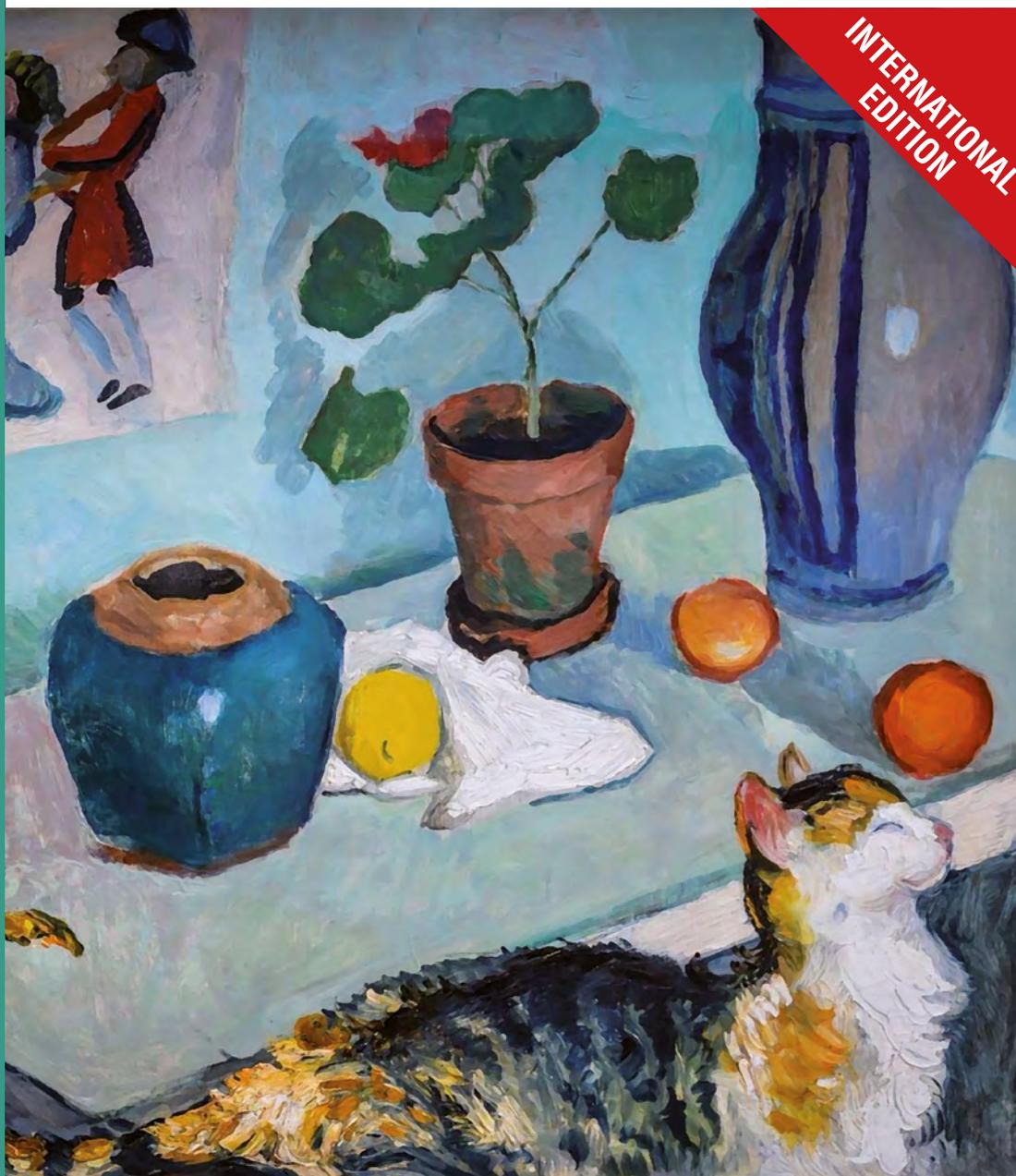


CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA
ISTITUZIONE CULTURALE DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA
FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI

www.accademia1953.it

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MONTHLY MAGAZINE
REG. N. 4049 - 29-5-1956
TRIBUNALE DI MILANO

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L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA
È STATA FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI
E DA LUIGI BERTETT, DINO BUZZATI TRAVERSO,
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ARTURO ORVIETO, SEVERINO PAGANI, ALDO PASSANTE,
GIAN LUIGI PONTI, GIÒ PONTI, DINO VILLANI,
EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,
CON MASSIMO ALBERINI E VINCENZO BUONASSISI.



On the cover: *Graphic elaboration of Spirit of the House: Still Life with Cat (1910) by August Macke; private collection*

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There is great chaos under heaven

The current situation is only 'excellent' for the coronavirus.

"There is great chaos under heaven", Mao Zedong reputedly said, "[hence] the situation is excellent!". The context was the disorder within Chinese society in the early 1960s, favourable to Mao's revolutionary movement. Today's chaos, instead, encourages political and social unrest: the situation is only 'excellent' for the coronavirus. Never before, not even eight months ago, had such chaos been seen. All against all. A maelstrom of so-called expert pseudo-scientists, politicians, administrators and journalists talking over each other and contradicting themselves from one day to the next. In an infamous ministerial meeting, one participant requested a curfew starting at 6:00 PM, another at 8, yet another at 11, until they settled somewhere between these, at 10. Based on which data? Did they just free-hand it? A chilling thought.

The statistics which torment us daily are only part of the truth

We have stated several times that the statistics, which torment us daily are only part of the truth; many other parameters are missing, such as age, comorbidities etc, but first and foremost, **the origin or source of the contagion**. Are these data available? Without such evidence, how can we choose a course of action? Why close restaurants and bars at 6 and not 7? Why leave bakeries open while shuttering the shops that sell their wares? Why close beauty spas but not hair salons? Why close theatres and cinemas? Is this all done by feel too? Our restaurants have been hit with particularly stringent regulations: distance between diners, sanitisation, masks, table quotas - all for naught. They close at 6: that's when the virus wakes up to attack! And in all this bedlam, there are always those imbeciles who advocate confining the so-called elderly at home for their own good, because they are the ones most likely to die. Well spotted, Sherlock! Some ridiculous provisions verge on the insulting, such as the decree to 'relieve' **restaurateurs**, or the modification of colour-coded zones to red, orange and

by Paolo Petroni
President of the Accademia



yellow, replacing the previous green, misleadingly indicative of peace and well-being, with yellow.

Yellow, orange and red zones are determined by an algorithm

The colour-coding is performed by an **algorithm**, they say, and is therefore scientific. We should clarify that algorithms constitute a **pseudo-scientific trap** which serves to justify merely political or personal decisions. This is because by definition, an algorithm solves problems based on instructions. Change the parameters, and voilà: new results. Nowadays, to whitewash haphazard choices with a scientific sheen, the 'algorithm' is invoked, instantly silencing those who don't know what it means or how it works. We're aware that the situation is dire worldwide, but we would make sacrifices more willingly if we were convinced of their usefulness and if decisions were based on real and reliable information. Even the **Carabinieri**, the Italian gendarmes, after many years abandoned their old motto: "*Usi obbedir tacendo, e tacendo morir*" ('Obey in silence, and in silence die'), preferring the less committed, less grim "*Nei secoli fedele*" ('Loyal through the ages').



Turin's *giandujotto* aims for PGI status

by Gigi Padovani

Honorary Academician for Torino Lingotto

A group of Piedmontese chocolatiers and companies has formed a committee to pursue a strictly regulated European designation.

ually wrapped chocolate: the *giandujotto*, a **symbol of Turin** since the mid-19th century. Today it is found in many chocolate shop on every continent, having long since relinquished its exclusive bond with the subalpine capital, **its birthplace during the 1867 Carnival celebrations.** Now, after one failed attempt early this century, a group of Piedmontese artisans and companies is working to achieve European recognition of the 'Turin *Giandujotto*' as a PGI - Protected Geographical Indication - product.

Italy leads Europe in number of PGI and PDO (the more stringently regulated Protected Designation of Origin) products: we have 343 of the total 1460. Since October 2018, for the first time these also include a cocoa-based speciality: **Modica chocolate from Sicily, which thereby joined other Italian delicacies protected by the label from Brussels: Tuscan cantucci, pampepato from Ferrara, torrone from Bagnara, and panforte and ricciarelli from Siena.**

With its unmistakable upside-down boat shape and its cocoa and hazelnut fragrance, it was the **world's first individ-**



Upon discovering that the Sicilians had reached that milestone before them, the artisans of Turin rolled up their sleeves and created a committee, now joined by forty-odd Piedmontese companies thus far. It is led by the young chocolatier **Guido Castagna**, known to the general public as the star of television programmes: he has a workshop and show-room in Giaveno, near Turin, and has been named President. Several experts are on the case: jurists, economists, design instructors and historians; and even Turin's Chamber of Commerce has contributed by providing a laboratory for conducting the necessary research.

The peculiarity of Modica chocolate, created in the Spanish County of Modica in eastern Sicily in the 16th century as *chocolate a la pedra*, is its archaic production method. It is cold-processed, which leaves its sugar crystals intact, allowing artisans to produce 'crunchy' chocolate bars. This is technically a defect, historically overcome through conching and refining: it should be noted that those bars of "*ciocolatte*" were destined to be melted into a hot beverage at home. Be that as it may, today it is highly fashionable, a signature product of its territory and a tourist magnet.

After thirty samples were analysed, it was decided to use Piedmontese PGI hazelnuts

"The giandujotto from Turin also has unique features. Our initiative" - explains Guido Castagna - "aims to establish recognition of **gianduja chocolate's**



origin in its most typical form: it was created here in Turin, and its deliciousness won over Europe before fondant chocolate was invented. Furthermore, in our official recipe, elaborated after analysing over thirty samples and with the approval of everyone involved, we have chosen to use Piedmontese PGI hazelnuts. When this chocolate receives the recognition to which we aspire, **it will be the first PGI speciality to have another PGI product as one of its ingredients**".

The recipe, without powdered milk, resulted from **the marriage of cocoa and hazelnut, devised by artisans in Turin** as a surrogate for Central American cocoa beans. Their import had been halted by Napoleon's Continental Blocade of 1806, as retaliation against Britain following the defeat at Trafalgar. The *Corylus avellana* plants abundant on the Piedmontese hills were easily available in Turin, already a European capital of the "food of the gods" by 1700. These

were ingeniously substituted for cocoa, not yet cultivated in Africa.

It's not a legend. It is corroborated by contemporary publications, such as a booklet published in Venice in 1813 by Antonio Bazzarini, entitled *Piano teorico-pratico di sostituzione nazionale al cioccolato* (*A theoretical and practical plan to replace chocolate nationally*). The author, a man of letters, declared his desire to be useful to the nation. He wrote: "The Cocoa nut, a tree once known in the New World, has regrettably milked the purses of Europe of so many millions in voluntary tribute which blind enthusiasm flung towards foreign parts, that the produce of our own lands, while in no wise inferior, have been left to languish". His thesis was that cocoa **beans were too expensive, but could be replaced by such "very nutritional foods" as the "occidental hazelnut"**, which, "ground into a paste and mixed with other substances, can form a confection as delicious and healthful as chocolate", being furthermore "lighter on the stomach", that is, more digestible.

The governing regulations require a proportion of hazelnuts between 30% and 45%

The secretary of the Piedmontese Giandujotto PGI Committee is the lawyer Antonio Borra, a hazelnut grower in Alta Langa. "We have undertaken a meticulous organoleptic and composition analysis of thirty-odd samples, identifying the hazelnut proportion for the official recipe: from a minimum of 30% to a maximum of 45%". There are multiple methods to produce this subalpine treasure of the chocolatier's art: it can be extruded (as from an icing bag), extruded and cut, moulded, or hand-shaped using the old 19th-century knife ("*coltelle*") technique. All will be accepted. The Turinese writer Bruno Gambarotta has written in one of his books that "the *giandujotto* proves the existence of God", though the Committee probably won't use this poetic definition. **Professor**

Giovanni Peira, a researcher and lecturer in Turin University's Department of Management, will have to compose the application text. "It will be a lengthy task. We will present our research to the Piedmontese Regional Government, which will have to give initial approval, followed by that of Italy's Ministry of Agricultural Policy. Lastly the request will be examined by the European Commission in Brussels. We predict **roughly a three-year process**, if all goes well, but its results for the territory and for business should benefit both industry and artisans. We have already found official documents dating from the 1960s, citing the "Turin *Giandujotto*" as the object of mutual agreements between Italy, Switzerland and France".

The chocolate was 'christened' by the Carnival character Gianduia

The Carnival character Gianduia 'christened' the hazelnut chocolate with his name **during the 1868 Carnival**, and **its first producers, from a decade beforehand**, were the 'chocolate manufacturers' **Caffarel Prochet**, who in 1869 became "**suppliers of the Royal Household**" by appointment to King Victor Emmanuel II. During those years, Turin had lost the role of national capital, transferred to Florence in September 1864, amid a popular revolt which caused 62 casualties when troops fired on crowds in San Carlo Square. To compensate the citizens, the municipal government instituted the "**Giandujeidi**" (**Gianduja Fair**), **a sort of ante-litteram EuroChocolate**, with stands full of *giandujotti* along city streets.

The subalpine capital is now trying to overcome the crisis unleashed by industrial decline and the pandemic: Turin's PGI *Giandujotto* (spelt with an old-fashioned "j", as of old, the Committee says) will be a sweet 'ambassador' for the territory, and may give us all back some joy (and some business).

Gigi Padovani



At the court of king Castelmagno

by Ferruccio Franza

Cuneo-Saluzzo Delegate

A PDO cheese with a subtle, delicate flavour which gains intensity and piquancy with ageing.

After crossing the Alps with his armies in support of the Pope, **Charlemagne was hosted by the Bishop of Saluzzo**. The emperor turned up his nose at nothing, not even **a large sackcloth-coloured cheese**. He sank in his blade and opened the cheese, and his eyes lit up on seeing its delicate golden hue. As he began removing the dark, rough crust and cutting into the blue veining, the Bishop interrupted: "Your Majesty! You're depriving yourself

of the best part". **The emperor allowed the mellow yet flavoursome delicacy to melt in his mouth**. From that day forth, a caravan made its way to Aachen every year, laden with cheese.

This is among the best-known anecdotes handed down by tradition, but in truth we know little about the cheese's real origins.

The earliest official documents mentioning Castelmagno cheese date from 1277. Furthermore, in 1722 a decree by Victor





Gnocchi with Castelmagno

Amadeus II of Sardinia ordered the people of Castelmagno to provide their feudal lord Ignazio De Morri with “nine rubbi” (a weight measurement) of cheese.

Blue cheeses are particularly appreciated at the end of a meal

However, it was in 20th-century ‘cheese literature’ that a particular group of cheeses gained a following, especially as desserts. These are the so-called blue cheeses. Their distinguishing feature is **the presence of specific moulds** of the genus *Penicillium*, **which gives them an unusual colour, with greenish-blue veins**. The best-known blue cheeses are

Gorgonzola, Roquefort and various French blue cheeses of the Pyrenees.

This family includes Castelmagno, considered among the best Italian cheeses and certainly **one of the rarest**. It owes its name to the Castelmagno township of the Grana Valley, in the Maritime Alps near Cuneo, where it has been produced since time immemorial. Today its **production area is strictly limited to three towns in the Upper Grana Valley:**

Castelmagno, Pradleves and Monterosso Grana.

CDO (Controlled Designation of Origin) was granted by a Presidential Decree dated 16 December 1982. On the 1st of July **1996**, PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) status was granted in accordance with European regulations, guaranteeing a unique production area.



Adherence to guidelines and protection of Castelmagno’s image are entrusted to the Consortium, located in Campomolino di Castelmagno.

Few Castelmagno producers remain: families whose herds are suitable for yielding a cheese fought over by the most exclusive restaurants in the world, as far afield as Tokyo and New York.

A substantial proportion of these producers are young, able and well-prepared, looking to the future, aware of being the conduits of a tradition and a product with extraordinary cultural, as well as economic and gastronomic, importance.

Castelmagno is made entirely by hand, sculpted similarly to clay, and seasoned in caves suffused with magic: born in meadows which were once the domain of wolves, and matured in a unique microclimate.

Castelmagno gnocchi have unequalled flavour and fragrance

Gnocchi are the most typical dish in the mountains round Cuneo. Their history is ancient, and they can easily make gluttons of us all.

Castelmagno gnocchi are simple to make: once boiled and drained, they are **pan-fried in butter with cubed Castelmagno, cream and grated cheese**. A brief stir over the flame to mix everything, a few grinds of fresh pepper, and they are ready to serve piping hot, after being browned in the oven for a few moments. The result is a delicate dish with unequalled flavour and fragrance.

In any case, **tasting slices with differing levels of ageing, paired with honey**, is the ideal way to finish the meal.

At the first light of day, this cheese is sculpted with minute instruments as the sun begins to gild the surrounding peaks. An inimitable feeling, followed by the most classic of tastings: a good white slice of cheese with fragrant oven-fresh bread.

Ferruccio Franza



The 'smart food' diet

by **Alessandra D'Attilio**
Pescara Academician

Longevity and disease prevention through 'smart foods'.

Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food", said Hippocrates of Kos. Nutrigenetics has taken to heart and elaborated upon this teaching from the father of medicine, **scouring foodstuffs for medicinal molecules able to weaken genes triggering ageing and boost those for longevity.** These principles underlie the **'smart food diet'**, which aims to use such foods to **inhibit bad eating habits conducive to disease,** and prevent cardio-vascular and degenerative ailments, diabetes and neoplasia.

Smart foods 'communicate' with DNA, mimicking the effects of fasting

Reliable research has demonstrated that "longevity genes are activated by food reduction: this slows down energy pro-

duction, shifting the focus to repairing the organism's tissues. It is as if nature had equipped animals with a method of prolonging life during food scarcity, to await better times. (...) **But caloric restriction is probably unfeasible for our species.** It is drastic and would deprive us of an important aspect of our social behaviour: sharing food". (Eliana Liotta with Lucilla Titta, *Smart Food Recipes*, Rizzoli, 2016).

Smart foods "communicate" with DNA and **can limit fat accumulation** by mimicking the effects of fasting: in effect, we eat, but it is as if we didn't. It has been ascertained that health is affected by entire food models more than by individual foods; of such models, the Mediterranean diet seems to have the greatest protective effect.

30 'smart foods' have been identified and subdivided into 2 categories: **20 'longevity foods'** able to stimulate genes governing lifespan, and **10 'protective foods'** whose regular consumption protects the body from obesity and chronic diseases.

An excess of alcohol and cured meats should be avoided within a smart food diet; red meat need not be altogether eliminated, as there is no scientific evidence that a vegetarian diet reduces cancer risks, but it is wise not to exceed 500 grammes per week.

A smart food diet with a 'seal of approval'

There is a scientifically certified European smart food diet, endorsed





by the **European Oncology Institute in Milan**. The EOI Team is led by Pier Giuseppe Pelicci and coordinated by the nutritionist Lucilla Titta; the nutritionists and researchers Maria Tieri, Greta Caprara and Vittoria Ercolanelli are part of the group.

The EOI Team combines nutrigenomics research with awareness-raising, aiming to create and disseminate statements endorsed by the scientific community, **fight misinformation and skewed perceptions, and encourage thoughtful food choices** to promote health and primary and secondary prevention.

The EOI's outreach work is based on the ten tumour prevention recommendations from the WCRF (World Cancer Research Fund), and guidelines from other internationally recognised scientific bodies to prevent cardio-cerebrovascular, neurodegenerative and metabolic diseases. **The EOI's recommended smart food diet** (<https://smartfood.ieo.it>) describes the two main meals in the form of a large dish (a conceptual image borrowed from the Harvard Medical School in Boston), on which space may be reserved for 'longevity' and 'protective' foods. **"There are no obsessive rules.** If one day we don't prepare an entree, that is fine. If we aren't hungry, we mustn't force-feed ourselves. Those who habitually skip lunch, or who only have a soup for dinner, may continue to do so. **What is important is not to spend the day snacking on pastries, crisps and sweets"**. (op. cit.).

As for portions, approximately half a meal should be fruit and vegetables, favouring fresh, seasonal produce with as much colour variety as possible; a quarter should be cereals (whole-grain is better) and their derivatives; a quarter should be protein (preferably vegetable, but animal proteins are fine). **Between meals, snack on nuts and oily seeds.** Dressings should be extra-virgin oils and cold-pressed seed oils. To drink, water or tea (with little or no sugar). As for eating times, they should be as regular as possible, and concentrated within a

twelve-hour period (during the day), giving the genetic metabolic pathways a chance to rest.

These foods can be judiciously incorporated into healthy recipes

LONGEVITY FOODS	PROTECTIVE FOODS
RED ORANGES	GARLIC
ASPARAGUS	
PERSIMMONS	WHOLE-GRAIN CEREALS
CAPERS	
CHERRIES	AROMATIC HERBS
RED CABBAGE	
DARK CHOCOLATE (min. 70% cocoa)	NUTS
ONIONS	
TURMERIC	FRESH FRUIT
STRAWBERRIES	
BERRIES	LEGUMES
LETTUCE	
AUBERGINES	OILY SEEDS
APPLES	
PURPLE POTATOES	EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
CHILLI PEPPERS AND SWEET PAPIKA	
BLACK PRUNES	COLD-PRESSED SEED OILS
RED RADICCHIO	
GREEN OR BLACK TEA	VEGETABLES
GRAPES	

PIATTO SMART

CEREALI E DERIVATI INTEGRALI:
POSSIBILMENTE AD OGNI PASTO

- ▶ **CEREALI IN CHICCO:** come orzo, farro, avena, segale, grano saraceno, quinoa e riso integrale, sono da prediligere.
- ▶ **PANE E PASTA:** meglio se integrali.

VERDURA E FRUTTA

DOVREBBERO RAPPRESENTARE METÀ DEL PIATTO SMART. Prediligi prodotti freschi e di stagione, variandone il più possibile i colori.

- ▶ **VERDURA:** non rappresenta solo un contorno ma deve essere la protagonista di tutti i piatti.
- ▶ **FRUTTA:** da consumare ai pasti o come spuntino.

FONTI DI PROTEINE:
LA VARIETÀ È FONDAMENTALE

- ▶ **LEGUMI:** 3-5 volte a settimana.
- ▶ **PESCE:** 3-5 volte a settimana, in particolare pesce azzurro.
- ▶ **UOVA:** 1-4 volte a settimana.
- ▶ **FORMAGGI:** 1-3 volte a settimana, meglio freschi e magri.
- ▶ **CARNE:** 0-3 volte a settimana, da preferire bianca (pollo, tacchino, coniglio). Limita il consumo di carne rossa ed evita i salumi e le carni lavorate.
- ▶ **LATTE, YOGURT O SOSTITUTI VEGETALI A BASE DI SOIA:** 1-2 porzioni al giorno, senza zuccheri aggiunti.



ACQUA: FONDAMENTALE PER IL CORRETTO FUNZIONAMENTO DELL'ORGANISMO

Un paio di bicchieri a pasto e altri quattro durante la giornata. Da evitare invece le bevande zuccherate (succhi di frutta, tè freddo, cola ecc...).



GRASSI BUONI E CONDIMENTI: NECESSARI PER BILANCIARE IL PASTO

- ▶ **OLIO EXTRA VERGINE D'OLIVA:** condimento principe del piatto smart. Oli di semi, solo spremuti a freddo.
- ▶ **FRUTTA SECCA A GUSCIO:** per lo spuntino e come ingrediente per arricchire i tuoi pasti.
- ▶ **SEMI, SPEZIE ED ERBE AROMATICHE:** per ridurre l'uso di sale, mantenendo comunque saporiti i tuoi piatti.

