

Previous page: Stuffed red peppers
with pine nuts and bay leaves

Left: Pan-fried sardines

Right: Funghi trifolati



I have suggested a
s suitable for eating
re good hot or cold,
both cook and eater
y day – and it does
y are served

d refreshing, though is rarely served at
Much more likely is a simple rice cake
adding thickened with egg yolks) or
s in red wine.

e the majority of this meal is low in
butter and red meat the pudding can
richer vein. Sweet nectarines matched
e voluptuousness of thick Mascarpone
ething of a classic in modern Italian
g; I have added a spoonful of tart
arrant preserve, which successfully
ne mixture cloying, and makes the
fish sing. Those who prefer something
h could try the combination of fresh
ith ricotta.

away from the tyranny of meat and
g we may find that Sunday lunch
is as enjoyable to prepare as it is to eat.
ormality of such a meal may hide the
n paid to quality and careful cooking,
does not mean that an Italian lunch is
rily more work than our roast beef
le pie – in fact it may be less. It is
hat the meal's easy-going air belies
ght that has gone into it.

from the shackles of convention
lunch can be opened up to a world
. Try a new approach to the Sunday
ere are better reasons for eating
ng than tradition.

All dishes serve four

Roast peppers with goat's cheese

4 medium-sized red or yellow peppers
6 small fresh goat's cheeses
3 tablespoons olive oil
12 capers

Put the peppers in a shallow roasting tin in a
hot oven at 200°C/400°F/Gas 6. Roast until
the skins are black in large patches and the
peppers have almost collapsed, about 30-50
minutes. Remove and set aside until cool
enough to handle, but still slightly warm. Peel
the skin from the peppers; it should come
away easily if they have been cooked enough.
Discard the skin and cut each pepper into
three long strips.

Slice the goat's cheeses in half horizontally.
Put each half on a strip of pepper and fold this
over the cheese. Place in an ovenproof serving
dish. Pour over the olive oil and scatter over
the capers. Put the peppers under a hot grill,
or in the oven, for a few minutes until the
cheese starts to melt. Serve hot or warm with
lots of crusty bread.

Funghi trifolati

Choose big, beefy mushrooms for this dish
350g/12oz chestnut, oyster or porcini
mushrooms

50g/2oz butter
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 plump cloves of garlic, squashed flat
a little chopped fresh thyme
a little lemon juice

To serve:

8 small slices of hot, thickly cut toast,
preferably from a country-style loaf

Slice the mushrooms, halving the oyster
mushrooms if they are large. Melt the butter
and the oil in a shallow pan over a moderate
heat. When it starts to sizzle add the garlic
and thyme and cook for a minute, then add
the mushrooms. Cook over gentle heat until
they are golden and tender. Season with salt
and pepper and squeeze over a little lemon
juice. Spoon the mushrooms and cooking
liquor over the toasts and eat immediately.

Pan-fried sardines

Fresh sardines are not such a rare find
nowadays. They are especially good when
grilled but can also be pan-fried.

3 sardines per person
a little olive oil
1 tablespoon pine kernels
grated zest and juice of half a lemon
small handful of chopped parsley per panful
of fish

Rinse the sardines under running cold water,
place in a non-stick pan and drizzle very lightly
with olive oil. Scatter over the pine kernels
and lemon. Fry very gently over moderate heat
for a few minutes until they are light golden
brown. Turn once and serve hot or warm with
chopped parsley, bread and lemon wedges.

Panzanella

4 slices coarse-textured white bread
6 ripe tomatoes
½ cucumber, cut into cubes
1 sweet onion
small bunch of parsley, chopped
handful of fresh basil leaves
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons wine vinegar

Tear the bread into small chunks and put in a
serving dish. Sprinkle over a little cold water,
just enough to wet the bread without ►