

Old recipes return in tough times

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ROME: Italians facing a hard winter with less cash to spend are being encouraged to rediscover the cheap, traditional recipes of their ancestors.

Soups made with old bread and even pig's lungs are being touted as the nation's real cooking, made at a fraction of the price of modern dishes.

"Old recipes are a richness that Italy boasts, that were perfected during periods of poverty and are a way to come through the crisis eating well," said Carlo Petrini, the head of the Slow Food movement, which campaigns for traditional, sustainable foods.

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Mr Petrini said the secret of Italy's low-cost, old-style cuisine was the use of leftovers, from Tuscany's ribollita vegetable soup, made with stale bread, to le virtu - the virtues - a soup made with every winter vegetable left in the cupboard.

In a round-up of nearly forgotten dishes, *La Repubblica* listed sbira soup made with tripe, mushrooms, lard, bread, pine nuts and meat sauce favoured by prison guards and served as the traditional last meal to prisoners sentenced to death.

Arneo Nizzoli, 76, who runs a renowned restaurant in northern Italy near Mantua, said cookery students were now showing up to eat his maialata meals, where he uses as much of the pig as possible, from pig's lung soup to cotechino sausage made with tongue.

Pig's noses, cheek and feet, which all find use in Nizzoli's kitchen, cost half a euro (61¢) a kilo, compared with more than €20 for prosciutto.

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