

The Italian Cheese Maker

– Nimma Adhikari



Venue & Food Courtesy: Himal Farm, 9841183728

This story could have taken a different turn. It could have been about a pot – an imported one but an unimportant one. It could be of interest to readers how this pot became a lifesaver to several spiders seeking a safe sanctuary. As fate had it, the pot could not live up to any of those expectations and ended up in a cheese-making

room. And here is how it begins:

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The year was 1989 when Sandro Serafini first came to Nepal as a tourist and would come as the same for the next 10 years until he got married to a Nepal-born. Serafini, now a proud owner of Himal Farm – though he prefers to call himself a simple cheese maker – along with his wife always dreamed of opening a restaurant of his own in Ne-

pal. However, it seems like better plans were already stocked up for him.

It is hard to believe that this man worked as a computer programmer in Italy before he finally settled in Nepal. And he has been in a lot different professions ever since, one being a pashmina exporter. The idea of cheese-making came to him when his daughter longed for Italian cheese, and the stores here had no better options. “I felt uncomfortable to have brought my daughter here and be unable to provide her something that was perfectly normal for me when I grew up,” says he.

Cheese and wine have always been one of the major parts of Italian cuisine. One can say that Italian food is quite incomplete without the use of cheese, and wine of course. Serafini talks about how different the concept of eating is in Italy. “Eating for us is not like finishing the plate and leaving the table,” shares Serafini. He remembers how food would be the reason behind better family values and bonding among members.

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foods though. Evening was the only time when fathers working outside home and mothers would get to spend together with their children. And that was why everyone eagerly looked forward to supper time to bond. Those cultures could not just die simply because he moved to a different land, could it? A passionate cook, not by profession though, he self-learned to make cheese.

He now produces a variety of cheese along with meat products, and these products are getting recognition in commercial as well as private kitchens. He recalls how his daughter was his first customer and somewhat of a taste analyzer, telling him what was good and what was the best. Had his daughter and wife not shown their love for a bite of cheese, the imported pot would have been subjected to the fate of spiders. All thanks to his family, we now have a variety to choose from.

CROSTINO WITH MOZZARELLA AND ANCHOVIES

This is a typical dish that can be found in almost any pizzeria in Italy and is very popular in Rome. It can be easily prepared at home and takes about 15 minutes to prepare it. A slice of bread topped with fresh mozzarella and then covered with a rich anchovy sauce, that’s it! It can also be prepared by using different toppings like mushrooms.

Ingredients:

- 250 g fresh mozzarella cheese
- 4 slices of Italian bread sliced
- 1 cm or French baguette
- 90 g unsalted butter
- 4 - 5 anchovy fillets
- 100 ml milk
- Salt to taste

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees (Celsius).

2. Pour the milk into a plate, add a pinch of salt and stir.

3. Soak only a single side of the bread slices in milk to soften it. Place the slices on a baking tray.

4. Cover the soaked bread with slices of mozzarella. Press lightly and bake.

5. Warm the butter and add the anchovy fillets. Anchovy fillets are available in any department store. Since the fillet is already salty, use unsalted butter to balance the flavor. Stir until the anchovies completely melt giving off a brown color.

6. When the crostino is done, that is slightly browned on the bottom, remove from the oven and spread the warm butter with anchovy sauce over the crostino.

Serve at once.

In the absence of oven, you can use a frying pan with lid. Cook over very low heat. !

food bites

DJ Raju

DJ Raju is one of the most popular DJs of Kathmandu. Known for his mind blowing remixes of popular songs like *Chyangba ho Chyangba*, Singh started with rock music back in 1987 playing the drums for the band Wrath Child. After he returned from Germany, where went to university, Wrath Child was reborn, and they opened a restaurant, Graffiti in 1992. During a six-month vacation in Europe following the closure of Graffiti in 1996, he hopped nightclubs from Berlin to Amsterdam to Ibiza. It then struck him that it was better to make people dance to your tune. He worked as a house DJ at Club Dynasty from 1997 to 2004 and also worked in clubs like Konnection and Farout both in Germany, Mirage in New Delhi, Big Ben in Kolkata, and a few clubs in Hong Kong. However Singh is not only the king of music but also somewhat a master chef. Currently involved with the event organizing company Vootoo, Singh recently opened Vootoo, The Food Votique. We get his view on food:

What food do you like to cook for your wife?
I make her spaghetti most of the time.

What makes Vootoo, The Food Votique different?
Our specialty are the spices, I personally look after it myself. We believe in professionalism. We did not open the restaurant just for the sake of opening one. We want to give the people of Kathmandu a good place to eat and hang out.



Where have you had food not worth the price?

I cannot name the place but it was in Jhamsikhel. I like my steak done medium and had ordered accordingly. However they got me a steak that was so well done it actually tasted like sukuti.

How would you rate these places on a scale of 1 to 5?

Bu Keba
Food – 5, Ambience – 4, Service – 4

Jardin
Food – 5, Ambience – 4, Service – 4

What dish should restaurants in Nepal compulsorily have in their menus?

It has to be momos, because anywhere you go in Nepal, momos have become the ideal snack for almost everyone.

What is your view the new restaurants in the city?
People should cook from their heart. When you add a little love to your food, it makes it special. I believe people who do not have passion for food should not just open a restaurant for the sake of it.

Where have you had the best ice-cream?
It is actually a home-made ice-cream at a friend’s place.

Mannat Shrestha

