

A decorative stained glass window graphic on the right side of the page. It features a gothic arch with intricate patterns in red, yellow, green, and blue. The central part of the window is a dark blue rectangle containing the text. The bottom of the window has a series of small, colorful arches.

Papal
DINNER
MENU

Papal DINNER MENU



ANTIPASTI

Pope Francis

Bagna Cauda / Seasonal Vegetables

Like his own papacy, the cultures of Argentina and Italy are intertwined in Pope Francis. Though born in Argentina, his family is Piedmontese, from northern Italy. There, a popular dish is bagna càuda—meaning “hot sauce”—served warm as a dip. In Argentina, it’s often prepared at Christmastime alongside empanadas. As a child, Francis would help his grandmother in the kitchen with both dishes. She would drop strips of empanada dough into hot oil to test the temperature. These strips puffed up, but when bitten, were hollow inside. “In the dialect we spoke, those bits were called ‘lies,’” Francis recalled. “My grandmother explained why: ‘Like lies, they look big, but are empty inside; they are false, unreal.’” He would dip these “lies” into the bagna càuda as a treat, and the lesson became a moral anchor for him throughout his life.



Pope Innocent (Conclave)

Afghan Bolani
Lamb Kofta / Curried Potato /
Green Sauce / Tourn

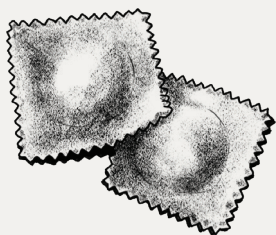
In Conclave, Cardinal Vincent Benítez, a little-known Mexican priest, is secretly appointed Archbishop of Afghanistan. His call for peace in times and places of turmoil leads to his selection as pope. To honor both his mission and his cultural roots, we feature bolani—an Afghan street food reminiscent of the Mexican quesadilla.



Pope Paul II

Prosciutto Cups / Melon Salad /
Chrysanthemum

Pope Paul II was one of the more controversial pontiffs. He created numerous cardinals in pectore—in secret—to stack the College of Cardinals with loyalists. When his reforms stalled despite this, he often delivered dramatic speeches that ended in tears, leading enemies to deride him as homosexual. His sudden death added fuel to the rumors. The official story was a heart attack caused by indigestion from overindulging in melon. His critics claimed a more salacious end: internal hemorrhaging allegedly caused by sodomy at the hands of a page boy.



PRIMI

Pope Leo XIV

Italian Beef Ravioli / Gardenia Bread
Crumbs / Demi Glace

The first American pope—and the first from Chicago—Pope Leo XIV loved pizza and Italian beef sandwiches from Aurelio's Pizza, now a major Midwestern chain, according to his brother. To honor his Chicago roots and Italian role, we created Italian Beef Ravioli topped with dehydrated giardiniera breadcrumbs, finished with a sauce made from the reduced beef braising liquid.

SECONDI

Pope Alexander VI

Honey-Thyme Duck Breast /
Plum-Chianti Gastrique
Candied Chestnuts / Leek Bread
Pudding

Rodrigo Borgia—Pope Alexander VI—was patriarch of the powerful and scheming Borgia family of Valencia. He rose to power as an outsider from Spain, exploiting the infighting among Italian city-states. Known for his realpolitik, he used bribery, blackmail, and assassination to consolidate control. His papacy was infamous for scandal, including the notorious "Feast of Chestnuts." Organized by his son Cesare Borgia, the banquet featured 50 courtesans and an alleged game involving picking up chestnuts from the floor using any means—or orifice—necessary. Some accounts claim it ended in an orgy, after which the Borgias used the resulting disgrace to blackmail participants. The Borgia family, naturally, claimed it was an innocent game with friendly wagers.





DOLCE

Pope Pius XIII (The Young Pope)

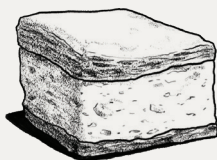
Cherry Coke Gelato /
Chocolate Cigarette

Cardinal Lenny Belardo, an American, becomes Pope Pius XIII in the hit series *The Young Pope*—the only Italian-made show to win an Emmy. On the show, he scorns papal luxuries: no rich food, no fawning staff, no celebrity culture. All he wants is Diet Cherry Coke Zero and cigarettes. He even has a button on his desk that, when pressed, summons an assistant to bring him a soda and discreetly end meetings.

Pope John Paul II

Kremówka Papieska / Strawberry
and Poppyseed

In 1999, during a visit to his hometown of Wadowice, John Paul II recalled how he and his friends celebrated finishing their final high school exams by devouring kremówki—flaky cream cakes from the local bakery. He once entered an eating contest and stunned classmates by consuming 18 pieces (still finishing second). “We survived all those kremówki after the exam,” he joked. The story charmed the world. Soon, the dessert was dubbed kremówka papieska—“the Pope’s cream cake”—and became a must-try for pilgrims to Poland.



DIGESTIVO



Pope Clement VIII

Carajillo Baptism / Salt Foam

Around 1600, Pope Clement VIII faced pressure from Catholic clergy to ban coffee. Dubbed “Satan’s drink” by some advisors for its Islamic origins and subversive popularity, coffee was on the brink of excommunication. But the Pope insisted on tasting it first. After sipping, he reportedly quipped, “Why, this Satan’s drink is so delicious that it would be a pity to let the infidels have exclusive use of it!” He then staged a symbolic “baptism” of coffee—effectively blessing it for Catholic consumption. From that point, coffee culture took off in Europe.

Pope Leo X

Leathers / Chocolate and Fruit

A member of the powerful Medici family, Pope Leo X was a patron of Renaissance art and known for his extravagant lifestyle. He was a large, jovial man who hosted three-hour feasts several times a week. At these banquets, his jester would take a guest’s leather jacket, stew it in a “savory sauce” until slightly softened, then eat the entire thing at the next feast—much to the horror and delight of the assembled diners.