

## Brighten up your day with some Mediterranean sunshine from leading chef Marco Roccasalvo's simple yet stylish Italian recipes

**W**hen Marco Roccasalvo moved to Ireland from his native Italy, he realised that although many of his beloved Italian ingredients were unavailable in Irish shops, he could still create delicious, authentic Italian dishes.

In 'Buon Appetito', the second book from Marco, the owner of the Campo de' Fiori Restaurant, Wine Bar and Risto-Market in Bray, the restaurateur shares the secrets of making classic Italian food at home, using everyday ingredients we're all familiar with.

The book is full of great anecdotes, tips and tricks — from how to tenderise octopus by boiling it with a cork, to the secrets of the perfect pasta.

It also includes contributions and recipes from Marco's friends and family, some of whom are well-known names and well regarded among foodies. Read it and you'll discover what Ross Lewis, Manuela Spinelli, Ciaran Nagle, Asheesh Dewan and more like to eat at home.

With recipes to suit every purse and cooking ability, this is the perfect cookbook for anyone who wants to be inspired to create mouth-watering Italian food in the comfort of their own home.

'Buon Appetito' is available to buy for €20 in Campo de' Fiori and online at [campodefiori.ie](http://campodefiori.ie). €1 from the sale of each book will be donated to the Irish Institute of Clinical Neuroscience to fund brain research.



PICTURES: Harry Weir



# The Italian job

## RISOTTO AL NERO DI SEPPIA RISOTTO WITH CUTTLEFISH INK

This is my version of a very special dish that subtly combines strong flavours, contrasts of colours and intoxicating aromas from the sea. I love it because the different textures come together nicely, the colours are very elegant and it truly smells of the ocean.

You must use either Arborio or Vialone Nano rice, but you can use either fresh or dry cuttlefish ink. My advice is to prepare it for a maximum of four people at a time — and don't smile too much while you're eating!

I recommend a dry white wine to serve with this dish, one that isn't too aromatic but that has good acidity — perhaps Greco di Tufo, Vermentino Ligure or Chablis. Serves 4.

### YOU WILL NEED

400g whole prawns  
Sea salt  
30g butter  
240g Arborio rice  
200g petit pois  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
100g baby squid  
2 sachets of cuttlefish ink (or 2 fresh cuttlefish ink sacs)  
Olive oil, for frying

### METHOD

Start by cleaning the prawns. Remove the heads and set them aside, then shell the tails and keep the shells. Place the heads, shells and 12g of salt in a pot with 2 litres of water. Bring to boil and then reduce the

heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Pass the cooking liquid through a sieve, discard the shells and heads and keep the resulting fish stock warm over a low heat.

Next, melt 10g of butter in a large heavy-bottomed saucepan, stir in the rice and saute, stirring for about 3 minutes until the grains are coated in butter. Now cover the rice with a couple of ladlefuls of the fish stock and cook, stirring until all the liquid has been absorbed.

Continue to add the stock, a ladleful at a time, allowing it to be absorbed before adding the next ladleful. It will take about 20 minutes for the rice to cook, so after 15 minutes, add the prawns to the dish.

In a separate small pot, boil the petit pois for 5 minutes in a little salted water.

Once cooked, drain and blend them with olive oil to form a bright, smooth cream. Put it through a sieve if necessary.

Cut the baby squid into thin strips and pan-fry for 5 minutes with a drop of olive oil and a pinch of salt. These will be used for presentation.

When the rice is cooked and the mixture is not too runny, remove the pan from the heat, add in the remaining butter and the cuttlefish ink and stir until the rice is nicely black and creamy.

To serve, spoon a little of the pea cream into the centre of a large soup plate and, using a ring mould, place the risotto in the centre of the plate. Place the fried squid over the risotto. Remove the ring mould carefully and serve hot.

## RISOTTO ASPARAGI E ZAFFERANO — RISOTTO WITH ASPARAGUS AND SAFFRON

Those who know me know asparagus, rice and saffron are some of my favourite ingredients. Saffron is one of the most expensive spices in the world and invokes stories of Chinese emperors, Tibetan monks and aphrodisiac properties. This dish brings together flavours, colours and scents that will enchant anybody who eats it. My advice is to use saffron threads, rather than powder. Be careful when buying saffron as some powders are not from the flower at all, so buy only from a reputable source. Serves 4.

### YOU WILL NEED

40g butter  
200g Arborio or Carnaroli rice  
1 litre hot vegetable stock  
1 sachet saffron threads  
200g green asparagus tips  
50g finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

### METHOD

Melt 10g of butter in a large heavy-bottomed saucepan over a medium heat. Stir in the rice and cook, stirring it constantly, for about 3 minutes, until the grains are coated in butter.

Start adding the vegetable broth, little by little, so that it covers the rice. Stir gently until the liquid has been absorbed and then repeat until all the stock has been used up. It will take about 18-20 minutes for the rice to cook.

Add the asparagus tips and saffron a couple of minutes before the end. When the rice is cooked, remove the pan from the heat and add in the rest of the butter and Parmigiano-Reggiano to obtain a nice creamy texture. In Italian, we call this *mantecare*. Season with the salt and pepper to taste. Put a lid on the pan and leave to rest for 2 minutes before serving.



## SPAGHETTI POMODORO E BASILICO — SPAGHETTI WITH TOMATO SAUCE AND BASIL

This is a classic Italian dish. It really embodies the simplicity of Mediterranean food, and is the dish all Italians eat. Don't let its simplicity mislead you — it's a healthy, light and delicious meal. My advice is to use good quality spaghetti or fresh egg tagliatelle. Serves 4.

### YOU WILL NEED

Extra virgin olive oil  
1 tbsp onion, finely chopped  
400g (1 tin) tinned tomatoes  
10 fresh basil leaves, plus more to garnish  
A pinch of sea salt  
½ tsp sugar  
200g spaghetti, or 250g egg fettuccine  
50g grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

### METHOD

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large saucepan and sweat the onion, making sure it doesn't brown.

Add the tinned tomatoes, basil leaves, salt and sugar to the pan. Keep a few basil leaves aside for decoration.

Cook the sauce for about 15 minutes over a medium-low heat. You can cover it to avoid unsightly splatters, but do not seal the pan entirely.

Using the instructions below for perfect pasta, cook yours al dente. When it is ready, drain the pasta, then mix it in with the tomato sauce. Add the grated Parmigiano-Reggiano and toss everything together for a minute. Serve the dish hot.

### PREPARING THE PERFECT PASTA

- Never break spaghetti in half. This is a mortal sin in my book.
- Pasta should be cooked al dente (with a little bite). This gives it a nicer texture and makes it easier to digest.
- For each 100g of pasta, use 1 litre of water and 7g of salt.
- Use a very large pot that can hold up to at least 6 litres of water.
- Make sure the water is boiling, and add the salt when the water boils, not

- when the pasta is cooking.
- Do not put oil in the water.
- Fresh pasta cooks much quicker.
- Always add the pasta into the sauce and not the other way around. Toss it to make sure the sauce is absorbed.
- Pasta and chicken simply do not go together. This is another mortal sin for any Italian.
- Do not pre-cook pasta. Pasta must always be cooked fresh for each dish.

