

bread-based soups, such as *supa mitunà*, which in spring is enriched with the taste of meadow herbs, while in winter it acquires the flavor of leeks or savoy cabbage. *Tapulun* is an ancient recipe of finely minced donkey meat simmered in red wine.

*Capunets* are cabbage or Swiss chard leaf rolls stuffed with minced meat, eggs, stale bread and other 'empty pantry' ingredients. As for cheeses, *tumin* mixed with garlic and chilies become *sancarin*; when flavored with oil, vinegar and spices, they are called *frachèt*, and if left whole to macerate in oil with plenty of chilies, they turn into fiery *tumin eletrio*.

**Besides cookies, are there any typical desserts?**

To end a typical Biellese lunch on a sweet note, try *palpitun*, a cake made with stale bread, pears and chocolate (and sometimes a dash of Fernet). Alternatively, try *zabaglione*, a custard that used to be made with red wine or milk, or *bunet*, which is found throughout Piedmont, a classic chocolate pudding with amaretti biscuits.

**With so many woods, will there be good honey?**

Of course, there will. The unpolluted and largely unpopulated terrain is ideal for bee-keeping. Many kinds of honey are produced in the mountains, such as delicate rhododendron honey and wildflower honey. Excellent chestnut,

linden, dandelion and acacia honey are also available. Also, try apple mustard and grape mustard, prepared by concentrating the fruit juice with long cooking (even more than 12 hours) until it turns into a thick, brown syrup, with which to accompany boiled meats, cheeses, Paletta and polenta.

**Why is Biella beer so good?**

Biellese waters are famous for their exceptional lightness (Lauretana spring water is the lightest in Europe), which is also why excellent quality beers are produced in the area. The most renowned is Menabrea, repeatedly rated the best *lager* in the world, yet there are also excellent craft beers all there to discover.

**Is it true that a native of Biella invented Vermouth?**

That is right: the distiller and herbalist Antonio Benedetto Carpano invented Vermouth in 1786 by blending Muscat wine with herbs and spices. Carpano was originally from Biella but had his workshop in Turin; the new drink was an immediate success throughout Piedmont and even won over the Savoy court.

**Which is the most famous liqueur in the area?**

The Ratafià di Andorno, traditionally made from the alcoholic maceration of wild cherries, according to a 500-year-old recipe.

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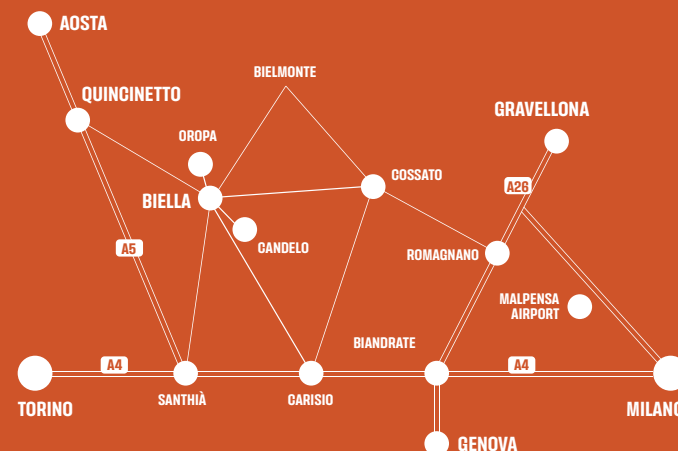
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◀ **Discover the food and wine excellences of Biellese**



◀ **Any advice on where to eat?**



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ÉQUIPE ARC-EN-CIEL

**BIELLESE: TRAVEL NOTES**

# Flavors of Biellese

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**Biellese food and wine are an expression of a unique area, which has achieved the perfect synthesis of low plain and mountain ingredients over the centuries. Curious? Feel free to ask as many questions as you like.**

**What are the essential ingredients of traditional Biellese cuisine?**

Traditional Biellese cuisine is influenced by the area's characteristics, namely unprofitable agriculture and widespread pastoralism. Ingredients are, therefore, few, but each area of the province has been able to interpret them in its way, creating its typical dishes. For the inhabitants of the hilly belt, chestnuts have been fundamental over the centuries, becoming an essential part of the economy and traditions. Chestnuts were eaten boiled with milk, with wine, combined with rice, and reduced to flour. Even today, they are still used in the preparation of risottos, soups and desserts. In the past, chestnuts and cheeses were an excellent resource for the valley dwellers, who exchanged them for the products of the plains: rice and corn. Rice is grown in the lowland

belt that joins the Biellese to the Vercellese, while corn became widespread in the 18th century and, in the form of polenta, became the staple diet of the mountain people.

**What is the most famous dish of the Biellese cuisine?**

It is polenta concia, the specialty of the Oropa basin: a soft creamed corn cooked for a long time in the cauldron, into which abundant local cheese is melted and tasty farmhouse butter incorporated.

**The Biellese also has rice fields, right?**

Indeed, one of the traditional dishes is riso in cagnone, which is rice boiled and mixed with toma cheese and sautéed butter. Like polenta concia, it is a simple and ancient preparation that blends the resources of mountain pastures with the products of the plains.

**Are there any fish dishes?**

From the Ligurian Riviera, crossing the plains, street vendors reached the Biellese, with their preserved fish, widely used in local cuisine: anchovies used to be, and still are, an essential ingredient of *bagna cauda*, while salted cod, cooked with onions, milk or tomato, went perfectly with polenta. Trouts from mountain streams and white-fish from Lake Viverone are renowned for their delicacy.

**Any lesser-known recipes?**

There are different types of



**TERRE  
DELL'ALTO  
PIEMONTE**





## Cheeses

### Maccagno

### Beddu

The most popular cheese is Toma, of ancient alpine tradition, made from whole and semi-skimmed milk. Each alpine pasture has its Toma; finding two of the same is hard. Maccagno is a tasty mountain cheese made from raw whole cow milk. Several new kinds of cheese

### Toma

### Sordevolo

include *beddu* aged on straw, the delicate Sordevolo, and *tumin*. Moreover, there is no shortage of goat cheeses too: fresh, aged or flavored. Butter is also of excellent quality; the raw milk butter from Alto Elvo is produced in mountain pastures by traditional techniques.



## Cold Cuts

### Paletta di Coggiola

### Cow and donkey salami

The Paletta di Coggiola is a shoulder ham flavored with local herbs and black pepper, stuffed into the bladder and air-dried. Very popular is *salam d'la*

### Salami sotto grasso

### Potato salami

*duja*, that is, preserved under the fat. Donkey and beef salami are also typical. Some areas produce potato salami, made from boiled potatoes and pork.



## At a glance



STILL TODAY, SEVERAL STONE MILLS GRIND CORN TO PRODUCE TRADITIONAL POLENTA FLOUR

BARAGGIA BIELLESE AND VERCELLESE PDO RICE IS THE FIRST AND ONLY ITALIAN PDO RICE

TYPICAL BIELLESE COOKIES FROM ABOVE: TORCETTI, PASTE DI MELIGA AND CANESTRELLI

THERE ARE TWO SLOWFOOD PRESIDIA IN THE BIELLESE: MACCAGNO AND ALTO ELVO RAW MILK BUTTER



## Cookies

### Canestrelli

The Biellese Canestrelli are fragrant chocolate-filled wafers. In addition, Crevacuore produces artisanal *canestrei*, chocolate wafers baked between the jaws of red-hot iron

### Torcetti

### Paste di meliga

and prepared according to an ancient recipe. Other typical cookies are Torcetti, with their characteristic curved shape, and Paste di meliga, made from cornmeal.



## Wines

### Erbaluce di Caluso DOCG

### Lessona DOC

Erbaluce is a white grape variety that grows in the Canavese area and is used to produce a fresh white wine with intense aromas and an excellent passito. On the other hand, the eastern Biellese is a land of great red wines

### Bramaterra DOC

### Coste della Sesia DOC

### Canavese DOC

with considerable body and structure, such as Bramaterra and Lessona. They are made from Nebbiolo grapes, which are added, depending on the appellation, to local grape varieties such as Vespolina, Croatina and Uva Rara.