



## North West Italy Culinary Culture

### Soffritto May 2009

*Tour Code ARLIT01*

***Does Italy hold the secret of human happiness?*** The Soffritto tour is designed to help us find out. We explore the region called Lunigiana, on the border of Tuscany and Liguria

Guided by restaurateur Lucio Galletto and author David Dale, we follow a leisurely schedule from the mountains to the sea, meeting local farmers, winemakers, cooks and characters.

The tour is about understanding how traditions going back to the Roman empire created the cuisine and the attitude with which the Italians conquered the English speaking world.

Accompanying the tour will be bookseller Carol Crennan

Recommened reading: 'Soffritto – A delicious Ligurian memoir', lived by Lucio Galletto, written by David Dale (Allen and Unwin).

## Day 1

### 3<sup>rd</sup> May

#### Milan

Make your own way to Milan and to the Hotel Andreola near Central Station. Arrive in time to freshen up and meet the group for dinner at 7pm. This evening enjoy an introduction to the tour and northern Italian cooking.

David, Lucio and Carol

*Andreola Central Hotel, Via Scalatti, 24 - 20124 Milano Italy*

## Day 2

### 4<sup>th</sup> May

#### Parma

After breakfast we meet our bus driver and head south to the Renaissance town of Parma. Lunch will be taken at the Restaurant Parizzi, where chef Marco Parizzi is applying his imagination to modernising the rich culinary traditions of the Emilia-Romagna region. We'll finish with a tasting of parmesans aged for one, two, or three years.

The afternoon is free for you to take a siesta or shop and explore the mustard-yellow town at your leisure (with tips from Lucio and David). Join the evening passeggiata (promenade) with the locals or sip an aperitivo before a light dinner in one of Parma's lively trattorias

Dinner with Lucio, David and Carol

*Overnight in Parma*

## Day 3

### 5<sup>th</sup> May

#### Parma

Up early this morning, we visit Parma's food market and then drive to a dairy farm which has been making parmesan for three generations and a family company which has been producing Italy's finest prosciutto (from contented pigs) for 100 years. Lunch will be in Modena, the home of Balsamic vinegar. Some of these vinegars are aged for 25 years and are as expensive as the best red wine, and you'll have a chance to taste. In the afternoon there will be time to wander in Modena or visit the Ferrari factory at nearby Maranello before returning to Parma for dinner.

Dinner with Lucio, David and Carol

*Overnight in Parma*

## Day 4

### 6<sup>th</sup> May

#### Travel over the Cisa Pass to Pontremoli

We follow the route of the ancient Via Francigena, by which pilgrims made their way from Paris to Rome 1000 years ago, and walk through the chestnut forest to a tiny chapel where they sheltered. We will lunch at Gavarina d'Oro, which makes hearty mountain food of the kind the pilgrims enjoyed and visit a chestnut mill and a farm devoted to making pecorino cheese from the area's little black sheep.

Dinner at Caveau del Teatro, Pontremoli's finest restaurant, where Amedeo Poletti, an architect turned chef, will explain his cooking and his conversion of a 17<sup>th</sup> century palace into the hotel where we will stay.

Dinner with Lucio, David and Carol

*Overnight in Pontremoli, Caveau del Teatro.*

## Day 5

### 7<sup>th</sup> May

#### **Pontremoli**

Morning walk to Pontremoli castle to see the mysterious “Stele” statues which guarded the settlements of the area 4,000 years ago.

Lunch at Trattoria da Busse, where the Bertocchi family have been serving traditional food for 60 years. In the afternoon explore Pontremoli or drive around the medieval villages of the region

Dinner with Lucio, David and Carol

*Overnight Pontremoli, Caveau del Teatro.*

## Day 6

### 8<sup>th</sup> May

#### **Travel to Portovenere**

Now we head for the coastline and the town from which Lord Byron would swim for three hours each day to visit his friend Shelley, across what is now called The Gulf of Poets. After settling into our hotel, we’ll take a short boat ride past the mussel beds to the island of Palmaria and lunch at Locanda Lorena.

In the afternoon we’ll explore Portovenere, a fishing village guarded by a Norman Castle.

Dinner with Lucio, David and Carol at a trattoria specialising in seafood.

Overnight in Portovenere.

## Day 7 9<sup>th</sup> May

### Cinque Terre

Travel by chartered boat to the Cinque Terre, five villages with grape and olive terraces clinging to the cliff face. We'll walk on the legendary Via del Amore, visit vineyards and basil plantations and lunch by the sea at Vernazza.

Dinner will be at Cappun Magru restaurant on top of the hill behind the Cinque Terre, where the region's most adventurous chef Maurizio Bordoni does his interpretations of the local seafood classics.

Overnight at Portovenere.

## Day 8 10<sup>th</sup> May

### Bocca di Magra

Now we take a short drive to the village where Lucio grew up, with a detour to see the trompe l'oeil facades on the houses of Lerici.

Where the river Magra enters the sea, Lucio's family built a shack on the sand, and it grew into the restaurant called Capannina Cicio, where we will lunch with a view across the river to the marble mountains of Carrara.

In the afternoon we'll visit the Roman colony of Luni, built in 100BC, with an amphitheatre able to hold 7,000 spectators.

Dinner will be in the hotel, which specializes in tiny antipasto dishes.

Lucio, David and Carol

*Overnight in Bocca di Magra, Hotel Sette Archi*

## Day 9 11<sup>th</sup> May

### Carrara

We'll drive into the Carrara mountains, visit the quarry where Michelangelo sourced his marble, and see marble sculptors at work. Lunch at Venanzio in the town of Colonnata.

Dinner will be at the other restaurant of Lucio's family -- Ciccio Marina in Carrara.

*Overnight Bocca di Magra, Hotel Sette Archi*

## Day 10 12<sup>th</sup> May

### Sarzana and Castelnuovo

We'll drive into the nearby hills and visit the forests where Lucio's father and uncle fought alongside the partisans to drive out the Nazis in 1944. We will lunch at Trattoria Armanda, a tiny place where the Ponzanelli family serves the finest food of the area - rabbit stuffed with pistachio nuts, chestnut pancakes, spinach tarts. We'll explore the towns of Castelnuovo and Sarzana, where Dante stayed during his period of exile from Florence.

Farewell dinner with David, Lucio, Carol and Lucio's family at Capannina Ciccio

*Overnight Bocca, Hotel Sette Archi*

## Day 11 – 13<sup>th</sup> May

Our private bus will take you to Pisa airport or to Florence, according to your future travel plans.

**Price: \$9,850 per person double share. Single room is an additional \$1,700. The price includes all transport by private bus with our own driver; accommodation and meals with selected wines.**

**The price does not include air fares.**

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