

## 09. ROME

### THE ETERNAL GARDEN

By Sara Hauman & Jordan Mackay

As a city, Rome has had its ups (Republic! Empire! Renaissance!) and downs (Sacked: 410, 546, 1527!). Throughout, however, its culinary culture remained diverse, delicious, and unique, even as it evolved. When we refer to a Roman, we might mean someone eating square pizza in the Campo de' Fiori today or someone eating leek and millet porridge in Trastevere a thousand years ago. Time flows, tumbles, and eddies, and nowhere is that more apparent than on the ancient cobblestone streets of Rome, where you can still drink from public water fountains fed by 3rd-century AD aqueducts.

Any one thing can't characterize Roman food; military conquests and Mediterranean access brought all manner of delicacies back to the capitol. Today, Roman food is generally known for its thrift, including an affection for offal, the so-called "quinto quarto" or fifth quarter, describing the leftover parts of an animal that amount to a fourth of its edible weight. Rome is most famously known for its four plates of pastas as scrumptious as they are foundational: carbonara, cacio e pepe, gricia, and amatriciana. And here, pizza often comes efficiently by the slice, sold by the kilo in rectangular sections.

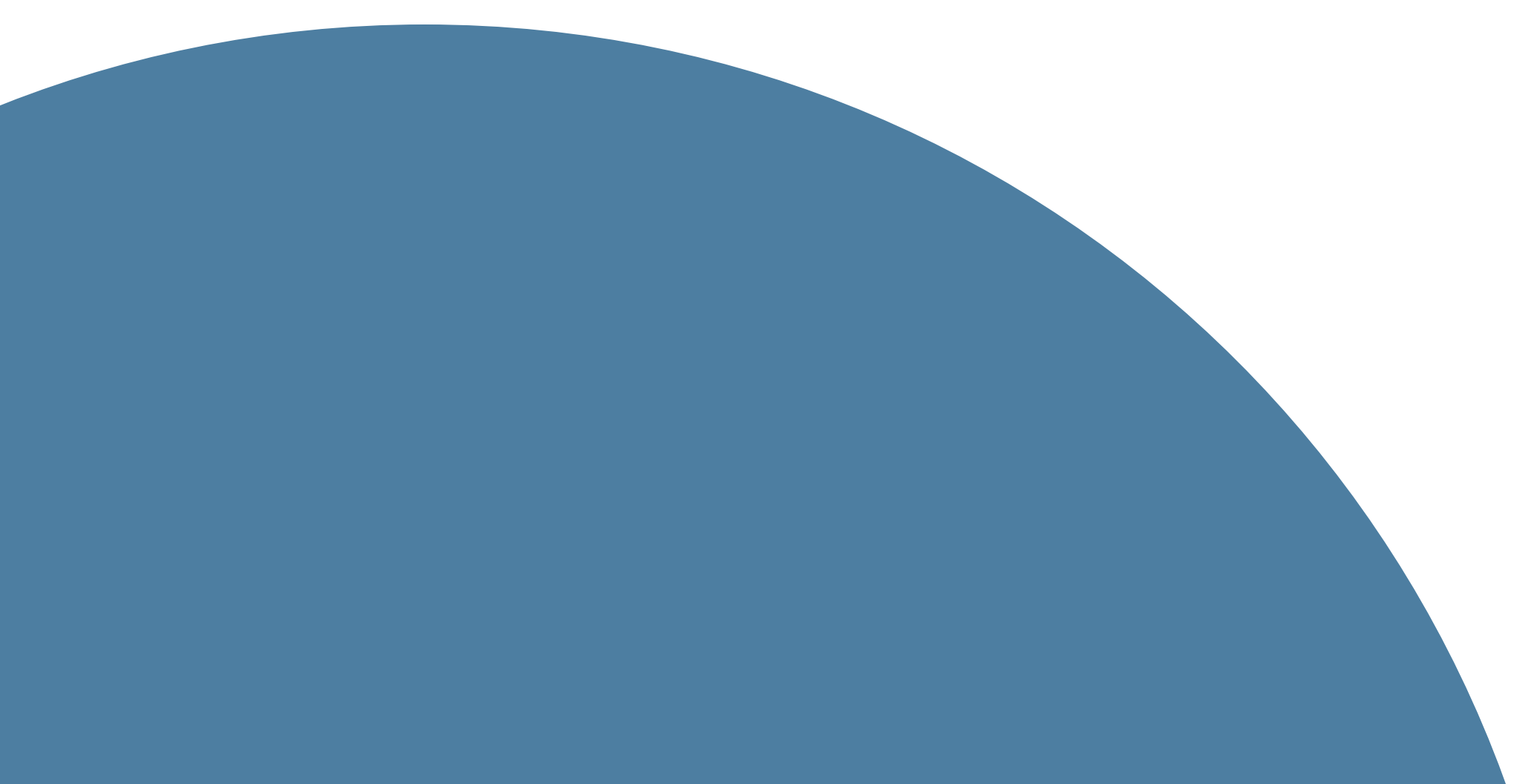
One economical category Romans have eternally reveled in, however, is vegetables, something we can't say about much of Europe, and thus the subject on which to focus this chapter. Romans practically organize their calendars by the appearance of important seasonal vegetables. As a wanderer of the Eternal City, you can't miss this riot of produce, as it gets piled high outside grocers and restaurants, beckoning you in for your fill of carciofi (artichokes), fave (fava beans), puntarelle (a form of chicory), and fragolina (little strawberries).

## 09. ROME

Rome's near-coastal location in the middle of the Italian peninsula assures moderate-to-warm temperatures most of the year, only rare freezes, setting a beautiful climate for agriculture out among the hills of the surrounding Lazio countryside. Vegetables often appear as "contorni" (side dishes) on restaurant menus, but locals and tourists alike happily make entire meals of them.

Our Roman menu combines many staples of the Roman diet in one place. Carciofi alla Giudia is one of the all-time great Roman dishes — artichokes in the Jewish (Giudia) style, fried and simply adorned. Seasonal and grown outside of Rome, the true carciofo romanesco is tender from leaf to stem, allowing it to be consumed whole, outer shell and all. On the other hand, typical American artichokes, must be severely trimmed to get to the fully edible parts. In Rome, you might find your artichoke under a shower of julienned mint — a much-celebrated herb — but here, it's freshened with lemon juice and dusted with parmesan cheese.

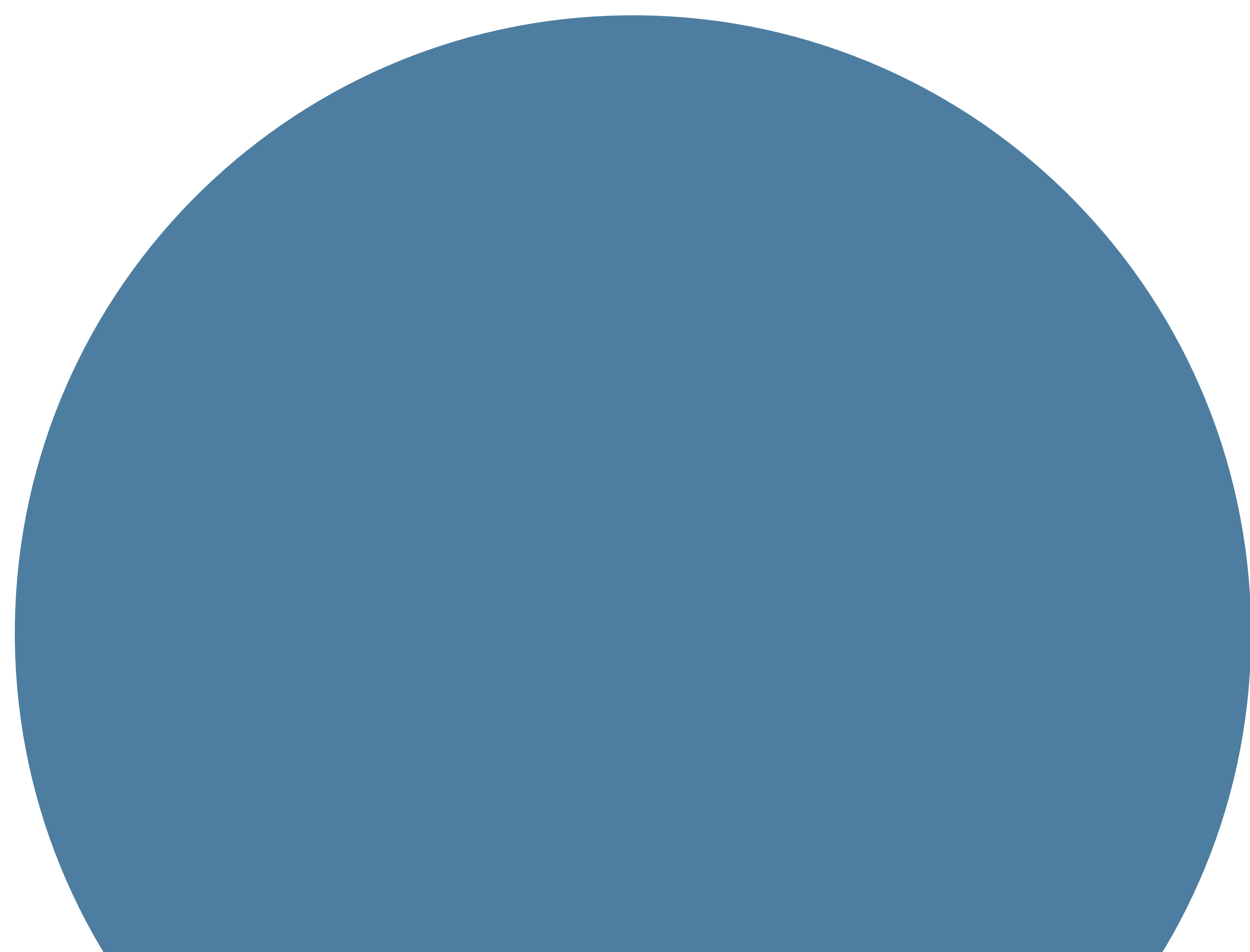
How could such a menu not feature romanesco, that chartreuse-hued, alien-looking relative of broccoli and cauliflower? Nutty and firm, it's perfect here, contrasted in texture and flavor with walnuts, currants, and a hint of anchovy. Romans love their bitter veg, but in our next recipe, we find radicchio's crunch and spice tempered by braising it in milk and enhancing it with the sweetness of fennel. A stew of vegetables gracefully combines many Roman favorites — fava beans, asparagus, sunchokes, and pea shoots or sprouts — with a modicum of pancetta and the herbal additions of oregano and mint. Finally, a simple gelato of Rome's treasured strawberries makes for an easy, refreshing, and pure final taste.



## 09. ROME

This menu is the ideal late-spring, early-summer feast, as tender strawberries, artichokes, asparagus, and favas all come gloriously into season. This is also the time to welcome back the sharp, vibrant white wines that may have taken a back seat during the grey of winter. Appropriately Italy specializes in such whites, as they tend to have the lively, herbal savor, citrusy zing, and crunchy minerality to elevate green vegetables. Look anywhere from northern Italian Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, and Ribolla Gialla to Southern Italy's Greco, Fiano, and Falanghina, Catarrato, or Inzolia. Or try a luscious combination of some of the grape varieties above in the Massican blends like Annia and Gemina.

One aspect of life that connects us with modern and ancient Romans is that we all experience the seasons. So welcome in summer garden season by eating your "verdure" like a good citizen of Rome and wash it down with a delicious glass of cold, white wine.



**09. ROME****ABOUT OUR AUTHORS**

Chef Sara Hauman's career is sprinkled with culinary accolades: Eater Young Gun, Zagat 30 under 30, and Bravo Top Chef contestant. Having cooked in kitchens from Spain's famed Asador Etxebarri to San Francisco's Octavia, she now resides in Portland, OR.

Jordan Mackay is a James Beard award-winning writer covering wine, spirits, and food. He has written for the New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and Food & Wine magazine. Jordan has penned countless books including Secrets of the Sommeliers, The Atlas of Taste, Franklin Barbecue, Franklin Steak, and the pending Maison Premiere Almanac.



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### OUR VEGETABLE FOCUSED ROMAN DINNER PARTY

Serves 6-8

1. Appetizer: CARCIOFI ALLA GIUDIA (FRIED ARTICHOKE)
2. Starter: WHOLE ROASTED ROMANESCO WITH WALNUTS, ANCHOVY, & CURRANTS
3. Side Dish: FENNEL & RADICCHIO BAKED IN MILK
4. Main Course: VIGNAROLA (VEGETABLE STEW)
5. Dessert: GELATO DI FRAGOLA (STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM)



## 09. ROME


### CARCIOFI ALLA GIUDIA (FRIED ARTICHOKES)

Serves 6-8

#### Ingredients:

- 4 large artichokes
- 2 lemons
- Parmesan cheese
- Salt
- Canola or grapeseed oil for frying


#### Preparation:

1. Fill a large tall-sided, heavy-bottomed pot with at least 3 inches of frying oil.
  2. Heat oil to 350F.
  3. While the oil is heating, clean and trim the artichokes.
  4. Pull off the outer leaves of the artichokes until you reach the more tender leaves that begin to angle inwards and are lighter in color.
  5. Trim the stem of the artichoke carefully with a small knife, removing the stringy and tough outer skin.
  6. Cut the top third of the artichoke off to reveal the inner heart of the artichoke where there will be magenta-colored leaves.
  7. Cut the artichoke in half lengthwise.
  8. The fuzzy hair-like material right above the stem is called the choke. Remove it using a spoon and then immediately place the cleaned artichoke in a large container of cold water with the juice of 1 lemon.
  9. Wet a paper towel and then place it on top of the container to prevent the artichokes from oxidizing. This process can be done up to a day in advance.
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**09. ROME****CARCIOFI ALLA GIUDIA (FRIED ARTICHOKE)**

Serves 6-8

To Cook:

1. When the oil has reached 350F, remove your artichokes from the lemon water and pat dry.
  2. With a slotted spoon or hand-held strainer, slowly submerge the artichokes in the hot oil.
  3. Cook the artichokes for 5-7 minutes or until the leaves have become golden brown and crispy and the stem is fork tender.
  4. Remove the artichokes from the oil and drain off the excess oil on a baking rack or paper towel.
  5. Season with salt and then serve with lemon wedges and as much shaved parmesan as you like.
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09. **ROME**

WHOLE ROASTED ROMANESCO WITH WALNUTS,  
ANCHOVY, & CURRANTS

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- 2 whole heads of romanesco
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus 1 cup
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 3 oil packed anchovy filets, chopped fine
- 1 lemon
- 1 tsp. garlic, grated on a microplane
- ¼ cup dried currants
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and crushed by hand
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- ¼ cup chopped mint



09. **ROME****WHOLE ROASTED ROMANESCO WITH WALNUTS,  
ANCHOVY, & CURRANTS**

Serves 6-8

## Preparation:

1. Preheat your oven to 425F.
2. Place the whole romanesco on a parchment-lined baking tray.
3. Using the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of olive oil, brush the olive oil liberally over the entire romanesco.
4. Season the romanesco with a few big pinches of salt and freshly cracked black pepper.
5. Roast the romanesco in the oven for 35-45 minutes or until it begins to brown all over, and a toothpick or cake tester is removed smoothly when inserted into the center of the head.
6. In a separate bowl, mix the anchovy, zest of 1 lemon, garlic, currants, walnuts, parsley, and mint.
7. Add the remaining olive oil to the mixture and mix.

## To serve:

- Place the whole heads of roasted romanesco onto a serving plate.
- Drizzle the walnut, anchovy, and currant mixture over the top of the roasted romanesco.
- Serve with lemon wedges and a sprinkle of flaky sea salt.

## 09. **ROME**

### FENNEL & RADICCHIO BAKED IN MILK

Serves 6-8

#### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cup whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 fennel bulbs
- 1 head radicchio
- 3 Tbsp capers
- 4 garlic cloves, grated on a microplane
- 6 sage leaves, chopped thin
- ¼ cup plain breadcrumbs
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- Pinch of red chili flakes

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### FENNEL & RADICCHIO BAKED IN MILK

Serves 6-8

Preparation:

1. Preheat the oven to 400F.
2. Place the milk and cream in a small pot and bring to a simmer.
3. Reduce the heat to low and gently simmer the mixture for about 45 minutes or until it has reduced by half in volume.
4. Slice the fennel lengthwise into ¼" slices.
5. Remove the very outer leaves of the radicchio and discard.
6. Continue to peel back the leaves of the radicchio until you reach the very small leaves. You will only want to use the larger leaves for this recipe.
7. Wash the larger radicchio leaves.
8. If the leaves are larger than the palm of your hand, trim them in half along the middle vein.
9. In the bottom of an ovenproof dish, place a layer of radicchio leaves.
10. Layer the fennel on top of the radicchio.
11. Place another layer of radicchio in the dish on top of the fennel, and then another layer of fennel on top until you have no more vegetables.
12. When the milk mixture has reduced, add the capers, garlic, and sage. Stir.
13. Pour this mixture over the layered radicchio and fennel.
14. In a small bowl, mix the breadcrumbs, cheese, and chili flakes.
15. Sprinkle this mixture evenly on top of the fennel and radicchio, making sure to disperse it into all the nooks and crannies so it will soak up some of the milk mixture.
16. Place the dish onto a large baking tray to catch any milk that might bubble over during baking and then put it into the oven.
17. Cook for about 35 minutes or until the top is golden brown and you can see the thickened milk bubbling gently.
18. Remove from the oven and let cool for 10-15 minutes before serving.

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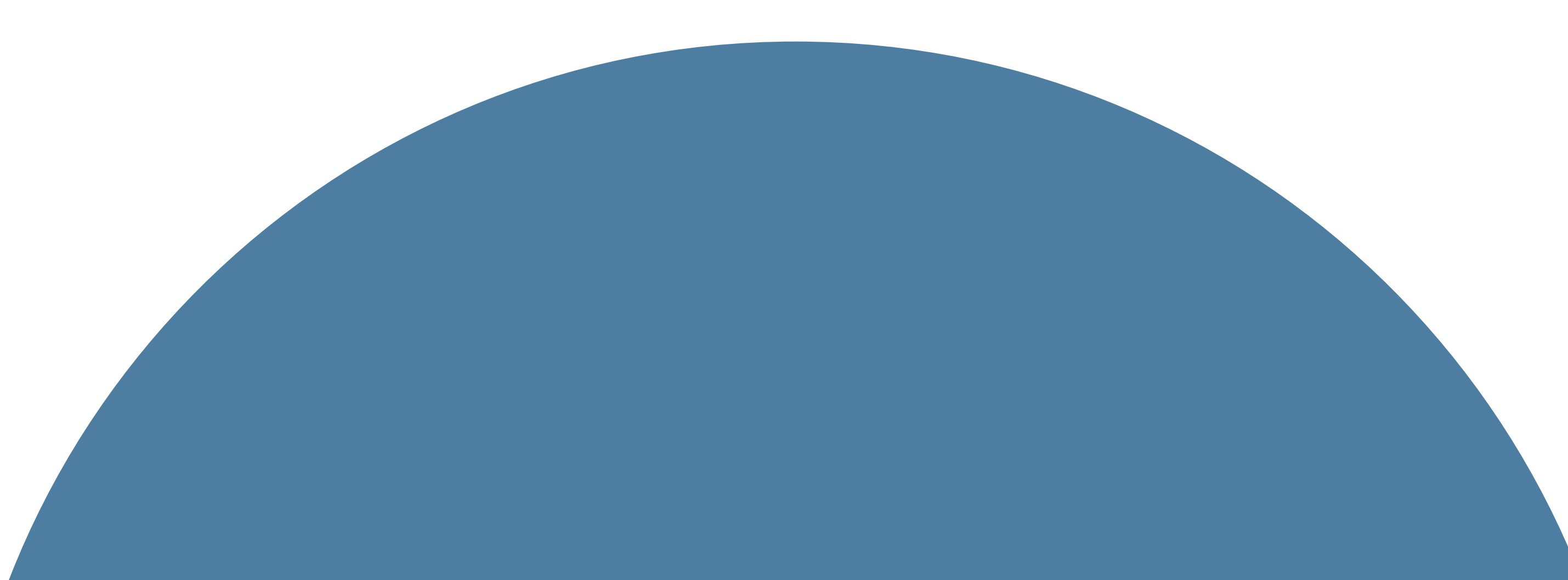
### VIGNAROLA (VEGETABLE STEW)

Serves 6-8

#### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 oz. pancetta, diced
- 1 medium yellow onion sliced
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 sprigs oregano
- 1 ½ - 2 cups water
- 1 overflowing cup sunchoke, sliced into ¼" pieces
- 1 overflowing cup fava beans, shucked from the pod\*
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1 ½" pieces
- 2 cups loosely packed fava greens or pea shoots
- Juice of 1 lemon
- A handful of mint leaves
- Sal

\* If your fava beans are small, you can use them straight from the pod. If your fava beans are larger, they are generally much starchier and may require blanching and a second shucking of the outer layer. If this is the case, they will only need to be warmed through and can be tossed into the vignarola at the same time as the asparagus.



## 09. ROME

### VIGNAROLA (VEGETABLE STEW)

Serves 6-8

#### Preparation:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pan.
2. Add the pancetta, sliced onions and a pinch of salt, and cook on medium heat for 5-7 minutes, stirring frequently. The pancetta will render and the onions will soften and become translucent.
3. Add the wine, oregano, water, and sunchoke. The liquid should just cover the sunchoke.
4. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook for 15-20 minutes or until the sunchoke are al dente.
5. Add the fava beans and cook for 5-6 more minutes. You may need to adjust the water level, adding more as needed due to evaporation.
6. Once the fava beans are wrinkly and cooked through, add your asparagus, and simmer the mixture for 2 more minutes.
7. Remove from the heat and stir in the washed and trimmed fava greens or pea shoots.
8. Adjust the seasoning with salt as desired and add the juice of 1 lemon, then serve, finishing the dish with freshly torn mint leaves and a healthy drizzle of olive oil.

#### To serve:

- Vignarola can be served with as much broth as you like making it more of a stew if that is your preference.

## 09. ROME

### GELATO DI FRAGOLA

Serves 6-8

Kitchenware needed for this recipe:

- Ice cream maker

Ingredients:

- 2 lb. fresh strawberries
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups cream
- 1 tsp salt
- Good olive oil for dressing

Preparation:

1. With a paring knife, hull, or remove, the head and leaves of the strawberries.
2. Place the strawberries and sugar into a blender and puree until smooth.
3. Transfer the strawberry puree to a large bowl and gently stir in the milk, cream, and salt.
4. Process the gelato base in an ice cream maker until thick.
5. Let harden in the freezer for about an hour or so.
6. Serve the gelato with more freshly cut strawberries, a drizzle of good olive oil, and a sprinkle of flaky sea salt.

\* The gelato can be made ahead of time and kept in the freezer for up to a month. If pre-made, pull the gelato out of your freezer for 45-60 minutes to temper before serving.