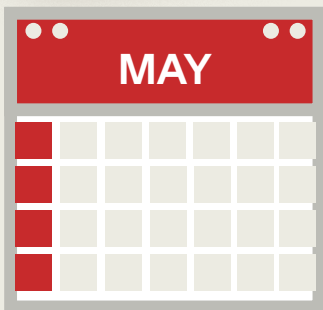
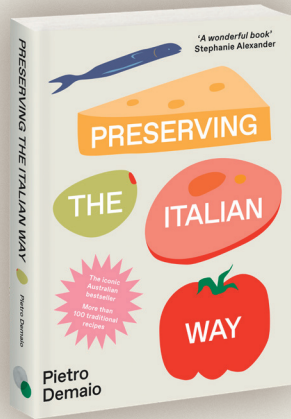


PRESERVING THE ITALIAN WAY

Pietro Demaio

Rosemary's black olives

Olive nere di Rosemary



For this recipe, pick or buy even-sized and firm black olives. Rosemary, a lifelong friend of mine from Northern Italy, says that the manzanillo variety is best.

1 kg hard, fresh black olives
table salt
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Special equipment
10 litre plastic container

Place the olives in the 10 litre plastic container and cover with cold, fresh water. Leave for 5 days, then drain and cover again with cold, fresh water, measuring how many litres you've used to cover the olives. Add 100 g of table salt for every litre of water to the olives. Mix the salt and olives together and leave for 24 hours, then drain and set aside while you prepare the brine.

Make a fresh salt solution – 100 g of salt for every 1 litre of water – in a large stockpot and bring to the boil. Allow to cool slightly while you place the drained olives in clean jars (see steps 1–2, page 21). Cover the olives with the still hot brine, ensuring they are completely submerged but there is still a 2 cm gap at the top of the jars. Seal immediately. As the brine cools, it will seal the jars hermetically to prevent the brine from developing a mould and to keep the olives firm.

Store in a cool, dark place for 40 days, then strain the brine out of the olive jars, reserving the olives. Make a fresh brine as above and pour the still hot brine over the olives again, before sealing the jars and storing in a cool, dark place for up to 6 months. They will be ready to eat after 3 weeks.

When you want to eat the olives, remove them from the brine and wash with fresh water. Mix through the garlic and oregano, then store the olives in the fridge for 1 day before eating.

