

# As Seen In the 2012 September Issue of *EveryDay with Rachael Ray*



## Shop like an Italian!

### 1. GRATING CHEESE

Why pick just one? There are a few different cheeses on hand for different dishes. Parmigiano-reggiano, made from cow's milk and aged at least 10 months, a complex salty-nutty flavor that pairs well with everything. Grana padano is a tad less expensive, similarly nutty but with a milder taste. Pecorino romano is a sharp, sheep's-milk cheese that's perfect for zesty hearty sauces.

### 2. MOZZARELLA

Rare is the Italian fridge that doesn't stock a ball of this soft, fresh cow's-milk cheese, used for everything from pizza to panini. You can find it in plastic wrap or brine-filled containers in the deli section. Its flavor and texture are best in uncooked appetizers;

when it comes to super-melty dishes like lasagna, go for the low-moisture mozzarella sold shredded or in blocks.

### 3. VINEGAR

Real deal: the sweet-tart Modena Balsamico and sold stores. What most in Italy) use: versions that meet the standards. Use for salad sauces.

### 4. EVOO

Extra-virgin olive oil has a strong, fruity aroma and taste. It is essential to cooking in Italy. The country consumes one-fifth of the olive oil produced globally. In order to qualify as "extra-virgin," minimal heat and no chemicals are used to extract the oil from the olives. The oil must also be low in acidity and pass a basic taste test mandated by the International Olive Council. (See p. 40 for more on EVOO.)

### 5. PANCIETTA

Also known as Italian bacon, this raw, salt-cured pork crisps up like its American counterpart, but because it's not smoked, it has a more subtle flavor. Order it in a chunk from the deli counter so you can slice and use it as needed.

### 6. TOMATOES

The secret to a good, full-flavored marinara is stellar tomatoes. When fresh are out of season, look for canned brands with no preservatives. Or splurge on San Marzano tomatoes, an Italian variety known for its sweet taste and meaty texture. Jarred sauces are convenient, but many have too much sugar; seek out those with no more than 5 grams per serving.

### 7. ANCHOVIES

These underrated little fish add a complex, salty-rich (and surprisingly non-fishy) backbone of flavor to some of Italy's tastiest sauces, like puttanesca. The fillets come canned, jarred in oil, or in paste form; all versions melt into hot sauces. The paste is most convenient because you can squeeze in a dab at a time, but the canned and jarred versions pack more intense flavor.

### 8. POLENTA

Coarsely ground cornmeal (which is naturally gluten-free) is sold in traditional, quick-cooking and instant dry versions, as well as precooked in tubes. Use dry if you want to cook a bowl of creamy polenta to top with meat, sauce or vegetables. The precooked, sliceable variety is convenient if you'd like to bake, fry or grill the polenta, because it holds its shape well.

### 9. FRESH GARLIC, HERBS AND SPICES

Garlic is one of the building blocks of Italian and Italian-American cooking. Buy only a little at a time so the cloves stay as fresh and moist as possible. Dried herbs like parsley, basil and oregano add depth to simmered sauces; fresh herbs are often used as a bright-tasting garnish. Though rarely spicy, Italian dishes are often rounded out with a touch of heat from crushed red pepper.

### 10. PASTA

With hundreds of styles in every shape imaginable, there's a pasta to suit every sauce. The classic is made with refined semolina flour, which is high in gluten (the protein in grain that creates a chewy bite). If you're looking for pasta with more fiber, go whole grain. It has a heartier, earthy-wheaty taste and up to 5 more grams of fiber per 1/2-cup serving.

## COOK LIKE A LOCAL WITH LIONI'S FRESH MOZZARELLA.

Rachael Ray's 10 must-haves for great Italian food at home!



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