



Caffè d'orzo: a sip of history

Everyone knows that Italians love their coffee, but not many know how much they love *caffè d'orzo* (barley coffee). Orzo♥Coffee is the first to introduce in the UK the rich and smooth taste of organic Italian ground roasted barley (*caffè d'orzo*). This is Italy's favourite alternative to coffee and its best kept secret.

Barley has been grown in Italy since ancient times. As an integral part of the Mediterranean diet it is used to make soups and breads. However, in the sixteen century when drinking coffee became popular with Europe's aristocracy and middle-classes, poorer farmers thought of trying to roast and grind their trusted barley instead. The rich, smooth and nutty drink, made from brewing the barley was considered the closest alternative to the exotic, but expensive imported coffee.

In the 1940s, during the rise of Italian nationalism *caffè d'orzo* received an unexpected boost. In order to encourage self-sufficiency and self-reliance (as well as responding to international sanctions), the war-time government abolished use of imported coffee, promoting instead the locally produced barley coffee.

Barley coffee has been for more than a century integral part of the traditions and values of rural Italy. Grown in the fields and roasted at home on the family fire-place or wooden stove, barley coffee was enjoyed by all the family – by children as well as their grandparents - roasting the seeds was a little family ritual, to undertake in front of the slow fire. A special pan 'tostaorzo' (see photo), with a turning mechanism inside, was used to slowly roasted the seeds over the fire.



With the post-war economic boom, *caffè d'orzo* was overshadowed by the more glamorous 'Italian' coffee. Nonetheless it remained in use, mainly for children, within the family home.

However, in recent years, as Italians rediscovered the origins of their food culture and tradition, *caffè d'orzo* has become increasingly more popular. It is seen as a healthier, naturally caffeine free, drink, enjoyed in bars and restaurants at any time of the day. As Italians have embraced a hectic modern life, the desire for natural, healthy and more balanced products has brought them back to *caffè d'orzo*. The warm and homely taste of orzo brings everyone back to family, nature and sustainable values. In a fast and industrialised food and drink market when often the list of ingredients are more complex and unpronounceable than a foreign language, *caffè d'orzo* has brought back the simplicity and trustworthiness of nature to everyone's cup.

Caffè d'orzo is nowadays enjoyed daily by families at home but it is also prepared in Italian cafes, bars and restaurant thanks to handy pods that can be used in the professional espresso machines, creating tasty orzo espressos, cappuccino and lattes.

In the history of *caffè d'orzo* there is a timeless and valuable lesson: the most precious flavours are the one we can find closest to home.

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For further information please contact us at media@orzocoffee.co.uk Tel. 0789 7745968

Notes to editor:

- Orzo♥Coffee is the first (and only) UK company to bring to the UK market the rich and smooth taste of original Italian '*caffè d'orzo*' (barley coffee)
- All Orzo♥Coffee products are 100% organic. The Orzo♥Coffee range includes: Orzo♥Coffee Originale (organic ground roasted barley), Orzo♥Coffee Pronto (organic instant soluble barley) and Orzo♥Coffee Espresso (organic ground roasted barley in espresso pods)
- Orzo♥Coffee is made with a specific variety of barley, called 'orzo mondo' (hulless or 'naked' barley). The barley is organically grown in the fields of the Veneto Region. It is harvested in the summer and slowly roasted at low temperatures to preserve all of its nutritional properties.
- Orzo♥Coffee is a new start-up based in Southampton with the mission to spread the love for '*caffè d'orzo*' (barley coffee) in UK
- Visit www.orzocoffee.com for further information on the full range of products available and find out new recipes
- Orzo♥Coffee will be soon available from selected retailers



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