

Doriano Fisotti


CUCINA DELLA NONNA

Doriano Fisotti, the manager of San Carlo restaurant in Birmingham, thinks back to his childhood in Puglia to share his grandmother's recipe for fried squid.

This recipe is on the menu at all San Carlo restaurants, which are based in Birmingham, Leicester, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool and Signor Sassi opposite Harrods in London's fashionable Knightsbridge Green. The San Carlo chain is a family business founded by Carlo Distefano in 1992, and Signor Sassi was acquired by the group in 2007. Visit www.sancarlo.co.uk or www.signorsassi.co.uk

Sunday afternoons will always hold special memories for me. I come from a family of six children, and when I was younger we were lucky to live by the sea in a little village called Otranto in Puglia, on the south-east Italian coast.

I can remember going to the beach with my brothers, sisters and friends as a teenager, then in the early evening the whole family would meet up at my grandmother's house for supper. Nonna Maria had 14 grandchildren altogether and dinnertime was always a happy family affair, where we would sit around the table watching the sun go down while enjoying her wonderful cooking.

Nonna Maria nearly always prepared fresh fish for supper – it was in plentiful supplies in the area, and nearly 40 years ago it was an inexpensive but nutritious way to feed a large family. Calamari was our favourite and nowadays, wherever I eat it, I think of those happy times back in Puglia – the conversations, the laughter and the joy of being together as a family. 



Frittura di calamari

SERVES 4  Preparation **15 minutes**  Cooking **5 minutes**

850g squid

350g seasoned flour

some lemon wedges, to garnish

1½ litres of vegetable oil

First prepare the squid. Wash and then remove the tentacles from the main body. Cut just below the eye and discard the innards and the beak. Cut the sac into rings and slice the head and tentacles in two. Drain well.

Place the flour in a bowl, then season with salt and pepper. Add the squid to the bowl and toss to coat thoroughly. Heat a deep pan with oil, then carefully add the calamari and leave to cook over a medium heat for 4-5 minutes. When golden brown, remove from the oil and drain on kitchen paper. Season and serve with lemon wedges, to garnish.