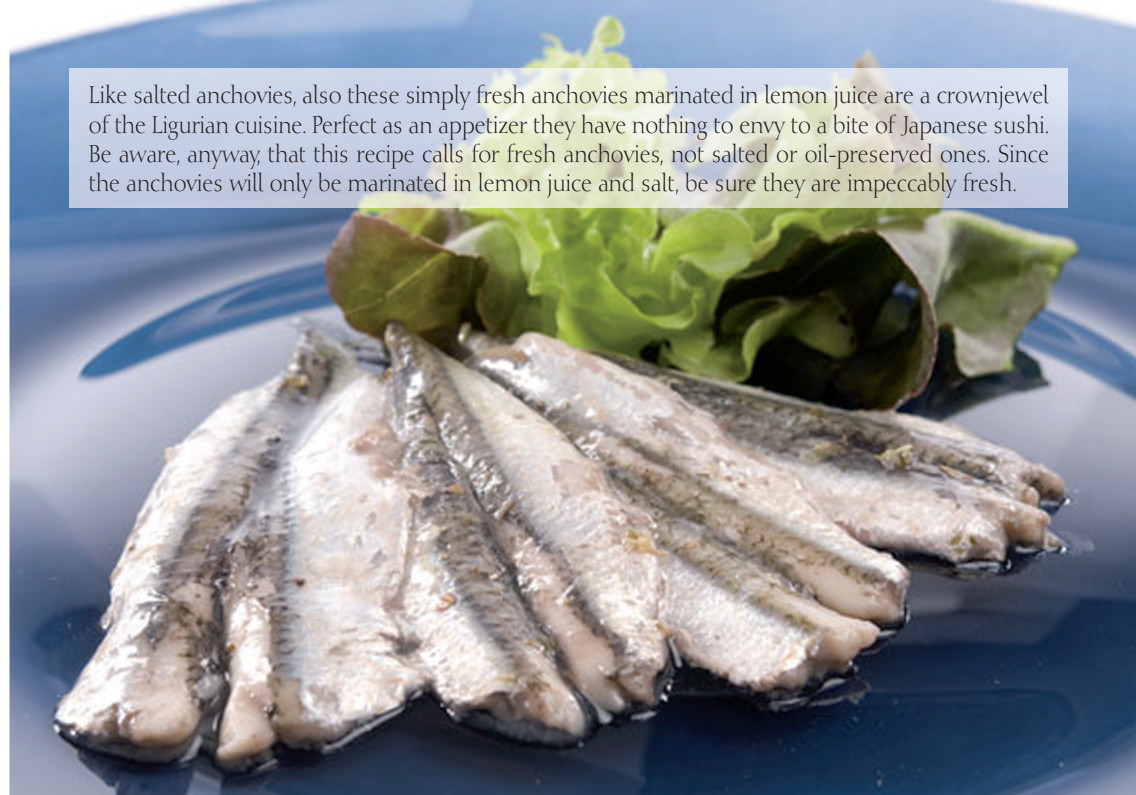
## Ingredients for 4 people:

1 Lb./450 gr. fresh Anchovies  
juice of 3 Lemons  
¼ cup/60 ml. Extra Virgin  
Olive oil  
1 tbsp. minced Italian Parsley  
sea Salt, Pepper

## Directions:

Clean the anchovies one by one pulling the head off by hand, then splitting them in two halves lengthwise using your thumbs. Remove the entrails, pull the central spine off taking care to keep the two halves together. Rinse the anchovies under cool running water. Lay them on their back on a cutting board, still splitted in two halves, then thoroughly dab them dry with a kitchen towel or paper. Arrange the splitted anchovies on a dish and cover with lemon juice, let them marinate for 4 or 5 hours in the fridge. Serve the anchovies drained from the marinade and displayed in a wide, shallow dish in a single layer (better if in a radial shape), sprinkled with olive oil, salt, pepper and chopped parsley. Accompany with crusty bread.

Like salted anchovies, also these simply fresh anchovies marinated in lemon juice are a crownjewel of the Ligurian cuisine. Perfect as an appetizer they have nothing to envy to a bite of Japanese sushi. Be aware, anyway, that this recipe calls for fresh anchovies, not salted or oil-preserved ones. Since the anchovies will only be marinated in lemon juice and salt, be sure they are impeccably fresh.



# Stuffed Anchovies

## Ingredients for 4 people:

1,3 Lb./600 gr. Anchovies,  
2 Eggs,  
½ cup/50 gr. grated  
Parmesan Cheese  
1,7 oz./50 gr. Breadcrumbs,  
1 Garlic clove,  
Parsley,  
Oregano,  
Salt to season  
Extra Virgin olive oil  
as needed

## Directions:

Clean the anchovies one by one pulling the head off by hand, then splitting them in two halves lengthwise using your thumbs. Remove the entrails, pull the central spine off taking care to keep the two halves of each single fish together. Rinse the anchovies under cool running water. Lay them on their back on a cutting board, still opened in two halves, then thoroughly dab them dry with a kitchen towel or paper. Prepare the stuffing mincing a couple of anchovies. In a bowl mix these anchovies with some chopped parsley, oregano, eggs, grated parmesan cheese, breadcrumbs and salt. Stir well. Place the anchovies opened in two halves on an oiled oven dish arranging them on their back. Top each "two halves" with plenty of stuffing, sprinkle some breadcrumbs all over them and spray with little olive oil. Place the dish in a preheated oven at 355° F. (180° C.) for about 20 min.

