

Delicious Traditional Italian Recipes!

Caprese Salad

Serves 4-6 | Prep. time 45 minutes | Cooking time 0 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 large tomatoes, sliced ¼ inch thick
- 1 pound fresh mozzarella, sliced ¼ inch thick
- ¼ cup packed fresh basil, washed and dried
- ⅓ teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Fine sea salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Layer the tomato and mozzarella slices alternately on a serving dish.
2. Sprinkle with oregano and drizzle with olive oil.
3. Season with salt and pepper.

Beef Bracirole

Serves 4–6 | Prep. time 15–20 minutes | Cooking time 90 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 pounds boneless top round beef steaks, cut into 12 even pieces
- 12 slices prosciutto, thin
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 8 garlic cloves, sliced
- ½ cup Italian parsley, chopped finely
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons Italian seasoned breadcrumbs
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon dry oregano
- 1 teaspoon dry basil
- ½ teaspoon dry thyme
- ½ teaspoon dry rosemary
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

For serving

- Cooked pasta or polenta
- Chopped Italian parsley
- Grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

1. On a clean working surface, lay a large piece of plastic wrap. Top with one steak and cover with another layer of plastic wrap. Pound the steak with a mallet or rolling pin to flatten the meat to less than a ¼ inch thick. Repeat for all the steaks.
2. Top each flattened steak with a prosciutto slice.
3. In a mixing bowl, add the 4 minced garlic cloves, parsley, Parmesan cheese, and breadcrumbs. Mix and season to taste with salt and black pepper.
4. Add the breadcrumb mixture evenly on top of each steak. Roll and fold the ends. Close each roll with a toothpick cut in two.
5. Warm the olive oil in deep cast iron pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, brown the rolls on each side. Work in batches so you do not overload the pan. Remove the beef rolls from the pan and let rest on a plate.
6. Increase heat to high and add the wine and bring to a boil, taking care of releasing the brown bits of flavor stuck to the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon or whisk.
7. Add the 8 sliced garlic cloves, beef broth, tomatoes, oregano, basil, thyme, and rosemary. Let simmer for 10 minutes and decrease the heat to medium-low.
8. Add the beef rolls to the pan, cover with lid or foil, and let simmer on low heat for 1 ½ hours or in the oven pre-heated to 325°F. Turn over the beef rolls every 15-20 minutes.
9. When cooked, remove from heat and move beef rolls to a plate. Let rest while thickening the sauce, if needed.
10. Remove about ½ cup of liquid from the pan into a small bowl. Stir-in 2 tablespoons of flour until smooth. Add to the pan, stir well with a whisk or spoon. Increase heat to medium-high and let simmer while stirring until the consistency is just right, about 3 to 6 minutes. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if needed.
11. Add the beef rolls back to the pan and stir. Before serving, take out all toothpicks. Serve over pasta or polenta and sprinkle with parsley and grated Parmesan cheese, if desired.

Margharita Pizza

Serves 8 | Prep. time 15 minutes | Cooking time 8 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 (12- to 13-inch) thin-crust dough or dough of choice
- ¼ - ½ cup pizza sauce
- 2 cups mozzarella, preferably *di bufala*, freshly shredded
- 1 Roma tomato, sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Pinch of sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1-2 teaspoons fresh basil leaves

Pizza sauce ingredients

- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 medium cloves garlic, grated
- 2 anchovy fillets (optional)
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste
- 2 sprigs fresh basil, leaves attached
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and halved
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ⅛ cup red wine (optional)

Directions

1. To make the pizza sauce, make the tomatoes into a chunky (not smooth) consistency using a blender, food processor or food mill. Set aside.
2. Heat the oil and butter over low to medium heat in a saucepan.
3. When the butter has melted, add the garlic, anchovy (optional), oregano, pepper flakes, and salt. If using anchovies, mash them with a wooden spoon or with a fork as you sauté.
4. Stir while cooking until the garlic has browned slightly (about 3-4 minutes).
5. Add the chopped tomatoes, basil, onion, sugar, and red wine (optional).
6. Simmer, stirring occasionally, over very low heat until reduced by ½ (about 1 hour).
7. Remove the onion and basil stems.
8. Adjust the flavor with salt or more pepper flakes, according to taste.
9. Allow to cool to room temperature. Can be kept in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.
10. To make the pizza, preheat oven to 500°F.
11. Spread sauce over dough, about 1 inch from the edge.
12. Sprinkle with cheese. Top with tomato slices.
13. Drizzle with oil and then season with salt and pepper.
14. Bake until golden brown and bubbly (about 8 minutes). Remove from oven.
15. Let rest for the cheese to set about 2-3 minutes. Garnish with basil leaves over top.
16. Slice and serve.

Chicken Parmigiana

Serves 4 | Prep. time 30 minutes | Cooking time 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 pieces boneless skinless chicken breast, pounded thin
- Salt and pepper
- 1 large egg, beaten with ½ tablespoon water
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- All-Purpose Tomato Sauce, recipe below
- 1 pound fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan
- Sliced green onion, for garnish
- Fettuccini with tomato sauce for serving

All-Purpose Tomato Sauce

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed to a paste with a pinch of salt
- 2 (28-ounce) cans plum tomatoes, undrained, pureed in a blender
- 1 (16-ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 (2.5-ounce) can tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup Italian parsley
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Directions

For the sauce

1. In a saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat.
2. Cook the onions and garlic until they are soft.
3. Add the pureed tomatoes with their juices, crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, bay leaf, parsley, and bell pepper, and bring it to a boil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Reduce the heat and cook until slightly thickened, about 30 minutes.
5. Let cool to room temperature and store, refrigerated, in jars.

For the chicken

6. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
7. Season the chicken with salt and pepper
8. Coat with flour and tap lightly to remove any excess.
9. Dip in the egg mixture and all any excess to drip off.
10. Coat evenly with bread crumbs.
11. In a skillet on the stovetop, heat the oil almost to the smoking point.
12. Brown the breasts on both sides, about 30-40 seconds per side.
13. Transfer the chicken to a baking sheet.
14. Top each chicken piece with 1-2 tablespoons of tomato sauce, slices of mozzarella and about 1 tablespoon of Parmesan.
15. Season with salt and pepper.
16. Bake until the chicken is cooked through and the cheese is melted, about 5 to 7 minutes.
17. Garnish with green onion and serve over pasta with tomato sauce if desired.

Lemon Parmesan Spaghetti

Serves 4 | Prep. time 8–10 minutes | Cooking time 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup heavy cream
- Juice and zest from 1 large lemon
- 1 pound spaghetti or spaghettini (thin spaghetti)
- ¼ cup brandy
- ¾ cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions

1. Add salted water to a medium saucepan or skillet and heat it over medium heat.
2. Add the pasta and cook as per package directions. Drain water and set aside.
3. In the same saucepan, heat the heavy cream, brandy and lemon juice over low heat.
4. Boil the mixture over high heat for 7–8 minutes until it thickens.
5. Mix in the spaghetti and lemon zest and toss well.
6. Add the cheese; toss again. Serve warm topped with reserved lemon zest.

Classic Tiramisu

Is there a better way to finish a great Italian meal than have a creamy delicious tiramisu? I think not! This recipe calls for all the traditional ingredients we use to make this classic dessert.

Serves 6 | Preparation 3 hours 30 minutes or more

Ingredients

- 1½ pounds mascarpone
- 6 eggs
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla
- 1 cup Espresso – very strong
- Amaretto liquor (optional)
- 18 Ladyfingers cookies
- Cocoa powder
- Mint leaves for decoration

Directions

1. Beat eggs, sugar, and vanilla for about 8-10 minutes, until it's very smooth and the cream has become fluffy and almost white. Incorporate the mascarpone cheese, and mix for an additional 4 to 6 minutes.
2. Prepare the espresso so it is very strong. Pour the coffee into a shallow bowl, and if desired, add some amaretto to taste. Break the ladyfinger cookies in two before soaking. Soak the cookies one piece at a time very quickly, literally in and out of the coffee. Let rest on a plate.
3. To assemble the tiramisu, deposit 1 tablespoon of the mascarpone cream at the bottom of serving glass, just so it barely covers the bottom. Place 2 or 3 pieces of the soaked cookie, and cover with the mascarpone cream. Lightly sprinkle with cocoa powder. Repeat another layer of cookies and cream and cocoa powder until the glass is almost filled. Finish with the cocoa powder.
4. Refrigerate at least 3 hours before you are ready to serve.
5. Decorate with fresh mint leaves.

***These recipes and more are found in Sarah Spencer's *A Taste of Italy: Traditional Italian Cooking Made Easy with Authentic Italian Recipes*. To get your copy, click on the cover below or click [here](#).

