



MAY
2026

fao Casa gazette

Mensile - No 05 - 2026 - Reg. Trib. N. 574 dell'8/10/1990

- GIOIELLI NASCOSTI: PUGLIA

- BIKE TOUR IN SALENTO

- SURYA NAMASKAR C

- CURIOSITY CORNER

- SALENTO STYLE OCTOPUS:
POLPO ALLA PIGNATA

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Typewritten electronic contributions for the FAO CASA Gazette are welcome. These can be articles, poems, drawings, photographs, etc. In fact, anything interesting that staff members and/or their families in Rome or in the field may wish to contribute. These contributions can be in English, French, Italian or Spanish.

No anonymous material will be accepted, and the Editor reserves the right to choose and/or reject material that is not in keeping with the ethics of the Organization. Send contributions electronically to the Editor at fao-staff-coop@fao.org or leave signed copies with the Coop office on the ground floor of Building E. The deadline for editorial material is the 10th of the month preceding the date of issue.

The Editor may schedule articles according to the priorities and editorial requirements of the FAO Staff Coop. The FAO CASA Gazette is published every month.

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Gioielli Nascosti

RUBRICA PER ACCOMPAGNARVI ALLA SCOPERTA DELLE BELLEZZE DEL NOSTRO PAESE

L'Italia è il Paese della grande bellezza. Custodisce tesori paesaggistici e capolavori artistici di valore inestimabile, apprezzati in tutto il mondo.

La FAO Staff Coop Gazette attraverso questa rubrica vuole condurre i lettori nel cuore dell'Italia in una passeggiata nella storia alla scoperta di caratteristici borghi dal fascino antico. Storia, arte, natura, terra e mare saranno i protagonisti della nostra rubrica in cui vogliamo raccogliere curiosità, immagini, colori e bellezze da celebrare e condividere con i nostri lettori.



di Enrica Romanazzo

Sostiene e promuove da anni le attività della FAO STAFF COOP. Nel contempo segue ed organizza eventi in difesa dell'ambiente e per la valorizzazione del territorio salentino

PUGLIA

Tutto il fascino del Levante racchiuso in una regione spettacolare: terra rossa, ulivi secolari, torri saracene, pagliare, castelli svevi, cattedrali ed abbazie, masserie, muretti a secco, paesi bianchi, trulli candidi e grigi, spiagge rocciose o di sabbia dorata, romantiche grotte, scogliere a strapiombo sul mare, acque cristalline, cielo azzurro....

Per il prossimo mese di giugno abbiamo pensato di proporre una straordinaria avventura nelle terre del Tacco d'Italia pedalando lungo la *Ciclovía del Salento Ionico* attraverso borghi imbiancati a calce baciati dalla luce del levante, antiche masserie, muretti a secco, parchi costieri, spiagge selvagge, fitte pinete, oasi naturali ed improvvisi scorci del Mar Ionio, tra il rosa dei fenicotteri, il giallo delle ginestre ed il verde dei fichi d'India, mentre la strada si svela raccontando la storia degli antichi Messapi. Una pedalata a colori in cui la bicicletta non rappresenta un mezzo per arrivare ma un fine per esplorare la natura, vivere il vento e la luce che filtra attraverso gli ulivi secolari tra immagini che scorrono dolcemente ad ogni pedalata. Un percorso che invita ad esplorare la Puglia più autentica ed ancestrale.

Per chi volesse partecipare a questa bella avventura il mio consiglio è quello di anticiparla con un tour attraverso i luoghi più caratteristici della regione.



La prima tappa da considerare per chi arriva in Puglia, potrebbe essere **Polignano a Mare**, dove le rocce hanno altezze talmente vertiginose, che ogni anno si tiene il campionato mondiale di tuffi. I famosi tuffatori di Acapulco all'inizio del mese di luglio si aggirano proprio qua tra le stradine bianche e i lampioni in ferro battuto. Poco lontano da Bari, lungo il percorso che porta verso la punta estrema d'Italia, si incontrano le **grotte di Castellana**, la suggestiva **Alberobello** con i famosi trulli e borghi fantastici come **Cisternino** imbiancato a calce come quasi tutti i paesi di Puglia e ancora **Locorotondo**, ed infine **Ostuni La Bianca** in cui perdersi nei vicoli del borgo che assomiglia ad una Casba, piena di ristoranti e taverne dai nomi curiosi come la Taverna della Gelosia, la Taverna dell'Apocalisse, Osteria del tempo Perso.... e poi via via scendendo verso la capitale del Salento: Lecce bella ed aristocratica con i suoi trionfi barocchi tanto da essere definita la Firenze del Sud con le sue chiese e la piazza Duomo, una tra le più belle d'Italia.

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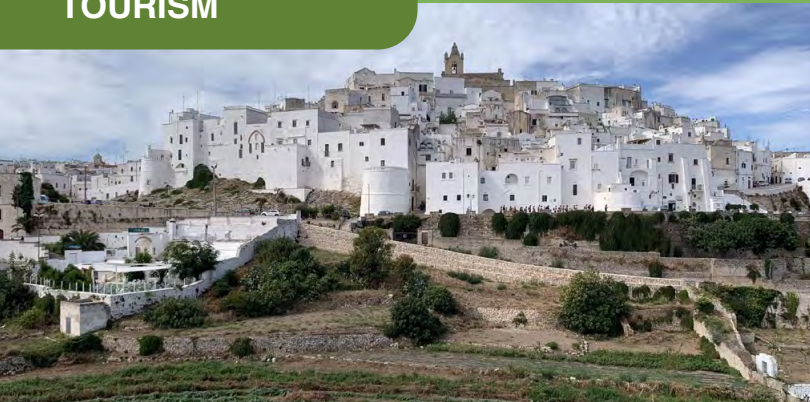
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SALENTO

Esistono luoghi che hanno la capacità di riassumere il senso di una terra intera. Perché sono in grado di offrire paesaggi morbidi e selvaggi, vegetazione rigogliosa, mare, centri termali, ma anche artigianato, storia,



arte, cultura, riti, leggende, musica tradizionale, turismo rurale ed un'enogastronomia che affonda le radici nella tradizione contadina. Questo è il Salento da esplorare, in un viaggio alla scoperta di antichi sapori e saperi. Il Salento è una terra che scalda i cuori con la poesia delle sue forme, la bellezza dei suoi paesaggi, la gentilezza e la cordialità della sua gente.... Non è un caso che, da un'indagine condotta da "Italia Touristica", risulti essere il territorio più amato dagli italiani. Perché non significa soltanto mare, barocco, enogastronomia, uliveti e musica, ma anche cordialità, accoglienza e calore, il piacere di essere accolti in un abbraccio familiare che suscita il desiderio di tornare in coloro che hanno conosciuto questi luoghi.

La messapica, terra dei due mari sospesa tra Oriente ed Occidente, è carica di suggestioni. Qui si percepisce la magnificenza di Roma ed Atene, si vedono le montagne dell'Epiro, qui sono passati Pirro, Re dell'Epiro e nipote di Alessandro Magno e anche Enea, in fuga dalla guerra di Troia, che arrivando in Italia diede origine alla dinastia di Romolo e Remo, fondatori della città di Roma.

È qui che la bellezza della natura si intreccia con le architetture che raccontano la sua storia, con il fascino di Otranto, di Santa Maria di Leuca, **la Finibus Terrae** dove si fondono i respiri dei due mari. È qui, in questi magici luoghi protesi verso l'oriente che **finisce il mondo!**

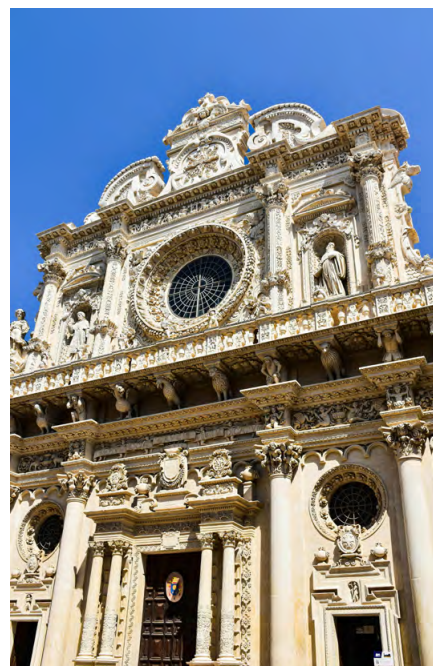
UN TOUR IN BICI PER VISITARE I SUOI LUOGHI ICONICI

LECCE, capitale del barocco, GALATINA patria della taranta e del pasticciotto, le spiagge di GALLIPOLI e quelle di UGENTO, la costa intatta di PORTO SELVAGGIO e le piccole marine non interessate dal turismo di massa... perle da attraversare in un viaggio inaspettato, facile da pedalare e bello da scoprire soprattutto in periodi di bassa stagione.



LECCE, LA “SIGNORA DEL BAROCCO” CHE AFFASCINA PER LA SUA ELEGANZA

La **Firenze del Sud**, città di respiro internazionale e cuore profondamente mediterraneo, ricca di storia e a due passi dalle coste più belle del Salento, è la città perfetta da visitare a maggio/giugno, mesi in cui il Mediterraneo si risveglia in tutta la sua luminosità. È questo il periodo in cui la città si accende della luce del Levante capace di esaltare la pietra leccese con suoi riflessi dorati. Varcare le sue antiche mura significa entrare in un mondo modellato dall'uso sapiente della pietra leccese, la cosiddetta “pietra gentile”: calcarea, morbida e plasmabile, lavorata da abili scarpellini ideatori di figure curiose e decorazioni ora fragorose, ora misurate e sobrie quanto eleganti e raffinate.



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Qui la presenza del barocco capriccioso e giocoso, esuberante ed al tempo stesso delicato e discreto come una vaporosa sottana che ricopre un corpo ambrato dal sole, è come una religione per i salentini, abituati ad accogliere da sempre popoli portatori di cultura, miti e leggende.

Lecce, città unica ed irripetibile nella sua espressione architettonica, è capace di sorprendere ad ogni sguardo, ad ogni dettaglio. In questi luoghi il barocco non è un semplice stile, ma un vero e proprio linguaggio dell'anima, che celebra la luce e la bellezza con un'intensità particolare.



Dagli scorci barocchi ai cortili segreti, ogni edificio conserva dettagli scolpiti che parlano di un passato ricco di contaminazioni, passioni e creatività. Il centro storico si snoda in un dedalo di vicoli dove ogni angolo racconta una storia diversa. La città al tramonto appare come un'elegante signora vestita con i suoi colori più belli: la pietra dorata dal sole e logorata dal tempo si tinge di tonalità suggestive che vanno dal giallo paglierino, al rosa e all'oro intenso. È il momento in cui la vista si perde tra i bagliori che avvolgono le facciate scolpite, le ombre che si modulano sull'asfalto, ed il turbinio di rondini che affollano le antiche campanarie.

La straordinaria **Piazza del Duomo**, raro esempio di piazza chiusa che racchiude il Duomo di Santa Maria Assunta, il Campanile, il Palazzo del Seminario e l'Episcopio, è l'emblema della scenografia che nel barocco leccese trasforma architetture e spazi urbani in vere e proprie quinte teatrali, usando la "pietra gentile" per creare effetti illusionistici, scenari drammatici e stupore. A Lecce facciate, chiese e piazze diventano scenografie permanenti, caratterizzate da esuberanza decorativa, colonne tortili e motivi naturalistici che mettono in scena la magnificenza e il sacro.

Altra meraviglia del barocco pugliese è la maestosa **Basilica di Santa Croce**, capolavoro in cui le decorazioni floreali e le figure mitologiche si fondono in un trionfo di eleganza.

Questa città in cui il tempo che sembra dilatarsi invita a passeggiare senza fretta, è perfetta per la **flânerie**, termine con cui i francesi definiscono il lusso di annoiarsi, il vagabondare senza meta per le strade alla ricerca di bellezza... Del resto l'impronta francese è presente nella città che nacque dalla brama dei ricchi latifondisti di abbandonare le dimore in campagna e creare un agglomerato urbano in cui poter costruire abitazioni eleganti.



La casa come *status symbol* doveva essere espressione di magnificenza, rappresentare la ricchezza ed il potere dei proprietari, che facevano a gara per arricchire ed abbellire le facciate delle loro case ad anche delle chiese riempiendole di dettagli e simboli araldici. Ma la competizione avveniva anche sul piano gastronomico, infatti molti reclutavano cuochi francesi per conferire ai piatti contadini il tocco di raffinatezza della cucina francese. Il **rustico leccese**, prodotto di rosticceria tipico del Salento, composto da due dischi di pasta sfoglia sovrapposti, farciti con un morbido e filante ripieno, è l'esempio perfetto dell'adattamento dei cuochi francesi alla cultura gastronomica locale... una sorta di evoluzione dei **vol-au-vent francesi** (vulev in dialetto locale) preparati con le ottime farine di grani antichi e ripieni di prodotti locali come pomodori e mozzarella impreziositi dalla besciamella, tipica salsa francese.

Lecce è la destinazione ideale per chi vuole immergersi nel gusto e nell'arte perché sa coniugare il fascino della storia con un'atmosfera vibrante e autentica. È una città creativa in cui non mancano manifestazioni culturali all'aperto, concerti sotto le stelle e mercatini artigianali che permettono di apprezzare l'abilità dei maestri cartapestai e dei ceramisti locali.



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Molti sono i bistrot e le osterie in cui degustare un calice di primitivo o di negroamaro e scoprire i sapori della terra pugliese che si intrecciano con un'ospitalità autentica.

Tra le varie proposte della cucina tradizionale salentina spiccano i CICERI e TRIA (una gustosa zuppa di ceci contadina), le CICORIE con CREMA di FAVE, la PAPARINA (un delicato contorno di foglie di papavero bollite e condite con olio extra vergine pugliese servito su crema di zucca), il PURPU A PIGNATTA, ovvero polpo con patate cotto a fuoco lento in un vaso di terracotta, ed infine il pollo ripieno al forno chiamato con il pittoresco e divertente termine dialettale "POLLO CUSUTU NCULU"..... Come d'uso nelle famiglie leccesi, le portate sono abbondanti.

Per celebrare l'unicità di questa splendida città, concludiamo in bellezza con un brindisi al PRIMITIVO di Manduria, un vino gradevole, pieno, armonico, che ben si sposa con i piatti della cucina tipica locale. Sorvegliarlo e gustare la semplicità e la genuinità degli ingredienti della tradizione contadina è pura estasi... Mi chiedo come possa l'accattivante tentazione del buon cibo, lasciare posto alle diete estive inflitte per superare la prova costume... Digiuno è una parola che il Salentino fatica solo a proferire...





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BIKE TOUR IN SALENTO

For the month of June, we've decided to offer an extraordinary adventure in the heel of Italy, pedaling along the Salento Ionian Cycle Route through whitewashed villages bathed in the eastern light, ancient farmhouses, dry-stone walls, coastal parks, wild beaches, dense pine forests, natural oases, and sudden glimpses of the Ionian Sea. Among the pink flamingos, the yellow brooms, and the green prickly pears, the road reveals itself, telling the story of the ancient Messapians. A colorful ride where the bicycle is not a means to reach a place, but a way for exploring nature, experiencing the wind and light filtering through the centuries-old olive trees, amidst images that gently flow with each pedal stroke. A route that invites you to explore the most authentic and ancestral Puglia.



Discover breathtaking landscapes where crystal-clear seas meet historic charm. Ride through ancient olive groves, traditional farms and scenic roads. Visit Gallipoli and Lecce, famous for its world-class Baroque architecture. Taste authentic Apulian cuisine throughout the journey.

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TOUR SPECIFICATIONS

Total Distance: 310 km (Daily tours: 60-100 km)
Elevation Gain: 1500 m total (Daily: 300-500 m)
Terrain: Good train and ability to ride in traffic
Difficulty: Physical difficulty 3-4/5 Technical difficulty 1-2/5
Fitness: Ability to bike for many hours and a good level of fitness are required



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Bikes: Suitable for Gravel, Mountain, Hybrid, or E-bikes.
Equipment: **HELMET IS OBLIGATORY.** Bike lights and a repair kit are highly recommended.
Luggage: Use pannier bags or a small backpack (max 15-20L)
Rental: Professional bike/e-bike and helmet rental available for €100.00 for the entire holiday.



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Guide Fee: €50.00/day for FAO Staff Coop members (€55.00 for non-members).
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SALENTO

There are places that have the ability to express the essence of an entire country. They offer soft, wild landscapes, lush vegetation, the sea, and spas, but also craftsmanship, history, art, culture, rituals, legends, traditional music, rural tourism, and food and wine rooted in rural tradition. This is Salento, a place to explore on a journey to discover ancient flavors and knowledge. Salento is a land that warms the heart with the poetry of its forms, the beauty of its landscapes, the kindness and cordiality of its people... It's no coincidence that, according to a survey conducted by "Italia Turistica", it is the most beloved region by Italians. Because it's not just about the sea,

Baroque architecture, food and wine, olive groves, and music, but also friendliness, hospitality, and warmth, the pleasure of being welcomed into a family embrace that inspires the desire to return in those who have known this land.

A BIKE TOUR TO VISIT ITS ICONIC PLACES:

LECCE, the capital of Baroque; GALATINA, home of the taranta and pasticciotto; the beaches of GALLIPOLI and Ugento; the pristine coast of PORTO SELVAGGIO; and the small marinas untouched by mass tourism... pearls to explore on an unexpected journey, easy to ride and beautiful to discover, especially in the low season.

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NEW EXPERTISE, THE SAME ATTENTIVE CARE

Two New Developments at Aventino Medical Group

Dear Readers,

May brings two important developments to Aventino Medical Group: the arrival of Dr. Eleonora De Luca in the Dermatology team and the introduction of cystoscopy among the diagnostic procedures now available at the clinic.

1- DERMATOLOGY: A TEAM OF GROWING STRENGTH



The first of these developments concerns **Dermatology**, a specialty that today stands among the greatest strengths of our practice.

At the heart of this area is **Dr. Luca Leoni**, who has been collaborating with Aventino Medical Group for many years and continues to represent a trusted and highly valued presence for our patients, thanks to the wealth of experience he has developed over time.

Dr. Luigi Cornacchia is another key member of the dermatology team, particularly esteemed for his surgical expertise and for the opportunity to perform minor dermatological procedures directly within the practice.

Dr. Marta Grimaldi, who also works at the Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital, brings to the team specific expertise in paediatric dermatology, alongside the treatment of skin conditions in adults.

It is within this context that we are also pleased to welcome **Dr. Eleonora De Luca**, who will be available every **Tuesday** morning. Trained at Rome's Gemelli Hospital alongside Dr.

Cornacchia and Dr. Grimaldi, she brings with her highly qualified expertise, with a particular focus on inflammatory skin diseases and dermoscopy, an examination of central importance in the early diagnosis of melanoma.

We have devoted an in-depth article on our blog to this subject, illustrated with images, to help readers better understand an examination that is simple, valuable, and often decisive.

Dr. De Luca, Dr. Cornacchia and Dr. Grimaldi are in direct agreement with Cigna.

2- UROLOGY: AN EXPANDED DIAGNOSTIC OFFERING



The second development concerns **Urology** and is a source of particular satisfaction for us: Aventino Medical Group has equipped itself with the instrumentation required to perform **cystoscopy**, thereby significantly expanding the diagnostic options available to our patients.

This marks an important step forward, further enhancing the role of our urologist, **Dr. Capozzoli**, and allowing for more timely and accurate assessment of urinary symptoms requiring targeted investigation.

We have also dedicated a blog article to this examination, with the aim of explaining clearly how it is performed, when it is indicated, and the role it may play within the diagnostic pathway.

Cystoscopy is also included within Cigna agreements.

Conclusion

These two developments reflect the way we work: growing with professionalism, expertise, and genuine attentiveness to the needs of those who place their trust in us.

Warm regards,
Aventino Medical Group




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SURYA NAMASKAR C

“THE SUN SALUTATION OF BALANCE”



by Janine Claudia Nizza

Janine Claudia Nizza is a Vinyasa Yoga Flow Teacher ERYT 1500 Senior Level 6 certified by Yoga Alliance International (Italian Division) and she is Master of 3rd level of Yoga certified by Endas. She is a trainer for instructors since 2016. She held Courses of Yoga for Fao Staff Coop members since 2012 participating with her teachings to spread the benefit of Vinyasa Yoga Flow since 2002 in Italy and United States. www.yogaflow.it - Coordinator of her course: paola.franceschelli@fao.org



As with all the **Krama Vinyasa** sequences I have developed for Yoga Flow since the early 2000s, the creation of this practice has been a long journey. It is the result of years of dedicated research into Asanas that—following the Hatha Yoga tradition of Surya Namaskar—do more than just prepare the body through musculoskeletal warming and “pose and counter-pose.” They must also offer practical, coherent use of sequential alignments that are posturally correct from start to finish.

At the heart of this Sun Salutation is **Virabhadrasana C** — the warrior who embodies the peace and wisdom found in physical and mental equilibrium.

The integration of **Virabhadrasana C** is specifically designed to offer a Surya Namaskar that is both functional and preparatory for single-leg balancing poses. Since 2023, this sequence has been revised and refined many times. There are several variations, particularly regarding the transitions into and out of postures and the numbering of the Vinyasas. Having finally reached the synthesis of a foundational routine after this experimental phase, I am presenting the simplest version of **Surya Namaskar C** in this article, with the hope that it serves your practice of balancing poses.

Digasana, commonly known as Warrior III (or Virabhadrasana C), translates to “**Direction**”. This definition is essential for finding balance; it represents how we can rely on stability even in chaotic situations. The “Decision” we make through breath and the dynamic action required to enter Digasana is fundamental. It creates direction and provides the courage to align the body toward the void, supported by only one foot. Practicing this pose helps synchronize the body, mind, and soul—the very essence of **Yoga (Union)**—across multiple planes of existence. It is a practice that extends into every present moment of our lives.

> [CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE ITALIAN VERSION ON THE YOGA PILLS WEBSITE](#)

This year marks my **25th anniversary** as a Vinyasa Yoga Flow teacher. I am deeply grateful to have chosen a path of teaching that has defined my entire career: **observing instead of judging, listening, and allowing the message to resonate deeply.** I believe in letting an intuition settle and mature before making it manifest. When we have a vision or an idea, it must always be placed at the ethical service of the common good. As teachers, we must be the first to study how to make dynamic yoga sequences simple and fluid so they may reach their true fulfillment and be of genuine help to every student.

By following the fundamental parameters found in **Patanjali's Yoga Sutras** and the teachings of **Krishnamacharya**, we can maintain the body and mind in a profound state of "Yoga". In this sequence, we are supported both spiritually and technically by **Ujjayi breath.** This breath helps us connect at every moment with the "respiratory tree" of our psycho-physical system. It activates the mind to apply intention in every Asana through the engagement of the Bandhas, ultimately increasing our daily energy, health, and well-being.

Practice Notes

I recommend practicing this Salutation only after performing at least three rounds of Surya Namaskar A and B. Repeat it three times, including both the right and left sides, returning to the final **Samasthiti** for five breaths.

Please note that **Surya Namaskar C**, unlike other variations, contains 17 Vinyasas (similar to Surya Namaskar B), but it returns to Samasthiti after completing the right side, which is counted as Vinyasa 9 (V9).

STUDIO MEDICO DERMATOLOGICO PROF. MAURIZIO ROTOLI



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An objective piece of advice: Do not begin your Vinyasa Yoga warm-up with Surya Namaskar C. Traditional Sun Salutations already provide everything needed to prepare the body for more complex Asanas. My humble contribution to the “Sun Salutations” is intended as a **compendium** to the others—a tool to favor single-leg balance and make your yogic warm-up more complete if your Vinyasa Yoga Flow practice is dedicated to such postures.

From my heart, I humbly offer this work to you who read, study, and practice yoga with consciousness and compassion.

I dedicate this article and my entire journey as a teacher to my Vinyasa Yoga masters: Juan Carlos Hernandez, Max Strom, Matthew Cohen, and Saul David Raye; and to my Astanga Yoga master since 21 years: Lino Miele.

Om Shanti and many blessings. Namaste.

DESCRIPTION OF SURYA NAMASKARA C

• Photo 1: Samasthiti

• **Photo 2: Tadasana Variation** – INHALE: Lift the arms and the heels. (V1)

• **Photo 3: Uttanasana** – EXHALE: Bring heels to the floor, lower the arms, and fold the torso forward. (V2)

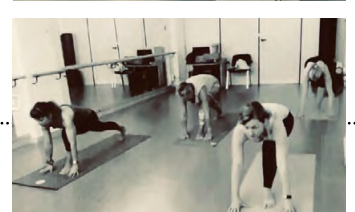
• **Photo 4: Ashwa Sanchalāsana** – INHALE: Hands to the floor, step the right leg back. (V3)

• **Photo 5: Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanāsana** – EXHALE: Left leg back and up (Three-Legged Downward Dog). Shift weight back without tilting the hips; keep elbows straight. (V4)

• **Photo 6: Ashwa Sanchalāsana** – INHALE: Step the left leg forward, knee bent. (V5)

• **Photo 7: Yoga Flow Transition** – EXHALE: Right foot to the floor, right knee bent, lift the torso with hands in Anjali Mudra.

• **Photo 8: Virabhadrasana A** – INHALE: Straighten the right leg and bend the left knee without unbalancing the pelvis. Lift the arms, extending the elbows. (V6)



• **Photo 9: Yoga Flow Transition** – EXHALE: Right foot to the floor, right knee bent, torso upright with hands in Anjali Mudra.

• **Photo 10: Virabhadrasana C (Digasana)** – INHALE: Gaze at the hands and lift the right leg, aligning it with the arms extended forward. Hold the posture for 5 Ujjayi breaths. Root the sole of the left foot firmly (Pada Bandha) while engaging Mula Bandha. (V7)

• **Photo 11: Utkatasana** – INHALE: Bring the right foot to meet the left, arms up, knees bent. (V8)

• **Photo 12: Samasthiti** – EXHALE: Straighten the knees and bring the arms down. (V9)

• **Tadasana Variation** – INHALE: Lift the arms and the heels. (V10)

• **Uttanasana** – EXHALE: Heels to the floor, lower arms, forward fold. (V11)

• **Ashwa Sanchalasana** – INHALE: Hands to the floor, step the left leg back. (V12)

• **Tri Pada Adho Mukha Svanasana** – EXHALE: Right leg back and up. Weight back, hips square, elbows straight. (V13)

• **Ashwa Sanchalasana** – INHALE: Right leg forward, knee bent. (V14)

• **Yoga Flow Transition** – EXHALE: Left foot to the floor, left knee bent, lift torso, Anjali Mudra.

• **Virabhadrasana A** – INHALE: Straighten left leg, bend right knee, lift arms. (V15)

• **Yoga Flow Transition** – EXHALE: Left foot to floor, left knee bent, Anjali Mudra.

• **Virabhadrasana C (Digasana)** – INHALE: Gaze at hands, lift left leg, align with arms. Hold for 5 Ujjayi breaths. Root the right foot (Pada Bandha) and engage Mula Bandha. (V16)

• **Utkatasana** – INHALE: Left foot meets the right, arms up, knees bent. (V17)

• **Samasthiti** – EXHALE: Straighten knees, arms down. Hold the posture for 5 Ujjayi breaths.



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and the other is **DEVOTED** to passing on all his
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Rudolf Steiner

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Bibliography:

Vinyasa Yoga by Srivatsa Ramaswami
A life worth breathing by Max Strom
Astanga Yoga, Sri K. Pattabhi Jois by Lino Miele, Yoga Mala by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois

AMBKIT INTERNATIONAL

[Ambrit International](#) is an independent, not-for-profit, international [IB World School](#) founded by Prof. Bernard C. Mullane in 1982 and owned by the Ambrit Foundation. In addition to providing an English language education for international families in Rome, the Founder's idea was to create a community in which families and teachers were interacting towards the goal of mutual growth.

Over the decades, Ambrit has welcomed and contributed to the education of thousands of international and local students, promoting integration between the various cultures from over 100 countries. Many Ambrit families come from the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture, embassies and other international institutions, forming a diverse student body and community alongside internationally minded Italian families. Many Ambrit alumni have also chosen the school for their own child's education contributing to the growth of the Ambrit family!

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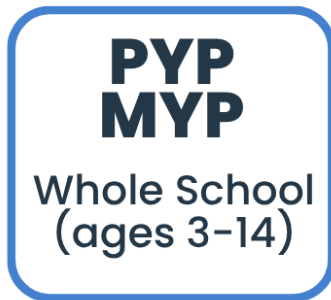


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Straight from the sun-drenched shores of Salento, Puglia, Polpo alla Pignata is a rustic masterpiece of Italian seafood. Named after the *pignata*—the traditional terracotta pot used for slow-cooking—this dish relies on the octopus cooking in its own juices until buttery tender. While a clay pot is traditional for heat retention, a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven works perfectly for the modern kitchen. Served with crusty bread to soak up the rich, tomato-infused sauce, it's a soul-warming meal that tastes like a summer evening in Southern Italy.



- **Prep time:** 20 mins
- **Cook time:** 75 mins
- **Resting time:** 20 mins
- **Yields:** 4 servings
- **Difficulty:** Easy



Ingredients

- **Octopus:** 2.2 lbs (1 kg), cleaned
- **Potatoes:** 1.1 lbs (500 g), peeled and cubed
- **Tomato Pulp/Crushed Tomatoes:** 26 oz (750 g)
- **Yellow Onion:** 1, finely chopped
- **Garlic:** 1 clove, peeled and halved
- **Fresh Chili Pepper:** 1/2, minced
(or red pepper flakes to taste)
- **Dry White Wine:** 1/2 cup
(e.g., Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc)
- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil:** As needed
- **Fresh Parsley:** 1 bunch, finely chopped
- **Salt:** To taste



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Instructions

1. Prepare the Octopus: Using kitchen shears, remove the eyes and the “beak” located at the center of the tentacles. Empty the head sac and rinse the octopus thoroughly under cold running water. Pat dry and cut into bite-sized chunks.



2. In a large Dutch oven or terracotta pot, heat a generous drizzle of olive oil over low heat. Add the chopped onion, garlic, and chili pepper. Sauté gently for a few minutes until the onion is translucent and fragrant.

3. Increase the heat to medium and add the octopus chunks. Stir well to coat the octopus in the aromatic oil. Pour in the white wine and allow the alcohol to evaporate for about 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

4. Add the cubed potatoes (cut to roughly the same size as the octopus) and the crushed tomatoes. Season with a small pinch of salt—be careful, as octopus is naturally salty. Stir to combine, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and simmer on the lowest heat setting for 1 hour.



Chef’s Tip: The sauce should become thick and rich, and the potatoes slightly softened but not disintegrated.

5. Resting and Serving: Once cooked, turn off the heat and let the dish rest, covered, for 20 minutes. This step is crucial for the flavors to meld and the octopus to reach its maximum tenderness. Garnish with plenty of fresh chopped parsley. Serve warm in individual bowls with toasted slices of rustic bread for the mandatory scarpetta (scooping up the leftover sauce).

Sources: <https://www.cookist.it/polpo-alla-pignata-ricetta/#>



Vegan “Polpo” alla Pignata:

- The Swap: Replace the octopus with 1.5 lbs of chunky King Oyster mushrooms, Pearl Oyster mushrooms, or firm Seitan.
- The “Fishy” Notes: To mimic the flavor of the sea, add a small piece of Kombu seaweed while simmering, or stir in a teaspoon of Nori flakes and a few capers just before serving.

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