

d) MORETUM

Moretum is a spread made of fresh cheese, herbs, olive oil, some vinegar and sometimes nuts. If you make it with pine nuts it is very similar to what we today know as pesto. The name *moretum* was given to the dish because it was made by crushing the ingredients together in a mortar (mortarium).

This is what Columella wrote in *De Re Rustica*, XII- lix: *Addito in mortarium satureiam, mentam, rutam, coriandrum, apium, porrum sectivum, aut si non erit viridem cepam, folia latucae, folia erucae, thymum viride, vel nepetam, tum etiam viride puleium, et caseum recentem et salsum: ea omnia partier conterito, acetique piperati exiguum, permisceto. Hanc mixturam cum in catillo composurris, oleum superfundito.*

“Put savory in the mortar with mint, rue, coriander, parsley, sliced leek, or, if it is not available, onion, lettuce and rocket leaves, green thyme, or catmint. Also spearmint and salted fresh cheese. This is all crushed together. Stir in a little peppered vinegar. Put this mixture on a plate and pour oil over it.”

Modern Recipe

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| 1 small head lettuce | 1 small leek / celery |
| 100 g fresh mint | 50 g coriander seeds |
| 50 g fresh parsley | 1 sprig fresh thyme |
| 200 g ricotta cheese | vinegar |
| pepper | olive oil |

e) GARUM

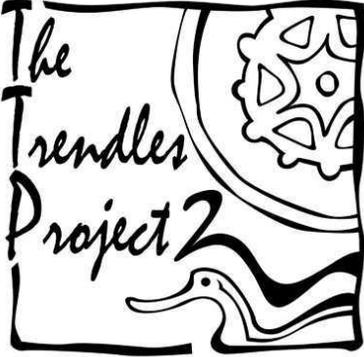
Ancient sources contain countless recipes for the preparation of *garum*, also known as *muria* or *liquamen*. A fish sauce that with the Romans had the equivalent use and popularity of modern Tomato Ketchup or Worcester Sauce!

Pliny the Elder, in his *Natural History*, XXXI.93 describes *Garum* as: *Aliud etiamnum liquoris exquisiti genus, quod garum vocavere, intestinibus piscium ceterisque, quae abicienda essent, sale maceratis, ut sit illa putrescentium sanies.*

“There is another product very popular nowadays that they call *Garum*, consisting of the guts of fish and the other parts that would otherwise be considered refuse; these are soaked in salt, so that *garum* is really liquor from the putrefaction of these matters.”

The most complete description is provided in “*De medicina et de virtute herbarum*” by Gargilius Martialis, a writer from the third century A.D.

“Use fatty fish, for example sardines, and a well-sealed (pitched) container with a 26-35 quart/liter capacity. Add dried aromatic herbs possessing a strong flavor, such as dill, coriander, fennel, celery, mint, oregano, and others making a layer on the bottom of the container; then put down a layer of fish (if small leave them whole, if large use pieces); and over this add a layer of salt two fingers high. Repeat these three layers until the container is filled. Let it rest for seven days in the sun. Then mix the sauce daily for twenty days. After that time it becomes a liquid (*garum*).”



FIVE ROMAN RECIPES

MULSUM & CONDITUM – honeyed & spiced wine

PANIS DEPSTICIUS – kneaded bread

LIBUM – honey or cheese cake

MORETUM – vegetarian pesto

GARUM – fish sauce

“Bonum vinum laetificat cor hominis”

“Non ut edam vivo, sed ut vivam edo”

a) MULSUM & CONDITUM

Mulsum was wine sweetened with honey, mixed in just before drinking (and therefore not like mead) and served as an aperitif at the beginning of the meal. Often freely dispensed to the plebs at public events to solicit their political support, the demand for *mulsum* became so great that it was more profitable to sell wine at home than to export it and, by the first century AD, wine had to be imported from Iberia and Gaul.

Varro relates the story of an impoverished host serving *mulsum* to his guests, even though he economized by not drinking it, himself. But *mulsum* was not always inexpensive or inferior.

Martial writes of the best quality being made of Falernian mixed with Attic honey, a drink suitable to be poured by Ganymede, himself, cupbearer to Zeus (XIII.108).

Conditum Piperatum had herbs and spices such as pepper added as well. The Latin name translates roughly as "spiced". Recipes for *conditum viatorium* (traveler's spiced wine) and *conditum paradoxum* (surprise spiced wine) are found in De re coquinaria.

This *conditum paradoxum* recipe includes: wine, honey, pepper, mastic, laurel, saffron, date seeds and dates soaked in wine.....

Conditum Paradoxum (from Apicius' De Re Coquinaria)

Conditi paradoxi compositio: mellis pondo XV in aeneum vas mittuntur, praemissis vini sextariis duobus, ut in coctura mellis vinum decoquas. quod igni lento et aridis lignis calefactum, commotum ferula dum coquitur, si effervere coeperit, vini rore compescitur, praeter quod subtracto igni in se redit. cum perfrixerit, rursus accenditur. hoc secundo ac tertio fiet, ac tum demum remotum a foco post pridie despumatur.

tum mittes piperis uncias IV iam triti, masticis scripulos III, folii et croci dragmae singulae, dactilorum ossibus torridis quinque, isdemque dactilis vino mollitis, intercedente prius suffusione vini de suo modo ac numero, ut tritura lenis habeatur. his omnibus paratis supermittis vini lenis sextaria XVIII. carbones perfecto aderunt [duo milia].

Translation

“The composition of this excellent spiced wine is as follows. Into a copper bowl put 6 sextarii of honey and 2 sextarii of wine; heat on a slow fire, constantly stirring the mixture with a whip. At the boiling point add a dash of cold wine, retire from stove and skim. Repeat this twice or three times, let it rest till the next day, and skim again.

Then add 4 ounces of crushed pepper, 3 scruples of mastic, a drachm each of nard or laurel leaves and saffron, 5 drachms of roasted date stones crushed and previously soaked in wine to soften them. When this is properly done add 18 sextarii of light wine. To clarify it perfectly, add crushed charcoal twice or as often as necessary which will draw the residue together.”

b) PANIS DEPSTICIUS (Cato’s Bread)

The simplest of all recipes to bake some Roman bread comes from Cato the Elder's agricultural handbook, *De Agricultura*, 74.

This manual, written around 160 BCE, is the one of the oldest piece of Roman prose we have, and is a guide to managing a farm. It is for the kind of bread any Roman could have been making at any stage of Roman history. Cato writes:

Panem depsticum sic facito. Manus mortariumque bene lavato. Farinam in mortarium indito, aquae paulatim addito subigitoque pulchre. Ubi bene subegeris, defingito coquitoque sub testu.

“Recipe for kneaded bread: wash both your hands and a bowl thoroughly. Pour flour into the bowl, add water gradually, and knead well. When it is well kneaded, roll it out and bake it under an earthenware lid.”

Ingredients for Cato's Roman Bread

- 500g Spelt flour**
- 350ml Water**
- A Pinch of Salt**
- A Splash of Olive Oil**

c) LIBUM

Libum was a sacrificial cake sometimes offered to household spirits during Rome's early history. The recipe below comes from the Roman consul Cato's agricultural writings.

Libum hoc modo facito. Casei P. II bene disterat in mortario. Ubi bene distriverit, farinae siligineae libram aut, si voles tenerius esse, selibram similaginis eodem indito permiscetoque cum caseo bene. Ovum unum addito et una permisceto bene. Inde panem facito, folia subdito, in foco caldo sub testu coquito leniter.

“Recipe for libum: Bray 2 pounds of cheese thoroughly in a mortar; when it is thoroughly macerated, add 1 pound of wheat flour, or, if you wish the cake to be more dainty, ½ pound of fine flour, and mix thoroughly with the cheese. Add 1 egg, and work the whole well. Pat out a loaf, place on leaves, and bake slowly on a warm hearth under a crock.”

Modern Recipe

- 1 cup Spelt flour**
- 8 ounces ricotta cheese**
- 1 egg, beaten**
- 1/2 cup clear honey**
- bay leaves**