

Rachel Roddy's recipe for stuffed tomatoes

An adaptation of a traditional Neopolitan stuffed peppers recipe, juicy tomatoes overflow with a comforting aubergine, olive and anchovy filling

Usually our lesson took place in the living room, at a big teak table with a felt cover, under a wall of books, many of which appeared to be legal. But every few weeks, when my Italian teacher's husband was working at home (consulting the books, I hoped), we had our lesson in the kitchen. It was not a big room, with fitted units on all four sides, and brown-and-orange tiles on both walls and floor, making it seem even smaller than it was. Nevertheless, it managed to fit a square table with a Formica top, two chairs and two stools. And that is where we'd sit and go through verbs or read simplified newspaper articles about unsolved murders.

If I hadn't liked my teacher so much, I might have found that room claustrophobic. But I did like her, as well as the verbs and the murders and the tiles, so I loved being in her brown kitchen. She would always make us tea, which, when we were in the living room, meant she disappeared. Sitting at my teacher's kitchen table, however, I could watch as she boiled the water in a pan, and used a step stool to reach the teapot and bone china cups. She took milk in her tea, a habit she had picked up when she lived in Bradford as a young woman, she told me, along with a fondness for malted milk biscuits.