

Pellegrino Artusi on Trial

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Pellegrino Artusi is the man who's considered to be the father of Italian cuisine because he was the first intellectual to collect the most important recipes of regional cuisines of Italy. On August 10th, a special jury in Emilia Romagna will decide if his cuisine is still delicious or outdated. What do you think?

[Minestrone](#) [2] is one of Italy's signature dishes, and every region has its own variety. The following is the minestrone recipe from [Pellegrino Artusi](#) [3], the man who's considered to be the father of Italian cuisine because he was the first intellectual to collect the most important recipes of regional cuisines of Italy (He is often credited with establishing a truly national Italian cuisine for the first time).



His cookbook "[La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiare bene](#)" [4] (The Science of Cooking and the Art of Fine dining), self published in 1891, collects 790 receipts, from broth to liqueurs, passing through soups, beginners, second dishes and cakes. The approach is a didactic one, each recipe has been tested numerous times and is followed by the author's reflections and anecdotes. The book has been a best seller in Italy since its first publication, and has been translated into numerous languages including Spanish, Dutch, German and English.

Minestrone Ingredients:

- 2 quarts (2 liters) simmering broth (beef or vegetable)
- 1/2 cup dried white beans (cannellini or similar), or a cup fresh beans.
- 1 packed cup each shredded Savoy cabbage, spinach, and beet greens
- A clove of garlic, crushed
- A bunch of parsley, a small carrot, a short celery stalk, and a small onion, minced
- A zucchini and a potato, diced
- 1/2 cup of tomato sauce, or minced, seeded, and peeled sun-ripened or canned plum tomatoes
- 1/2 cup rice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Boiling water
- Grated Parmigiano

Prep Time: 45 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours, 5 minutes

Preparation:

"In the summer of 1855 I was in Livorno, cholera was slithering here and there in many provinces of Italy, and had everyone dreading a general epidemic, which in fact burst out forthwith. One Saturday evening I went into an inn and asked "What kind of soup do you have?"

"Minestrone," came the answer.

"Bring me the minestrone," said I. I dined, took a walk, and went to bed, in a room in a spanking new hotel owned by a Mr. Dominici, in Piazza del Voltone. During the night my insides rebelled in a most frightful manner, and I went to and from the privy until dawn, damning the minestrone all the while.

The next morning I fled to Florence, where I recovered immediately. Monday came the sorry news that cholera had broken out in Livorno, and Mr. Dominici had been the first fatality - minestrone indeed!"

It was not the soup, but the early symptoms of cholera to cause Artusi's severe gut pain, yet the episode convinced him to write a renowned recipe for minestrone.

The vegetables listed above are indicative and they can be replaced according to your tastes and what's available at the market. Simmer the vegetables in the broth. When they're almost done, check the seasoning, add the rice, and continue cooking, stirring gently. The rice should serve to absorb excess liquid, but if the soup gets too thick, add some boiling water. Serve with or without the grated parmigiano.

How does the recipe sound? Delicious or outdated?

A special jury in Italy will decide. Indeed on August 10th, Artusi and his cuisine will be on trial in Emilia Romagna. For the past 13 years, the cultural institution [Sammauroindustria](#) [5] has put famous Italian personalities on trial. There is a prosecutor, a defense and the audience is the jury. Armed with a small pallet they pick a side and whoever gets more votes wins. So the food writer [Alfredo Antonaros Taracchini](#) [6] will accuse Artusi of being outdated while [Piero Meldini](#) [7], a member of the cultural institution [Casa Artusi](#) [8], will defend Artusi's cuisine and try to prove that it is still good. Both sides will be supported by two chefs, Alberto Faccani ([Ristorante Magnolia Cesenatico](#) [9]) and Silverio Cineri ([Ristorante Silverio Faenza](#) [10]). The judge will be played by



[Gianfranco Miro Gori](#) [11], the creator of this trial and the president of Sammauroindustria.

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- [4] <http://www.amazon.com/Artusi-scienza-cucina-larte-mangiar/dp/8809023188>
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