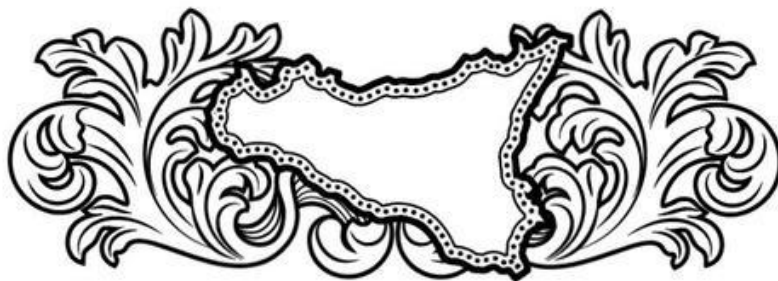




A TINCHITE' BOOKING BOX
ENJOY THE GENUINE SICILIAN FLAVORS



***"Non just a cookbook, but a journey through the flavors,
stories and culture of Trinacria"***

(Annalisa Pompeo)



My dear curious palates,

Thanks for purchasing the **tinchite box**..

You must know that in my land everything is done in great and hyperbolic abundance. Have you ever attended a Sicilian wedding? You eat out of proportion and the reception never seems to end.

Sicilians love the disproportionate quantities even at the lexical level, for this reason they often use this dialect word which, translated into Italian, is equivalent to saying 'a iosa'. They use it when they are at the table but also in many other everyday situations. For example, when it rains hard (which in Sicily is a rare fact), they usually look out the window and exclaim:

"Sta chiuvennu a tinchitè"

(slang expression that any Italian would never understand and that is equivalent to saying "It's raining nonstop").

As for you, American friends (I miss you), are you ready to experience this experiential tinchitè box, that is, in the name of an explosion of taste and abundance? I promise you so much sun!



We immediately open the box to discover the real made in Sicily at 0 Km:

CAVATELLI: fresh handmade pasta (to be made together with semola flour following the video cooking lesson);

SICILIAN PESTO: ricotta, eggplant, almonds, capers, dried tomatoes and extra virgin olive oil (200 gr);

ORGANIC EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL;

OREGANO;

EGGPLANT CAPONATA;

ORGANIC ALMONDS: from the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento for Cubaita (nougat to be made together following the video cooking lesson);

MARTORANA FRUIT;

SPREADABLE PISTACHIO CREAM;

BAY LEAVES (LAUREL LEAVES)



I know, you are already mouth-watering and a certain **pitittu** (appetite) just reading my words.

This box is really a *riot of flavors and traditions*, the result of a conscious selection of the producers most attentive to respect for the biodiversity of my land.

You are about to prepare with your own hands a typical dish of Agrigentinian gastronomy: fresh homemade **cavatelli** with the precious semola flour of an ancient Sicilian granary. Season them with the Sicilian pesto you found in the box. Its color is a little unusual, right? How come it is not as green as the classic pesto that you usually order in classic Italian restaurants? Unlike the Genoese one (obtained with basil), **Sicilian pesto** is much more elaborate and recalls many other local flavors: eggplant, almonds, capers and dried tomatoes (which form a perfect partnership) while ricotta gives the seasoning a delicate softness.

Try it even with the croutons, you will discover a tasty and tasty sauce that will remind you of all the scents of the South.

While dabbling in cooking cavatelli, sip a good glass of red wine accompanied by **cunzatu bread**, which is seasoned as per



typical island tradition. Flavor it with the highest quality extra virgin olive oil and **refined** taste that I have chosen for you.

Now embellish your bread with a hint of salt and a pinch of **organic Sicilian oregano**: your bread will take on an unmistakable aroma. Considered by our Greek ancestors a symbol of peace and well-being, the oregano of Sicily is a plant that naturally leads to our mountains (oregano means precisely, in Greek, "splendor of the mountain"). A plant that is still harvested by hand, in bunches and then allowed to dry in the sun, so as not to lose its precious properties.

In Sicily we use dried oregano *to flavor many dishes*, such as homemade pizza, grilled meat, grilled cheeses and the cherry tomatoes salad. For those who do not know, oregano is not only an aromatic plant but also a valid ally for our organism: it promotes digestion and fights coughs and colds. A magical plant to say the least:

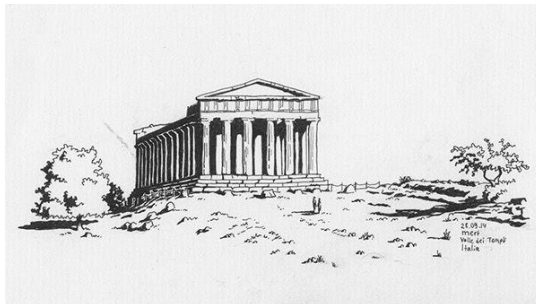
... who knows if it is true, as Greek mythology tells us, that it was really the Goddess Aphrodite who gave oregano to men to spread in them so much happiness ...

I hope I can do the same with you!



You will certainly jump for joy to know that **organic almonds**, which I selected to create **cubaita**, are the same that probably consumed precisely the Goddess Aphrodite.

Yes, my dear curious palates, you are going to cook a dessert with almonds from **the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento**, the same ones that used to cultivate the ancient Greeks.



Do you realize that this is a real trip to rural Sicily to discover the natural rhythms and the most genuine flavors?

Synonymous with freshness and naturalness is also **the aubergine caponata that you** find in the jar. It is a cult dish of the Sicilian tradition, a sweet and sour dish that we serve as an appetizer, side dish or even a single dish. A recipe that smells of history and complex peasant traditions: it is a set of



vegetables, including celery and onion, cooked together with the queen of this dish (the eggplant) and flavored with tomato, wine vinegar, sugar, salt and capers.

And here is now a real delicacy of Sicily: the jar of spreadable cream that you find in the box is not just any pistachio but an artisan **concentrate of 20% Raffadali** pistachio cream.

His majesty the pistachio of Raffadali, which together with that of Bronte hold the primacy of the best Sicilian pistachio, is a precious ingredient with an intense green color, handcrafted a step away from my house.

I will wait for you soon to come to Sicily so I will show you one of my food and wine tours, the renowned producers from which this pistachio is born. Its taste, only apparently salty, tends rather to sweet and finds wide use in the kitchen precisely because of its great versatility. We use it to season pasta, adorn the famous cannoli and for many other sweet and savory dishes. The **Sicilian spreadable** pistachio cream that I have given you, is an artisan product free of preservatives and dyes.

Try it for breakfast on bread or rusks or even to stuff crepes, its intense flavor will captivate you (and make you conquer).



Did you know, in fact, that pistachio is an aphrodisiac food? It also contains good fats and does not make you fat, despite the strong caloric contribution it makes.

Speaking of calories, do you know what **martorana fruit is that** you just unpacked?



Martorana fruit (as we call it on the Island) is a dessert composed of simple but winning ingredients: sugar, water and almond flour..

A true masterpiece of the Sicilian confectionery tradition, (decorated with food dyes that makes it look like real fruit)



has its roots back in the 1800s: it was carried on from the nuns of the convent of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, in Palermo.

Why right here? According to legend, the bishop of that era came to visit the convent to see that there were the fruit trees of this convent that were so praised for their wealth.

The visit, however, was made in the middle of autumn, for the feast of All Saints (it is not by chance a typical dessert of November 2), when the trees were still devoid of any fruit.

The nuns, for the occasion, set out to create fruits with almond paste and then colored them and put them on the trees.

This is how the curious tradition of martorana fruit was born!



Finally, my dear curious palates, after this great binge of Sicilian specialties, it is time to resort to the therapeutic power of **Bay Leaves**.



The leaves of this plant, with a delicious aroma, are naturally dried in the sun and preserve many nutrients for our organism. What are we ever going to do with them? We're going to find out together.

Are you ready? Keep flipping through this notebook and turn into real Sicilian cooks! Amuninni (let's go), let the culinary adventure begin!





Recipe

Cavatelli, the recipe (passu passu) of fresh pasta in the Agrigento area

Do you know that at every corner of western Sicily has its own pasta format?

The cavatelli are characteristic of Agrigento, (the province where I live) the macaroni of Palermo, while the busiate (similar to fusilli) belong to the area of Trapani. Curious to notice all these differences within the same side of the island, right?





I am sure that, with the said '**Fresh Pasta**' imprinted on the box, many of you will have begun to 'tremble' between childhood memories of grandmothers and great-grandmothers struggling with endless hours of effort spent between eggs, flour and manual vicissitudes with the pasta machine.

No panic! I will never ask you to use a crank! Making pasta at home, today and together, will not be a feat of the past at all. Let's say that, unlike northern Italy, from Rome down to the precision, it is rare to find fresh pasta whose dough is made with eggs.

In the South, and therefore also in Sicily, we use **durum wheat semola** and water.

One of my secrets (the result of years of chef experimentation) is also the addition of a drizzle of oil to the dough.

The reason? A more elastic dough that will not make the cavatelli stick. The result is winning: a lighter pasta, faster to work and, last but not least, friend of vegans.



Are you ready? Fasten your aprons and operate the taste buds!

Here are all the ingredients you will need, in addition to your "hands in the dough" and/or those of those who want to participate in this sensory experience:

- **100 grams of flour per person**. I remind you that you have 1 pack of 1 kg (in Sicily we love to keep wide with portions, so if you plan to use the whole package, make sure before inviting your neighbors too);
- **50 grams of water** (remember that the water doses are always indicative, better to adjust, as they say here, by eye). The dough must be hard and not as soft as of pizza;
- **1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil..**

Amuni, sbrazzamuni ("Come on, let's get to work", for non-connoisseurs of the Sicilian dialect).

Take the flour, measure it (about 100 gr per person) and create, for each workplace, a small pile with a hole in the center. Do you know Etna, the most active volcano in Europe that is located on our island?



Well, it makes the idea good.

Add the water little by little and start moving your fingers circularly.

Every time I give cooking classes, I like to explain to all my students that making pasta is a bit like thinking about a snowball, rolling down the mountain, grows collecting more snow until it grows bigger and bigger.

The goal, at this stage, is to collect all the flour until you get a ball that is not too soft but not too hard (look at me in the video). In the meantime, have you already noticed the yellow color of the semola and its graininess?

You can work the dough with the palms of your hands or with your thumbs (as I am doing live).

Please don't be curved on yourself but take advantage of it to stretch your back, pressing with your hands on the dough and squeezing your buttocks from time to time (they will benefit).

Now add the extra virgin olive oil.





How to understand when the dough is ready? Simple, take a knife and cut the dough in half to make sure it's nice compact and homogeneous, just like it's been kneaded by a machine. Remember these other little tips:

The more pressure we exert with our hands, the smoother and more compact the dough will be.

If you have used too much water, add a little flour and vice versa. Easy, right?

Now, the beauty comes. From the obtained panetto ball, take a small part and create a drawstring as wide as a finger. With a knife, cut small pieces that will have to look like small "pillows".

It is important that the little pieces are the same; So, if you are participating in the cooking class in company, you should apply for a model "pillow", so as to try to get everyone the same size.

We're almost there.... Missing the last passu (step)!



With your thumb, you have to put a little pressure on each piece of pasta and at the same time make a twist (I know, it is easier to watch me on video than to read it here, but once you learn the technique, you will all be Kings and Queens of Cavatello)!



Are you all there? Isn't that funny? Are you sipping a glass of red wine in the meantime? Maybe a nice Nero d'Avola? Now I'm going to show you the curly quarry version. Follow me on the video... It will be easier done than said. There we go! My *curious palates*, you have created your cavatelli.



Place them on a tray and sprinkle them with a touch of flour so they do not stick. They don't need to rest.

Being fresh pasta, they cook in a few minutes.

When the water boils, add a pinch of salt, "lower" the cavatelli by depriving them of excess flour and remain vigilant so as not to miss a tooth cooking. Once they're afloat, they will be ready! Season your cavatelli with the seasoning you find in the box and add a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, if necessary (always store some cooking water, it can serve you to make the dish creamy)..

Being a dough made without the use of eggs, it can rest outside the fridge.

You can prepare the cavatelli the day before to cook them the next day.

If you have made many and do not want to cook them all, store them in the fridge "ntrusciati" (wrapped) by a kitchen towel and then in a plastic container. For about 2/3 days they will keep cool.

"Bon appetitu"!

Yours, Annalisa Pompeo



Recipe

Cubaita, the almond nougat that smells like Sicily



My dear curious palates,

Let's discover a sublime recipe of the Sicilian confectionery tradition: **Cubaita**.

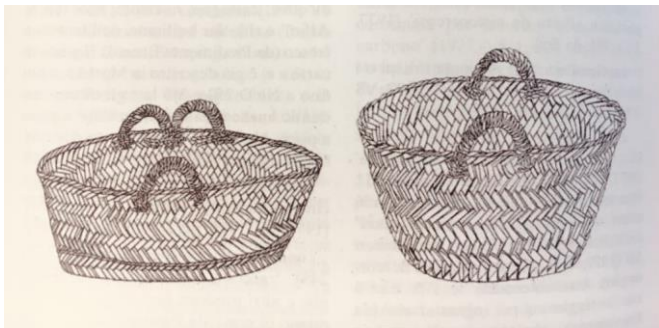
Don't get confused with the famous Cuba Libre, this dessert is far from Latin American influences and has nothing to do with the typical Cuban cocktail.

Cubaita, rather, has Arab origins and, although it resembles a nougat, it differs from it whose roots are, rather, Spanish. During the ancient Arab domination, this people introduced sesame seeds and many confectionery delicacies based on



dried fruits to Sicily that still today, as per 'our' Cubaita, are handed down from generation to generation.

I like to call it the first energy bar in history. The Arabs, who were great travelers, used to travel long distances drawing strength and vitality from this delicious dessert based on dried fruit, sugar and honey, easily transportable and comfortable to consume on the road. Brilliant, right?



Sometimes I wonder if, in those days, arabs were aware, as we are today, of the many beneficial properties of dried fruit. Our cubaita, unlike the Middle Eastern tradition that uses sesame,



it is prepared with almonds **from the Valley of the Temples of Agrigento..**

Yes, just those precious almonds that the Greeks and Romans ate many centuries ago: a riot of crunchy sweetness for a triumph (healthy) of aromas and flavors.

Let's **immediately** see the ingredients we need (the doses are calculated for 4 people but never forget that we Sicilians love strong sizes):

- 200 grams of natural almonds (not salted and not toasted); the package is 250 grams, the remaining 50 grams used as well as healthy and rewarding hunger-breaking snacks. Do you know that almonds, allied with heart, arteries and bones, are a valid natural remedy against anemia and diabetes? What better chance to get your doctor out of the way, or not?
- 150 grams of white caster sugar
- Sunflower oil



Now let's prepare **all the work tools**::

- a wooden ladle
- a kitchen spoon
- a stable base of marble, granite or steel (the important thing is that it is not made of wood).

Fasten your aprons, let's get started!

Pour the almonds and sugar into a high-edged saucepan and leave it on the heat over medium heat: from time to time (at least in this first stage) mix everything with the wooden ladle.

Our goal, for now, is to toast the almonds and melt the sugar until it turns into caramel.

In the meantime, prepare the working base where we will go to lay our steaming nougat, once ready. Spread the seed oil on the base you have chosen, helping you with a paper handkerchief. Better to form a large circle, so as not to make the nougat stick.

In the meantime, do not forget to turn the mixture in the pot and, if necessary, reduce or lower the flame.



For this recipe you have to be focused. Then turn on flight mode on your mobile phone and keep requests from children, friends and family at bay.

Be careful never to create smoke, the smell must be pleasant: hints of burning are signs of a flame too high.

How to figure out when it's time to pour nougat on the base?

When all the sugar grains have disappeared and turned into caramel. If, turning with the wooden ladle, the mixture is well fluid and amber (not too light and not too dark) it is time to put out the flame and proceed.

An important tip, if you do not want to say goodbye to your little pot forever: fill it immediately with water to facilitate its cleaning later. Otherwise you will hear from your mother-in-law, who gave you this kitchen container!

Once you have the nougat in the center of your work table, help yourself with the wooden ladle and spoon to amalgamate it (follow me in the video, this is a delicate phase in which you must have a quick and decisive dexterity).

Attention, concentration, pace and speed... Before it gets cold!



Create small clouds of nougat. Do you have an organic lemon in your house? So then take the opportunity to grate some zest (only the yellow part) on each piece of cubaita.

Now shape the various pieces with your hands: if they are too large, cut them with a knife, if they are too small join them to each other before they get completely cold.

Well, my skilled curious palates, you created your first Cubaita! Aren't you excited?

I would remind you that, with air contact, Cubaita tends to lose its lucidity and becomes sticky. Eat it now or store it in a glass or plastic container... It will last for even a week!

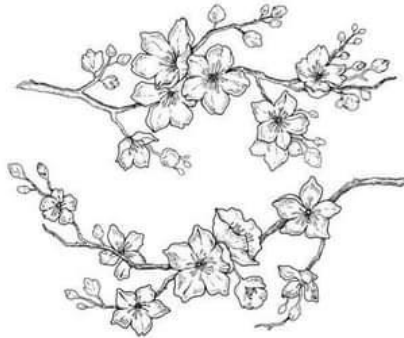
Now that you too have become experts in Cubaita, I will give you a little suggestion...



I love to prepare Cubaita whenever I want to give a little thought to my friends. I pack it in transparent plastic sachets and add a handwritten dedication before delivering it to every lucky recipient. The more I become an adult, the more I realize that the things that really matter are the spontaneous ones, often cheap but imbued with a lot of love.

With sweet affection,

Yours, Annalisa Pompeo





Recipe

Bay Leaf (Laurel) herbal tea, the best natural digestive made in Sicily

My dear curious palates,
as you well know, food for Sicilians plays a sacred role. In our culture the dishes have extra large proportions and, at the end of the meal, we often and willingly find ourselves

chini comu i cacocciuli,

full like artichokes.

There is a digestive, very natural, which for generations has the advantage of saving us from Sunday binges made in Sicily: it is called *acqua cu l'addragaru* (with laurel) and is a real cure-all with multifaceted therapeutic properties.

You've been wrapped into southern scents, savoring all the explosions of flavors, and now look for a permanent center of gravity on the couch. No, I'm not a clairvoyant!

I'm just aware of that sense of 'blessed fullness' that accompanies me from my childhood after every meal.



So stay comfortable and enjoy all the benefits of the magical ingredient that I want to share with you: **sicilian dried laurel**.

What is Laurel?

Laurel is an evergreen plant, with an unmistakable scent, that grows in Mediterranean areas. It is so important and widespread in Sicily that it has become a traditional **agri-food** product, whose roots have been rooted since ancient times.

Did you know that the Greeks and Romans consecrated the Laurel plant nothing less than to the God Apollo?





They believed that its leaves had magical properties, that would drive away bad luck and to protect against thunderstorms and rheumatic and respiratory diseases.

Here in Sicily, as throughout Italy, on graduation day students celebrate the achievement of the University Degree with a Laurel wreath. A custom that is handed down from the ancient Romans, who used to celebrate the glory of poets and leaders by girding their head with these 'divine' leaves.

The leaves of this Mediterranean plant are especially rich in benefits, especially if harvested in April, immediately after flowering. The Laurel, which you find in the box, is harvested mainly in the spring and then dried in the shade, so as to best preserve all its properties.

During all seasons, I frequently consume this plant, not only to prepare the digestive herbal tea that I propose to you today but also as a spice **in** the kitchen to flavor many dishes. This aromatic herb with a strong flavor goes very well with soups such as lentils and beans, with meats (especially pork



and game), fish (such as beccafico sardines) and to flavor vegetables and mushrooms in oil and vinegar. Try it also to remove the acidity of the sauce, to season the baked potatoes and to prepare delicious spaghetti with tuna and tomato sauce.

Also considered a natural repellent against parasites and insects, especially flies, Laurel is also a great ally for those who want to cure coughing, counteract rheumatic pain, dermatitis and fight hair loss (Over the centuries, Laurel was even used to fight plague).

Flavoring water with Laurel is, as mentioned, an extraordinary **remedy for digesting and** restoring the balance of the stomach.

I, for example, prepare a Laurel herbal tea for my children when they have small colics or nausea.

Therefore, my dear curious palates, if today you have eaten too much because of me, take some boiled water with one or two bay leaves and with a small lemon zest (optional) and



enjoy all the beneficial of the water *cu ll'addragaru* of our island!

This infusion that smells of the South will stimulate the enzymes of digestion and reopen your appetite,
Take my word!





My dear curious palates,

Thank you for following me on this journey.

This box wants to be just an appetizer, a first taste of many new seasonal boxes and an invitation to visit my island as soon as possible.

Follow me on social media so you don't miss this culinary passion and tag photos of your 2.0 gourmet experience on Facebook with the hashtag #GoSicilyBox.

The most characteristic photo will win a cooking class and an enogastronomic tour experience this time live, right here in Sicily!

As Goethe cited:

Italy with out Sicily, leaves no image in the spirit. It is in Sicily that the key to everything is found. The purity of the contours, the softness of everything, the yielding exchangeability of the tins, the harmonious unity of the sky with the sea and the sea with the land... who has only seen them once, will own them for life.