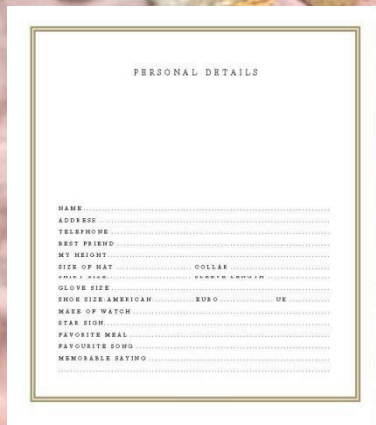


PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME
ADDRESS
TELEPHONE
BEST FRIEND
MY HEIGHT
SIZE OF HAT ..... COLLAR
SHIRT SIZE ..... SLEEVE LENGTH
GLOVE SIZE
SHOE SIZE AMERICAN ..... EURO ..... UK
MAKE OF WATCH
STAR SIGN
FAVORITE MEAL
FAVOURITE SONG
MEMORABLE DATING

Cicchetti

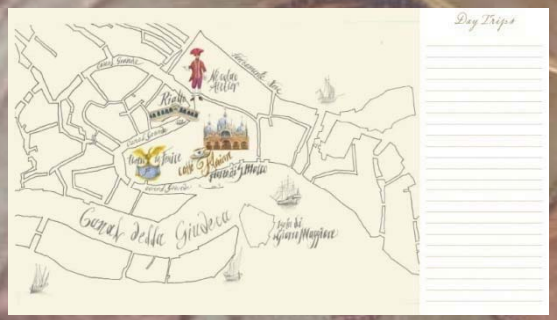
Tramezzini

Italian sandwiches

The tramezzini are classic little sandwiches – white bread, stuffed to bursting with mayonnaise & other fillings – that have been updated by the alcohol-free of modern Venice. They are an important part of Venetian life & are served often with a lovely glass of wine. The bread crusts of these white bread with the crusts cut off (about 10 cm/4 inches square), which you then halve into two triangles. The tramezzini are stuffed in the middle & taper down to the corners. Keep them covered if you aren't be serving them immediately, as the edges don't curl up.

These are what we filled ours with:

—a layer of mayonnaise, then a small slice of ham & 2 artichoke quarters (*the ones bottled in oil*);
—a layer of mayonnaise, a tablespoon or so of crumbled drained tuna, 2 opened-out capers & a slice of hard-boiled egg in the middle;
—chopped/quartered blanched asparagus mixed with a little mayonnaise (*about 1 tablespoon mayonnaise to 1 tablespoon asparagus pieces*), poached scampi, a couple of blanched asparagus tips & a sprinkling of ground pepper. Add a dab more mayonnaise to keep the top slice of bread in place;
—a layer of tuna salsa (*make a tin of drained tuna in oil with 1 large tablespoon capers and smooth oil, then mix with 1 tablespoon mayonnaise*), some crumbled drained tuna, sliced pickled cucumbers & a dab more salsa on the top piece of bread;
—a layer of mayonnaise, sliced egg, artichoke quarters (*the ones bottled in oil*) & ground pepper;
—or any other filling you like.



Antipasti

La saltata di vongole alla marinara

Clams & tomato

Tomato sauce
4 tablespoons olive oil
4 small cloves, very finely chopped
375 g (13 oz/1½ cups) tomato passata
a good pinch of peperoncino
2 tablespoons cream

Clams:
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 kg (2.2 lb/4 cups) sample vongole in shells
125 ml (4 fl oz/½ cup) white wine

This is from my lovely colleague, Louise (half-Venetian, half-Roman). Like to make clams. She adds a dash of cream to the tomato sauce, which makes it beautifully sweet & mellow. These can be served with bread or any great bread into pasta with a little of the pasta cooking water to loosen things up. Try penne, spaghetti or any pasta you like: you'll need about 320 g (11 oz). You can also add a handful of chopped herbs to the sauce if you like. I have used vongole venere (carpet shell clams) here but any vongole are fine. Your clams will probably have been purged of sand already but check with the fishmonger, otherwise you'll need to soak them for a day in a colander standing in well-salted water, changing the water several times.

—To make the tomato sauce, heat the oil in a frying pan & cook the onion over low heat until it almost disappears & is very soft (*it should not be dark but should be very well cooked*). Add the passata, a grinding of salt & pepper & a good pinch of peperoncino. Simmer uncovered for 15-20 minutes until it all thickens into a lovely sauce. Add the cream & allow the sauce to bubble for a couple of minutes more. Take the pan off the heat.

—If you've been soaking your clams, give them a good rinse in the water, rinse them, drain & leave in the colander. Heat the oil with the garlic in a large frying pan (*that has a lid*). Once you start to smell the garlic, add the clams & wine. Turn the heat up to the maximum & put the lid on the pan. Let the clams sit from open. Discard any that refuse to open.

—Take the clams out of the pan. Check for sand by pressing on the bottom of the pan with the back of a spoon. If you think there might be sand, then strain the sauce through a colander lined with muslin.

—Add all the clam water to the tomato sauce & simmer for 5-10 minutes until the flavours have merged & the liquid reduced a little. You want there to be quite a lot of liquid but it shouldn't be too watery. Return the clams to the pan & heat through for a minute. Serve straight from the pan with bread.

Serves 4