



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Discovering Italy through its Culinary Traditions

PROF. BARBARA BETTINELLI, PROF. VALERIA MOSCARIELLO AND PROF. TATIANA BAGGIO

Term	Summer 2026
Area of study	Cultural Studies
Area Code	CU300
Credits	6 ECTS
Dates	8 – 19 June 2026 (2 weeks)
Method of instruction	In person

Course description

This course is aimed at students with an interest in Italian food traditions, society, and culture. It will also cover the relationships between Italian traditions and contemporary Italian society drawing from examples including festivals and the influence of foreign civilizations. You'll be surprised by the history behind the food, and how strictly related to the culture and heritage of an area a wine or a dish can be. Food is one of the cornerstones of Italian culture and even if times are changing and life is more and more frenetic, Italians still find a great pleasure in sitting at a table, at home or at the restaurant, and share a good meal together: this is because to the people of Italy, Italian food and wine are part of their culture and, very often, also of their own family history. Italian cuisine can be difficult to define, as recipes, tastes, ingredients and cooking styles vary enormously from region to region. One thing that most people will agree on though is that it is one of the richest and most delicious cuisines in the world.

Course contents

Students will explore the following topics:

- Italian Eating Habits
- The History of Italians and their Food
- Italy, its Regions, and its Regional Cuisine
- The Italian universe of pasta
- Slow Food vs Fast Food
- Italian Coffee Culture
- The culture and cuisine of some of Italy's regions
- The Mediterranean Diet
- Festival Foods
- Famous Italian Chefs
- Italian Wines: Pairing Food and Wine



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Films, extracts from books, articles, food quizzes will be used to illustrate and explain the role of food and wine in Italian culture. Lectures will be complemented by a field trip to Eataly food-market where students will discover the great variety of Italian artisanal products, learn about Eataly market concept, and will taste high-quality food directly from production sites.

At least one cooking lab session will be held and given limited space in the kitchen, the number of sessions will be determined by overall class size.

During cooking labs, students will discover some traditional Italian dishes and will have the opportunity to participate "hands-on," gaining the practical experience needed to recreate these recipes at home.

Important:

- Please note that Kitchen Labs are held in the University cafeteria kitchens. Since these facilities are used for daily food service, there is a risk of cross-contamination from various ingredients. It is vital for students with allergies or specific dietary requirements to be aware of this; the kitchen cannot guarantee a completely allergen-free environment.
- In a teaching kitchen, hygiene is a fundamental food safety requirement. To protect your classmates and ensure the quality of the food prepared, students must adhere to the following professional standards:
 - Nails must be kept short and free of polish.
 - Long hair must be tied back
 - Students must wear a hat or hair net and a clean apron.

Università Cattolica will provide each student with an apron and a hat / hair net. These rules reflect professional kitchen standards and are strictly enforced: all students must meet these hygiene requirements to participate.

Method of teaching

The course will be taught through a variety of class discussions, presentations, documentaries and films.

Course requirements

Students will be required to:

- follow class regularly and participate in class discussions;
- complete assignments and tasks;
- participate in a final project.

Students are not allowed to use earbuds, phones, tablets, and portable computers during lessons and labs except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes.

Grading

50% group presentation of a research project

50% exam on the topics covered in class



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Course reading and materials

All materials will be available on Blackboard.

Prerequisites

None

Instructors' bio

Professor Barbara Bettinelli was born and educated in Italy where she worked as a language teacher and teacher trainer in the Italian state system up to her late 20s. She then spent fifteen years in the UK where she completed her PhD and taught Italian at the University of Nottingham. In 2001 she moved back to Italy where she is currently teaching English and Italian language and Culture at the Università Cattolica. She also works as Educational Developer for Cattolica Centre of Higher Education Internationalisation. She has written many books aimed at students of Italian and English, which are published in Italy by Pearson Longman.

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Professor Valeria Moscariello was born and educated in Italy. After graduating in English Languages and studying in both England and the United States, she earned a Master's Degree in Teaching Italian as a Foreign Language. She has extensive experience teaching Italian language and culture in language schools and the Università Cattolica of Milan. She developed a passion for sustainable tourism, becoming a tour leader and organizer of niche tours focused on authentic Italian specialties and traditions. She also contributed to volumes dedicated to intercultural dialogue, and Italian identity in a global context.

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Professor Tatiana Baggio was born and educated in Italy. She worked for sixteen years at Società Dante Alighieri in Milan where she taught Italian to students of all ages and from all over the world. She holds the Ditals Level II from the Ditals Center of the University for Foreigners of Siena, a qualification certifying advanced competence in teaching Italian to foreign students and a Master's Degree in Teaching Italian as a Foreign Language. She is currently working as a teacher of Italian Language and Culture to foreign students at the Università Cattolica in Milan and in other state and private universities.

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Course Schedule

Lesson	Date and Time(CET)	Topic	Reading/Course Material
1	08/06/2026 2-6pm	Buongiorno! Welcome to the World of Italian Food and Cooking - Italian Eating Habits	Materials available on Blackboard.
2	9/06/2026 9.30am-13.30pm	Italian Food doesn't exist – Exploring Italian regions: Lombardy and Campania	



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3	10/06/2026 9.30am-13.30pm	The Italian universe of pasta - Exploring Italian regions: Lazio	
4	11/06/2026 9.30am-13.30pm	Italian coffee culture - The Slow Food Movement	
5	12/06/2026	Field trip to Eataly	
6	15/06/2025 9.30am-13.30pm	The Mediterranean diet - Practical tips: how to prepare a real Italian dish	
7	16/06/2026 9.30am-13.30pm	Italian festival foods - Exploring Italian regions: Sicily	
8	17/06/2026 9.30am-13.30pm	Italian wines: from wine making to pairing wines and food - Practical tips: how to prepare a real Italian dish	
9	18/06/2026	Famous Italian chefs - Working towards your final project	
10	19/06/2026	Final exams	