

VALLE D'AOSTA & PIEMONTE



GNOCCHI

You can buy ready-made gnocchi anywhere, but they're actually very easy to make yourself. It takes some time and requires concentration, but that shouldn't be too much of a problem, when you're on holiday, right? We think it's a fun camping activity! You can buy special gnocchi boards to roll your gnocchi, but you don't really need to. Any worktop – the kitchen table at the campsite or your table outside of your camper van – and a potato press or a potato masher will do the trick.

Vegetarian
Serves 4

500 g floury potatoes
300 g 00 flour
some semolina flour
pinch of salt
150 g dairy butter
2 sprigs of sage
Parmesan or pecorino to taste
black pepper

Cook the potatoes in their jackets in salted boiling water. Drain and let the potatoes dry over heat. Peel the potatoes and mash or press them.

Dust your worktop with some 00 flour and combine the potato mash with the rest of the flour. Fold the dough to form a compact ball. Don't knead the dough like you would do for pasta or bread, because it develops the gluten, making the dough too stretchy. Shape small portions of the dough into long 'snakes'. Cut the snakes into small squares and press the tines of the fork into these pillowy squares.

Place the gnocchi on a plate or tray that you've dusted with semolina flour so they don't stick. Bring a pot of salted water to the boil, drop in the gnocchi, and cook for 4 minutes until they float to the top.

Mince half of the sage leaves. Melt some butter in a large frying pan and fry the whole sage leaves for 1 minute in the butter. Remove the leaves from the pan and add the rest of the butter. Once the butter has melted, you can add the sage. Season with salt and black pepper.

Toss the gnocchi in the savoury butter sauce and sprinkle with loads of Parmesan cheese or pecorino.

PS
Italian 00 flour is a very finely milled flour and great for making a very elastic dough.

PS
Semolina is a type of coarse flour that's made from durum wheat; it will add some extra bite.

PS
Once you've shaped the dough into squares, press the tines of a fork along the edges to make them jagged. This way your gnocchi will absorb the sauce better.





Liguria's Riviera has two parts. The Riviera di Ponente extends to the west of Genoa, with wide beaches. We visited the eastern part, the Riviera di Levante, with its rugged rocks. The ideal way to explore this amazing coastline is by boat. We took the ferry to Portofino. There are several departures every hour and you buy your ticket on the spot from the ticket office. Our boat stopped at Santa Margherita, Portofino, and San Fruttuoso; they are all just 15 minutes from each other. From the water, you can see how breathtaking the Ligurian coast is, with countless inlets and small bays such as Baia del Silenzio, and small towns that dot the rocky hillsides. If you have the time, head for San Fruttuoso, a hamlet with just a few residents and cliffs that are up to 40 metres high.

MARINATED OLIVES

A great snack to have on hand. Buy different types of olives from the local shops or markets and get marinating.

Serves 2 for 3 days, or share with your campsite neighbours

500 g olives of your choice
2 lemons
2 oranges
2 garlic cloves
1 anchovy
½ bunch of flat-leaf parsley (optional)
200 ml olive oil (extra virgin)
black pepper

Peel the lemons and one orange (make sure the peels are thin) and squeeze for the juice. Slice the other orange.

Place the olives in a bowl, pour over the lemon juice and the olive oil. Press the garlic and add. Finely slice the anchovies and combine with the olives. Season with pepper. Garnish with some parsley if you want.





Some more nice spots

The lovely village of **Frontino** (population: 285) has tons of medieval charm and is a great place for a stroll through picturesque squares and quiet streets.

Apparently, **Urbino** is one of the best-preserved Renaissance cities in Italy. Raphael, the 'prince of painters', was born here in 1483 and is widely considered one of the most important representatives of this art movement. You can see many of his works in Vatican City. Urbino is also home to one of Italy's oldest universities, which was founded in the 16th century. An artful and vibrant city, in other words, with a student population of 25,000.



Frontino

AFFOGATO

The Italian iced coffee. You can't go wrong with this super simple dessert in the country with the best coffee and the best gelato. Crumble in some biscotti to add crunch and add a shot of amaretto for fans.

Vegetarian
Serves 4

4 cups of your best coffee
4 scoops of vanilla ice cream
from the local gelateria
almond biscotti
splash of amaretto (optional)

Scoop the ice cream into verrines or coffee cups. Pour over the coffee, and a shot of amaretto for anyone who wants. Crumble the biscotti over the ice cream and serve.



AMARENA CHERRY DESSERT

In a country where sweet treats abound, the Amarena cherry is the cherry on the cake. In Italy it is often served with gelato, but we prefer to pair these sour cherries in sugar syrup with mascarpone. We mix it with yoghurt and lemon juice for an airy, fresh dessert that will have you coming back for seconds.

Vegetarian
Serves 4

4 tbsp mascarpone
4 tbsp full fat yoghurt
½ lemon (juice)
4 tbsp Amarena cherries
4 tsp syrup of the glazed cherries
4 tbsp flaked almonds
4 ladyfinger or boudoir biscuits of your choice

Mix the mascarpone, the yoghurt, and the lemon juice in a bowl and scoop into the verrines. Add the cherries and the cherry syrup. Toast the flaked almonds in a pan until golden brown and serve with the cherries and the ladyfingers.





PIT STOP: LAZIO

Lazio is home to Rome, the capital of Italy, and the reason why so many foreign tourists head to the region as part of a city trip to the Eternal City. While we can see why, we also think it's a bit sad because Lazio has so much more to offer: Lake Bolsena or Lake Vico, the Etruscan necropolis in the papal city of Viterbo, the gardens of Villa Lante in Bagnaia and Villa d'Este in Tivoli are all worth visiting. More to the south, you can unwind on the pristine beaches between picturesque San Felice Circeo and Sperlonga. The twelve villages of the Castelli Romani (the 'Roman castles') in the Alban hills are a must-see.

We made a pit stop at **International Glamping Lago di Bracciano**, which is just 30 minutes from Rome by car. This stunning lake is actually a gigantic volcanic crater, which was filled with water 600,000 years ago after several eruptions. The campsite has a private beach on the lake – with black volcanic sand! – and a small swimming pool (swimming cap mandatory), lots of playground equipment for kids, a good restaurant and bar and clean sanitary facilities. There's a nice shop on the opposite side of the street where you can pick up fresh fruit and veg. A great place to relax, swim, and cook among a largely Italian crowd.

— Via del Pianoro 4, 00069 Trevignano Romano

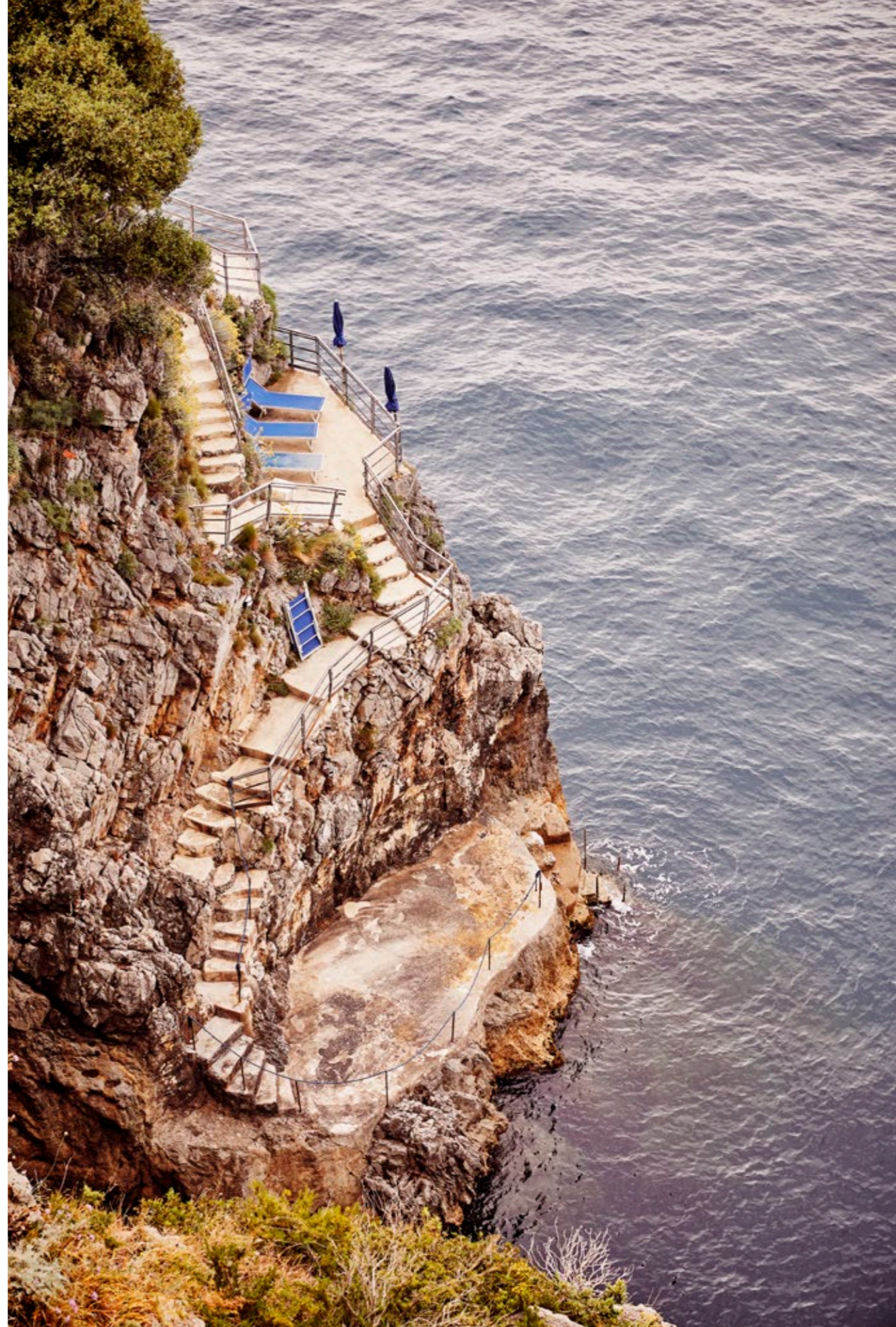


— Glamping Lago di Bracciano



— Lake Bracciano

CAMPANIA







PASTA ALLE VONGOLE

Pasta alle vongole has to be our favourite dish in the world and we think most people are inclined to agree with us. This is the classic way of preparing it. We don't add tomato or any other ingredients which – in our humble opinion – don't really belong in this dish anyway. Instead of clams (vongole), you can use the shellfish or seafood that you like best or that is available in shops or at the market.

Serves 4

1 onion
2 garlic cloves
2 chillis
1 kg vongole (small clams)
½ bunch of flat-leaf parsley
400 g linguini or spaghetti
100 ml olive oil
salt

Finely chop the onion and the garlic. Finely slice the chillis. Rinse the clams twice. Finely chop the parsley. In the meantime, cook your pasta. Set the timer for 2 minutes less than the package instructions recommend.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the garlic and the onion with the chillis. Tip the clams into the pan and give everything a good shake. Put the lid on the pan. Don't let them cook for too long.

Add the pasta to the clams and stir or toss well. Sprinkle with some parsley leaves and season with salt. Toss again and serve.