

CROATIAN CUISINE & RECIPES



Historical influence on cuisine

Situated at the southeast of Europe, Croatia shares its Adriatic sea border with Italy, its north border with Slovenia and Hungary, east with Serbia and with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Diversity of its 56 610 km² size territory includes rich plains and fields, picturesque hills and amazing mountains and the beautiful Adriatic sea with indented coast and 1185 islands.

Croatian coastal cuisine is Mediterranean, and is based on fish and sea food, grapes and wine, olive oil, wild growing herbs and aromatic spices.

Unlike the light Mediterranean cuisine at the south of Croatia, mostly influenced by the Italian cuisine, traditional cuisine of continental Croatia is from the west influenced by the Hungarian and central European cuisine, and from the east by the Turkish and Arabic cuisine.

Continental Croatia

If we begin with **soups**, the traditional ones are chicken and beef soups, which are cooked slowly with root vegetables, and are served with home-made noodles, seasoned with pepper and parsley.

Today, meat still prevails in shape of roasts, steaks and smoke-dried products, which are made according to old, unchanged recipes. In each part of Croatia you will be offered different meat recipes such as **veal fillet "Stubica"** (pork fillet stuffed with prunes in cream and plum brandy sauce), **Zagorje turkey with famous mlinci (Croatian thin bread)**, **stuffed cabbage leaves** (sarma), **roasted pheasant** or **paprikaš (stewed meat)** made from game which is traditionally also raised there, **buncec (smoked pork leg)** and **roast chicken, geese and ducks, ham, kulen (paprika-flavored salami), roast pork, čobanac (shepherd's stew - stew made from different kinds of meat), lamb roast** and **smoked meat** products such as **Prosciutto**. With bigger or smaller variations, you can find smoked-meat products such as **ham, bacon, sausages, blood-sausages** and **češnjovke (garlic sausages)** in all parts of continental Croatia.

In addition to meat, side dishes are mandatory: potatoes (mashed, sautéed, fried, roast), rice (rizi-bizi – rice with peas), žganci (hard-boiled corn mush) with milk or as a side dish to game meals, pasta (mlinci, with roasts) and sauces made from roast, mushrooms and cream.

Lighter meals comprise of fresh salads which are made from white or red cabbage, mixed tomatoes, paprikas, onion and different kinds of green salad (Iceberg, Butter head, radicchio), all flavored with salt, vinegar and oil.

Food for winter is made from both vegetables and fruits, and they are usually made from cucumbers, cabbage, paprika stuffed with cabbage, mixed vegetables, beet, aivar, marmalades and jams (plums, apricots, peaches, strawberries).

In terms of dairy products, the specialties are the cottage cheese and cream, buttermilk or churn and smoked cottage cheese.

The most famous cottage cheese specialties are boiled or overdone **zagorski štrukli (cheese puff pastry)** and **Croatian pancakes**, filled with sweet cheese, covered with cream and overdone.

Cakes' making tradition is a long one. **Walnut rolls, poppy seed rolls, strudel with fruits fillings, lard rolls and bear paw cookies** are only a few suggestions to complete your meal. In terms of drinks, you should try **home-made plum brandy, mead (drink sweetened with honey)** and **some of the top wines**.

Coastal and island cuisine

Cuisine of Croatian coast and islands is a typical Mediterranean, and is based on natural sea and coastal sources - fish and seafood, grapes and wine, olives and olive oil, sheep and goats, figs, wild-growing herbs and aromatic spices.

Fish (dog's tooth, sea bass, grooper, gilthead, grouper, mackerel, anchovy), main source of protein, are prepared in any way imaginable: boiled, great soups are made from them, fish stews, risottos, grilled, baked in oven, marinated and salted. We should not forget about seafood, fresh **oysters** with lemon juice, **octopus** baked under the bell, stewed or stuffed **calamari, mussels and vongole (clams)** cooked in aromatic buzara, inevitable **scampi** and **crabs**.

In terms of meat, the first thing that comes to everyone's mind is **Prosciutto** – Istrian or Dalmatian smoked pork leg. Also appreciated is **lamb**, but also baby beef, especially when **pastizzada is concerned** for which almost every family in Dalmatia has its own recipe which is passed from generation to generation.

Various vegetables make for side dishes to fish and meat meals such as chard, potatoes, tomato, artichoke, cabbage. **Pasta** only indicates the influence of the Italian cuisine (spaghetti, gnocchi), but there are also original Istrian and coastal pastas such as **fuzi, surlice and pasutice**.

You don't go crazy with the spices. This only does not apply to olive oil or fresh but dried seasoning herbs and wild-grown herbs which the coastal areas are rich in. Bay-leaf is almost inevitable, like rosemary, basil, sage, while parsley and garlic go with fish. Green and black olives, sour small onions and capers can be a part of every meal.

The story is pretty simple when it comes to cakes: there are no rich and kitschy cakes with thick butter based creams. Traditionally, Dalmatian cakes prefer fruit, fresh or dried (raisins, dry figs), honey (which is healthier than sugar), and they rather replace the cream with crunchy pieces of almond and walnut. We will mention a few: **fritule, kroštule (fritters), sweets made from Lošinj chestnuts, rafiole, cukarine, pince, mandulat, smokvenjak, Rožata (caramel cake)**.

Islanders like to boast about the diversity of their cuisine and we can differentiate between Brač cuisine (specialty is vitalac: a sausage made from grilled lamb innards), Hvar (goat cheese in olive oil, pepper cakes), Korčula (a way of preparing calamari without cleaning them), Komiža and Vis (anchovy grilled on stick; komiška or viška scone with sardines), Pag cuisine (Pag cheese and Pag lamb).

It is a common knowledge that fish has to swim three times: in sea, in oil and in wine. That is why a glass of wine is welcomed by each meal, and is often used as its ingredient.

Here are a few simple recipes:

Chicken soup (Kokosija juha)

Ingredients:

800 g chicken meat with bones

300 g carrot

50 g root of continental celery

50 g onion (whole)

Parsley leaves

Salt, ground pepper

100 g pasta for soup (*home made pasta can be found in most continental shops)

Preparation:

In a large pot put chicken, carrot, celery, parsley and onion, add salt, pepper, pour cold water and bring to the boil. Turn the heat down and simmer for two hours. When ready, take the meat out, strain the soup and add the pasta. After the meat is cleaned from bones can be cut and add to the soup or eat separately. ADDITION to most of the meals is a **VEGETA**, stock powder that can be found in continental shops and most of chain supermarkets such as IGA, Coles and Safeway (Woolworth).

Information about **VEGETA** is available on their web site www.vegeta.com.au

Vegeta Gourmet Stock Powder

Vegeta Gourmet Stock Powder is a versatile, unique product which has been created through a process of careful selection of vegetables, herbs and spices. It brings out the aroma and adds a full flavour to any savoury meal, while not overpowering the original flavour of your chosen ingredients.

You can use it in stir fries, casseroles or sauces, as well as when preparing vegetarian meals - by adding directly to the meal a few minutes before the end of cooking.



It is easy to use **Vegeta**:

- simply sprinkle on meats or seafood prior to barbecuing, frying or baking,
- add to any sauce or gravy
- mix 1 teaspoon (3 g) with 1 cup (250 ml) of hot water and use as a soup base or liquid stock for other meals.

With **Vegeta** a tasty, easy to prepare meal can be ready in only a few minutes!

Vegeta Gourmet Stock Powder is:

- 99% fat free,
- Lactose Free and has:

- No Gluten,
- No GMO
- No Animal Content.

Did you know that Vegeta Gourmet was first launched to the market under the name "**Vegeta 40**"? This name was later changed, and today it is simply by chance that it is present in 40 countries around the world.

Vegeta Gourmet has been present on the Australian market for over 30 years.

Filo pastry rolls (pita)

Ingredients:

1-packet filo pastry sheets

Oil

Fillings:

Can be used different ingredients for fillings:

1. Ricotta, spinach and salt (as option eggs can be added)
2. Minced meat, onion, salt, pepper and finely diced potato can be added
3. Shredded apple with sugar and cinnamon

Potato Salad (Salata od krumpira)

Ingredients:

4 middle size potatoes

½ onion

Oil, vinegar, salt and pepper (optional)

Preparation:

Wash the potato, cook in the skin, peel and cut into slices. While still hot, add oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Garnish the salad with chopped onion.

***Other very popular salad is shredded cabbage, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.**

Waffle blocks (Oblatne)

Ingredients:

1-packet waffle sheets (can be found in continental shops)

15 tablespoons milk

15 tablespoons grated walnuts

15 tablespoons sugar

250 g unsalted butter

2 ribs of cooking chocolate

Preparation:

Mix all ingredients and cook them on low heat. Fill the waffle sheets with hot filling, cut into slices when cold

Black coffee (Turkish coffee)

Ingredients:

5 cups of water (small coffee cups, usually found in continental shops)

5 teaspoons grinded coffee

Preparation:

Boil the water in coffee pot, move from the heat and add the coffee, stirred it and put back on heat to boil again. Pour the coffee in the small cups and sweetened as per wish.