

= Acquacotta =

Acquacotta (pronounced [?akkwa?k?tta] ; Italian for " cooked water ") is a broth @-@ based hot soup in Italian cuisine that was originally a peasant food . Its preparation and consumption dates back to ancient history , and it originated in the coastal area of named Maremma in southern Tuscany and northern Lazio . The dish was invented in part as a means to make hardened , stale bread edible . In contemporary times , ingredients can vary , and additional ingredients are sometimes used . Variations of the dish include Aquacotta con funghi and Aquacotta con peperoni .

= = History = =

Acquacotta is a simple traditional dish originating in the coastal region of Italy known as Maremma , which spans the southern half of Tuscany 's coast and runs into northern Lazio . The word " acquacotta " means " cooked water " in the Italian language . It was originally a peasant food , and has been described as an ancient dish , the recipe of which was derived in part by people who lived in the Tuscan forest working as colliers (charcoal burners) , who were typically very poor and are " traditionally among the poorest of people " . It was also prepared and consumed by farmers and shepherds in the Maremma area . Historically , the soup was sometimes served as an antipasto dish , the first course in an Italian meal . It remains a popular dish in Maremma and throughout Italy .

Acquacotta was invented in part as a means to make stale , hardened bread edible . People that worked away from home for significant periods of time , such as woodcutters and shepherds , would bring bread and other foods with them (such as pancetta and salt cod) to hold them over . Acquacotta was prepared and used to marinate the stale bread , thus softening it .

A legend about acquacotta exists in relation to the concept of stone soup , which is generally based upon a premise of a poor traveler who arrived at a village having only a stone , but convinced the villagers to add ingredients to his stone soup , creating acquacotta ; variations of the legend exist .

= = = Ingredients = = =

Historically , acquacotta 's primary ingredients were water , stale bread , onion , tomato and olive oil , along with various vegetables and leftover foods that may have been available . In the earlier 1800s , some preparations used agresto , a juice derived from half @-@ ripened grapes , in place of tomatoes , which were not a common food in Italy prior to " the latter decades of the nineteenth century " .

= = In contemporary times = =

Contemporary preparations of acquacotta may use stale , fresh , or toasted bread , and can include additional ingredients such as vegetable broth , eggs , cheeses such as Parmigiano @-@ Reggiano and Pecorino Toscano , celery , garlic , basil , beans such as cannellini beans , cabbage , kale , lemon juice , salt , pepper , potatoes and others . Some versions may use edible mushrooms such as porcini , wild herbs , and leaf vegetables / greens such as arugula , endive , mint , chard , chicory , dandelion greens , watercress , valerian and others . As the greens boil down , they contribute to the broth 's flavor . The dish may be topped with a poached egg . Contemporary versions may be prepared in advance from a few hours to a day , stored in a cold place or refrigerated , and then reheated prior to serving . It can also be preserved by freezing .

= = Variations = =

Acquacotta con funghi is an aquacotta soup variation that uses porcini mushrooms as a primary ingredient . Additional ingredients include bread , stock or water , tomato conserva , Parmesan cheese , eggs , mentuccia , wild mint , garlic , olive oil , salt and pepper . This variation 's flavor and aroma has been described as based upon the porcini mushrooms that are used ; parsley may also

be used .

Acquacotta con peperoni is an aquacotta soup variation that includes celery , red pepper and garlic .