

bulk purchasing, and with Shanghai's humid climate and limited storage space in the fridge, it's better to buy fresh when needed.

For root vegetables such as taro and yam, the price of buying in kilos is much lower than buying in grams, and these two are particularly unpleasant to handle, some people are even allergic to their sticky juice and the rough skin, which can cause itching.

So if you love to cook and eat taro and yam, which are two very healthy, delicious root vegetables and carbohydrate options that work well in both savory and sweet cooking, spending some time to rinse, peel and cut a few kilos at a time wearing protective gloves saves money and trouble.

The mud on taro and yam should be thoroughly cleaned off before peeling the skin, so that it avoids the flesh coming in contact with the dirt. The yam can be peeled with a standard peeler, but the thick and rough skin of large taros is best sliced off, making sure the black spots are removed as well.

Then, rinse the peeled root vegetables and pat dry, on a dry cutting board, cut them into smaller pieces or large chunks depending on your preference, then weigh and portion them into smaller bags and put them in the freezer.

Excess potatoes can be processed in the same way, and frozen root vegetables can be used in cooking stews directly without thawing.

The plastic bags that aren't torn apart during the process can be cleaned, dried and reused to reduce plastic waste. Silicon bags work well too, but plastic boxes may take up too much space in the freezer.

In the fruit category, apples and citrus fruits are very durable, but berries, peaches and ripe bananas cannot last long. Some of the counter-top fresh produce, such as pineapple, garlic and onion, can go bad quickly in the spring and summer in Shanghai because of the high humidity. An onion with skin on may start to perish after three to four days at the moment.

Herbs usually remain fresh for a few hours but can last a few days if they are properly rinsed, dried and stored in the fridge in the right container.

When dealing with meat at home, there are two key guidelines to keep in mind. One is to separate all the boards and tools, the other is to avoid repeated thawing and freezing.

Meat can be purchased in large quantities and then stored for a month. Dividing the meat into smaller portions suitable for each dish planned not only saves time and space in the fridge, but also minimizes the risk of bacterial growth. Thawing the meat in the fridge at a low temperature can best preserve the juicy texture and flavor.

Vacuum sealing the meat (preferably when it's frozen so there's little liquid) can extend the storage period even longer, it's also easier to thaw in the fridge or a water bath.

Tofu won't last long in the fridge after it's opened, but a box of tofu is typically around 400 grams and it's a very fulfilling protein. One way to store leftover tofu with a harder texture is to cut it into cubes and freeze, which is another delicacy called frozen tofu to be used directly without thawing. The freezing will create small holes in the tofu to make it almost sponge like, and it's perfect for soups with Chinese cabbage or hotpot to absorb the delicious broth.

Multi-faceted art of wine storage

Over time, everything we eat and drink spoils. But intriguingly, many of the world's finest foods and beverages get better with age, up to a certain point. Witness, dry-aged beef, hard cheeses, vinegars, selected teas and of course wines. Proper aging necessitates suitable storage and nowhere else is this more evident than with the world's most inimitable and precious beverage.

Over the entire lifecycle of wine, there are different stages of storage. At the winery, there's post fermentation aging in barrels, concrete, stainless steel or other large vessels prior to bottling. Many top wines will have months or years of additional maturing in the bottle before leaving the winery. Once in the hands of merchants and collectors, top wines may benefit from cellaring for years or even decades. Truth be told, extremely age-worthy wines are the exception rather than the rule and comprise only a tiny fraction of all wines products.

The final life of wine begins when a bottle is opened and the wine interacts with oxygen. Top reds may need hours of breathing before they reach their peak drinkability, and a select few of the world's best whites also benefit from some breathing time. Should you be unable to finish a bottle of wine and want to drink it the following day, then it's critical to limit the time the wine interacts with oxygen. In other words, once you open the bottle pour the number of glasses you require then put the cork back in and store in your fridge. Unless it's a very old or fragile wine, it'll remain perfectly drinkable over the next day or two.

One rather obscure Italian variety makes wines that necessitate proper aging and storage. Some call it the Barolo of southern Italy, others refer to it as the world's first grand cru; but however depicted, Aglianico is one of Italy's three paramount red varieties, a status it shares with Sangiovese and Nebbiolo. This is ancient grape that thrives in the volcanic soils of southern Italy. Several noted oenologists speculate that Aglianico boasts the longest uninterrupted history of cultivation of any wine variety. In fact, the origin of the grape is still disputed.

Many wine historians believe Aglianico was first planted in southern Italy by Phoenician traders and early Greek settlers. A more recent theory propagated by wine historians at the University of Milan claim the variety grew wild in southernmost reaches of the arch of the Italian peninsula and was consumed by indigenous peoples as early as the Bronze Age. These academics assert that the Phoenicians and Greeks merely adopted the variety when they first arrived in southern Italy.

During the early Roman Empire the grape rose to prominence when it was a major component of the celebrated Falerno



Volcanic soil vineyards or Monte Vulture — Ti Gong

wine. Roman poet-philosopher Pliny the Elder declared that wines made from Aglianico were the finest of the empire. And after defeating the Romans in 212 BC, Hannibal sent his soldiers to Lucania so they could heal themselves with the Aglianico wines of Vulture.

The lofty status Aglianico held in ancient times slowly dissipated over the centuries and the variety nearly disappeared. New investment and interest in making quality wines in the late 1980s abetted southern Italian producers to rediscover their rich diversity of native varieties. Aglianico was the apex among them. Today, the two top expressions of the grape are Aglianico del Vulture DOC/DOCG in Basilicata and Taurasi DOCG in Campania. The former is my focus this week.

Aglianico del Vulture

The extinct volcano Monte Vulture dominates the landscape of northern Basilicata. The Aglianico variety thrives in the rich, free-draining volcanic soils of Vulture. The best vineyards are southeast facing sloping sites located on the elevated lower slopes of the mountain. Altitude is everything to the Aglianico grape; so important that DOC and DOCG regulations require that all vineyards must be between 200 and 700 meters above sea level.

Aglianico favors hot and dry climates and is one of the latest ripening grapes, sometimes being harvested as late as mid-November. Aglianico del Vulture DOC and DOCG wines must be made of 100 percent Aglianico grapes and conform to strict yield and barrel and bottle-aging requirements with Riserva wines requiring a minimum of five years aging.

As late ripening grape, Aglianico vintages matter. This is especially true when purchasing older vintages.

For Aglianico del Vulture wines, avoid 2014 and 2004 wines and seek out wines from the excellent 2010, 2009, 2007, 2005, 2001, 2000, 1999 and 1998 vintages. Most other vintages range from good to very good. Aglianico del Vulture wines aren't easy to find in China but two excellent producers have wines available in Shanghai. These are Elena Fucci and Feudi di San Gregorio. Suitable Aglianico alternatives are the Taurasi wines of Campania or less



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acclaimed but still good IGT wines.

Younger and more approachable Aglianico IGT wines can be consumed after release, but the DOC and DOCG wines demand time. Cellaring these wines for the better part of a decade or longer helps the youthful astringent tannins morph into supple and velvety tannins while also revealing more complex and elegant aromas and flavors. A well-made Aglianico del Vulture wine typically exhibits black cherry, dark berry, mocha and coffee aromas and flavors with spicy, leathery, mineral notes and a long finish.

Aglianico del Vulture DOC and DOCG wines need upwards of an hour or more breathing time. The combination of acidity, tannins and relatively high alcohol also require that the wines be served no higher than 16 degrees Celsius. Strong wines beseech boldly flavored dishes, and therefore game or heavily spiced dishes are classic companions of Aglianico wines. I'm particularly fond of pairing these behemoth reds with a range of classic Ningxia lamb dishes.

Where to buy in Shanghai

www.yishe.hk

Elena Fucci Titolo Aglianico del Vulture Superiore Riserva DOCG

Elena Fucci Titolo Aglianico del Vulture Superiore DOCG

Elena Fucci Titolo Aglianico del Vulture DOC

www.sinodrink.com

Feudi di San Gregorio Aglianico del Vulture DOC

Villa Matilde Aglianico IGT

Villa Matilde Taurasi DOCG

Region & Style at a glance

Varieties

Aglianico is the only permitted grape.

Key term

Rough is used to describe overly tannic or acidic wines that may with age become more balanced, complex and softer on the palate.

Star wine

Elena Fucci Titolo Aglianico del Vulture Superiore Riserva DOCG

AGLIANICO DEL VULTURE DOC/DOCG (ITALY)



Star Wine

Elena Fucci Titolo Aglianico del Vulture Superiore Riserva DOCG