

# THE JEWS OF ITALY

TEMPLE EMANU-EL ✦ APRIL 27, 2002

## *The Sephardic Cuisine of the Italian-Jewish Heritage*

Between Michelangelo's beautiful Campidoglio square and the Tiber is a neighborhood of distinctive character. It was in this area, during the 16th-century Counter Reformation, that Pope Paul IV had a wall built to segregate the Jews of Rome inside a Ghetto. To this day, many of Rome's Jews still live here, and it seems appropriate to bring to you some of the flavors that are predominant there. Rome has had a Jewish community since at least 50 B.C.E. Over the centuries, Italy's Jews were often isolated from other Jewish communities, so they developed their own style and traditions of cooking. Roman Jewish food may not conform to the traditions of the Sephardic Jews of Spain and the Middle East, but has a definite Roman influenced cucina. Many distinctive dishes are of Jewish origin rather than Italian. Next time you are in Rome, take a stroll through the Jewish Ghetto. Although most of the original streets and buildings (and the odious wall) are gone, there is still plenty to see. On Sundays there is a palpable "smalltown" atmosphere as residents gather to chat in amiable groups. The Synagogue, built in 1904, contains a fascinating museum of the history of Italian-Jews. Across the street is a tiny chapel where, for centuries, Jews were forced to worship every Sunday under penalty of severe punishment. This is our humble effort to recreate the foods of a gastronomic wealth on its way to extinction. — *Walter Potenza*

### Menu

FROM THE GHETTO OF MARSALA IN SICILY

*Crostini with roasted eggplant, mint and goat cheese*

FROM THE GHETTO IN FLORENCE

*Savory focaccia with grapes and sage, brushed with extra virgin olive oil*

FROM THE GHETTO OF TRANI IN PUGLIA

*A salad of field greens with a condiment of tomatoes, seedless cucumbers and a vinaigrette of pomegranate juice and walnuts*

FROM THE GHETTO OF LIVORNO IN TUSCANY

*Fresh Salmon, poached in thyme, paired with a sauce of lemon zest and tarragon, served with potatoes and fresh asparagus*

*Lemon Chiffon (Bread of Spain) cake, topped with fresh berries, paired with an assortment of Jewish-Italian cookies*

Healthy and Fun Cooks!

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Mike Best

