



REAL FOOD WEEKLY

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“ITALIAN CLASSICS”

I'm very excited about the menu this week. My wonderful husband is Italian, so I rarely get a special request for anything that isn't Italian. These recipes have the potential to become favorites in your home. The Manicotti is a more extensive recipe, but the others are very easy. The key to good Italian cooking is having the staples on hand, such as the base recipes for marinara sauce and basil pesto.



MIGNOGNA MANICOTTI



MINISTRONE SOUP



PARMESAN CHICKEN FINGERS WITH BROCCOLI RABE



PICCATA DI POLLO WITH CHEESY POLENTA
AND ZUCCHINI PAPERDELLE



MIGNOGNA MANICOTTI

Total Time: 45 minutes *With marinara and pesto sauce already made.
Serve an easy Italian salad with this meal.

Ingredients:

FOR CREPES:

1 cup semolina flour (use all-purpose if unavailable)

1 cup all-purpose flour (if using an alternative flour, use something that is meant for pastries, or else crepes will be too thick to be able to flip)

4 eggs

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

pinch of salt

FOR FILLING AND TOPPING:

Extra virgin olive oil

4oz. loose Italian sausage

4 cups spinach

½ cup peas (frozen and thawed okay)

1 ½ cup mozzarella cheese, cut into small cubes, plus 1 cup grated

1 cup ricotta cheese

1 egg yolk

salt and pepper

2-3 cups marinara sauce *Use this week's homemade recipe

½ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Whisk ingredients for crepes in a mixing bowl until smooth. Heat a nonstick skillet and pour ¼ - ½ cup batter into pan, rotating the pan until it is thinly coated with the batter. Cook for 1-2 minutes, until the sides start to lift up, then flip and cook for 30 more seconds. Set on a large plate and repeat with the rest of the batter.

For the filling, heat a little oil in a saucepan and sauté sausage until browned. Add spinach and let cook down until wilted. Place sausage mixture in a large mixing bowl, then gently mix in peas, cubes of mozzarella, ricotta, and egg yolk. Season with salt and pepper.

Coat a large baking dish with marinara. Place about 1/3 cup of filling in the center of a crepe and roll the crepe up like a burrito by folding in short sides first, then rolling. Place each rolled crepe, seam-side down, in the baking dish until it is full. (If you have extra, you may fill an additional baking dish.) Pour at least 1 cup of marinara over the top of the stuffed manicotti, then sprinkle evenly with grated mozzarella and Parmesan cheese. Bake for 20-30 minutes until cheese is bubbling and beginning to brown. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.



PARMESAN CHICKEN FINGERS WITH BROCCOLI RABE

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

2 pounds chicken tenders (or breast meat cut into thin strips)
salt and pepper
2 eggs
¼ cup arrowroot powder
½ cup dry breadcrumbs
½ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
2 teaspoons dried oregano
¼ cup butter, plus extra as needed
extra virgin olive oil
2-3 broccoli rabe per person

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Beat eggs with salt and pepper in a small dish. Whisk arrowroot, breadcrumbs, and Parmesan in another dish. Grease a large baking dish with butter. Toss chicken pieces in egg mixture, then coat with dry mixture, shaking to remove excess. Place chicken tenders in baking dish, and repeat with remaining chicken. Drizzle liberally with oil, then bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

When chicken is 10-15 minutes from being done, fill a saucepan with an inch of water and bring to a boil. Add a handful of salt, then add broccoli for 5-7 minutes until bright green and tender. Strain water, then add broccoli back to pan and stir in butter until melted. Toss to coat broccoli with butter. Season as needed, and serve with chicken.

MINISTRONE SOUP

Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons butter
1 onion, chopped
2-3 zucchini, chopped
1-2 carrots, chopped
salt and pepper
1 ½ cups marinara sauce
4 cups chicken stock
½ cup couscous or quinoa
chopped leftover meat from other recipes (optional)
grated cheese, optional
basil pesto, optional

Heat butter in stockpot and sauté onions for 5 minutes. Add zucchini and carrots and sauté for 5 minutes, then season with salt and pepper. Stir in marinara, stock, couscous or quinoa, and leftover meat. Let simmer for 15-20 minutes until vegetables are soft and couscous/quinoa is cooked. Top with cheese and a dollop of pesto (*optional*), and serve.



PICCATA DI POLLO WITH CHEESY POLENTA AND ZUCCHINI PAPARDELLE

Total Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

FOR POLENTA:

¼ cup butter

2 cloves of garlic, minced

2 cups pre-cooked polenta (or precook cornmeal in boiling water, then strained)

1 cup whole milk

salt and pepper

1 cup cheddar cheese

½ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

For Chicken:

8-10 chicken pieces, such as thighs

salt and pepper

¼ cup arrowroot powder

4 tablespoons butter, divided

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

½ cup white wine

Juice of 1 lemon

¼ cup capers

FOR ZUCCHINI:

4-6 medium zucchini, peeled into long strips of “pasta” with a vegetable peeler (do not peel past seeds in center)

¼ cup butter

salt and pepper

flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped, for garnish

(Preheat oven to 375°F only if using thick pieces of bone-in chicken.)

Melt butter in a medium stockpot and sauté garlic. Whisk in polenta and milk until smooth, and season with salt and pepper. When polenta is beginning to simmer, stir in cheese and season as needed. Continue to stir until smooth and keep warm.

For chicken, season chicken pieces with salt and pepper, then dredge in arrowroot, shaking to remove excess and leaving only a light dusting of powder. Heat oil and 2 tablespoons butter over high heat and sear chicken for 4-6 minutes per side, until browned. Remove chicken and set aside. Deglaze pan with wine, stirring to remove bits from bottom of pan, then stir in lemon juice, capers, and remaining 2 tablespoons of butter. Add chicken back to pan and simmer over low heat until sauce is slightly reduced and chicken is thoroughly cooked. *(If using thick pieces of chicken, then place in oven until chicken is fully cooked.)*

For zucchini, heat butter in a small saucepan and sauté zucchini until soft. Season with salt and pepper, then serve with chicken and polenta garnished with finely chopped parsley.



HOMEMADE MARINARA

Ingredients:

Extra virgin olive oil
1 chicken liver (optional)
¼ cup basil pesto (or pureed basil and garlic)
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
¼ cup tomato paste
**32 oz. canned diced tomatoes (2 large cans-
San Marzano is best)**
salt and pepper
dash of sugar (optional)

Heat a few tablespoons oil in a large stockpot and sauté liver (*optional*) and pesto. Stir in vinegar, tomato paste and canned tomatoes, and season liberally with salt, pepper, and a dash of sugar. Bring sauce to a simmer then puree with an immersion blender until smooth. (*Use a regular blender if you don't have an immersion blender, then return sauce to pot.*) Simmer over low heat for 30-60 minutes. Use immediately or let cool and store in the refrigerator.

BASIL PESTO - BASE RECIPE

**This recipe is used as a base recipe for other recipes, and therefore is not prepared like a traditional basil pesto. This pesto is very basic and excludes pine nuts and lemon zest.*

Ingredients:

1 large bunch of basil
2-3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
salt and pepper
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Place basil and garlic in a small food processor or blender and season liberally with salt and pepper. Pulse until finely chopped, then continue pulsing while slowly drizzling in olive oil. Transfer pesto to a small storage container and stir in Parmesan until evenly mixed. Use immediately or store in refrigerator.