

## A PASTA-POWERED FLOWER SHOW

***Six herbs Italians love to use when they are in full bloom and how to cook with them***



Flower Show season is nearly upon us: starting with RHS Chelsea onwards, across the UK, thousands will flock to take in the glorious blooms across Chatsworth, Tatton Park, Hampton Court Palace, and ever-popular Open Gardens events amongst others. In keeping with this summer extravaganza, Italy's favourite pasta maker, La Famiglia Rana has some simple advice on bringing a flash of all things floral to your cooking.

The easiest way to do this is with herbs. Whether they feature in rolling landscaped lawns or a more modest well-tended window box; whether you're a green-fingered genius or more of a beginner, almost everyone has cultivated a potted herb or two. What few people realise however is that **you can eat their flowers too – and as they come into full bloom in the spring and summer months, so can your cooking.**

### **Six herbs Italians like to use when they are in full bloom:**

**1. CHIVES** – It's hard to imagine these verdant, grass-like stalks in flower until you see it, but the delicate, feathered blossoms bring a light onion flavour best used as a savoury garnish.

**Recipe suggestion:** Best used to complement other light but punchy flavours. For example: toss some freshly prepared La Famiglia Rana Spinach & Ricotta Tortelloni through with Parmigiano Reggiano sauce. Season to taste then cut the flower heads and sprinkle, whole, over the dish for a burst of colour and beauty.

You can also chop the flowers, mix them with butter and pepper, and season the cooked Tortelloni with the aromatic butter.

**2. LAVENDER** – this will be one of the first to flower in spring. The blue-violet flowers are robust in appearance but delicate in flavour.

**Recipe suggestion:** You might expect only sweet recipes to suit this flower, but that's not the case. Try combining the buds with coarse sea salt and extra virgin olive oil when preparing La Famiglia Rana's Pan-Fry Gnocchi – to perfectly complement a duck or lamb main.

You could also infuse some lavender flowers in extra virgin olive oil and season La Famiglia Rana Prosciutto Cotto & Mozzarella Tortelloni.

**3. BASIL** – The basil plant’s white flowers taste just like the leaves and are best treated in the same way. Gently stir them through your dish just before serving, or sprinkle liberally on top.

**Recipe suggestion:** For the most striking results, combine with a contrasting colour, such as the green or warm orange of La Famiglia Rana’s Pan-Fried Gnocchi in the spinach or pumpkin variety.

You can also make a fresh salad with La Famiglia Rana Aubergine Parmigiana Tortelloni, chopped tomatoes, extra virgin olive oil and basil flowers.

**4. THYME** – another spring-flowering herb, the flowers are strong and carry the scent of the specific variety. For example, citrus thyme or wild thyme. Overall it’s earthy, and both sweet and savoury.

**Recipe suggestion:** As it can be quite a strong flavour, these are often traditionally used to infuse oils or vinegar. Experiment with steeping the flowers in a bottle of good olive oil before tossing some freshly prepared La Famiglia Rana tortelloni in your favourite flavour.

**5. OREGANO** – One of the most iconic Italian herbs. Just like the leaves, the oregano flowers are spicy but sweet, but the very best thing about these flowers is that they come in the most celebratory bright colours.

**Recipe suggestion:** These hold their flavour very well amongst stronger-tasting ingredients. Try sprinkling over a gratin-style dish. For a quick crowd-pleaser, combine La Famiglia Rana’s Pan-Fried Gnocchi – Spinach with La Famiglia Rana’ Parmigiano Reggiano sauce in a baking dish and pop under the grill for a few minutes before sprinkling with oregano flowers.

**6. SAGE** – In the UK we adore sage with chicken – and its gently aniseed taste is carried through in its flowers. Although the flavour is velvety smooth, the colours are a bright impactful violet so to get the most (for your eyes and your tastebuds) use fresh over dishes.

**Recipe suggestion:** The most classic British combination can be given a distinct Italian twist: toss some La Famiglia Rana Chicken & Pancetta Tortelloni with good quality butter and season to taste before decorating the dish with freshly-picked sage flowers for a refined but heart-filled meal.

For more recipe ideas and to discover the full range of La Famiglia Rana products, which includes fresh filled tortelloni, pasta sauces and pan-fried gnocchi, visit: [www.rana.co.uk](http://www.rana.co.uk)

La Famiglia Rana products are available at Sainsbury’s, Ocado, Morrisons and independent retailers. The Pan-Fried Gnocchi range is exclusively available at Sainsbury’s. To find a specific store location [www.rana.co.uk/store-locator](http://www.rana.co.uk/store-locator).

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*For more information or imagery, please contact La Famiglia Rana Press office on [rana@cowpr.com](mailto:rana@cowpr.com)*

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About La Famiglia Rana** [www.rana.co.uk](http://www.rana.co.uk)

As our names suggests, La Famiglia Rana is a family run-and-owned company. We’ve been producing the finest fresh filled pasta since 1962. From humble beginnings when founder Giovanni Rana hand-made and personally delivered fresh tortelloni to friends and neighbors in Verona, we’re now a globally recognised brand and we continue to uphold our same core values: using only the best ingredients and pushing boundaries to create the tastiest fresh filled pasta.