**January -Italian Nights**

**Mele con Salsa di Lampone**

8 to 10 servings

*Ingredients:*

2 cups raspberries (fresh or unsweetened frozen)

3 tbsp raspberry jam

2 tbsp sugar

¼ white dessert wine (such as Moscato)

1 to 2 tbsp raspberry vinegar (to taste)

8 to 10 medium Golden Delicious apples, peeled, cored, thinly sliced

Mascarpone cheese or unsweetened whipped cream

In a food processor or blender, puree the raspberries. Add the jam and sugar and pulse to blend. Add the wine and vinegar, and blend well. Put the apples slices in a large bowl, pour the sauce over, and mix gently to coat the apple slices. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for 1 hour. Spoon the fruit with its sauce into individual dessert bowls and top with a dollop of mascarpone cheese or whipped cream. Serve immediately.

**Mascarpone Mini Cupcakes with Strawberry Glaze**

48 mini muffins

*Ingredients:*

8oz mascarpone cheese, at room temperature

2 egg whites

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 box white cake mix

1/3 cup frozen strawberries, thawed and drained

2 ½ cup confectioners’ sugar

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line 4 mini muffin tins, a total of 48 mini muffins molds) with paper liners. In a large bowl, combine the mascarpone, egg whites, and vegetable oil. Using a hand mixer beat in ingredients until combined and creamy. Add the cake mix and 1 cup of water and mix until smooth, about 3 minutes. Fill the muffin liners to just below the rim and bake until puff and golden, 18 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven, let cool slightly in the tins, then transfer the cupcakes to a wire rack to cool completely. Meanwhile, puree the strawberries in a blender or small food processor. Sift the confectioners’ sugar and place in a medium bowl. Pour in the strawberry puree and whisk until smooth. Dip the tops of the cooled cupcakes into the strawberry glaze. Let the cupcakes sit for a few minutes for the glaze to firm up, then serve.

**That Good Salad**

*Ingredients:*

¾ cup vegetable oil

½ cup fresh lemon juice

2 each garlic cloves, minced

½ tsp salt

½ tsp pepper

2 lb romaine lettuce (2 bunches) torn

2 cups tomatoes, chopped

1 cup Swiss cheese (4oz) shredded

2/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted

½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated

8 strips bacon, cooked, crumbled

1 cup Caesar salad croutons

In a jar with tight-fitting lid, combine oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper; cover and shake well. Chill. In a bowl, toss romaine, tomatoes, Swiss cheese, almonds if desired, Parmesan cheese, and bacon. Shake dressing; all over salad and toss. Add croutons and serve immediately.

**Dutaluch Knots**

*Ingredients:*

6 eggs

1 cup sugar

1 cup Crisco

6 tsp baking powder

2 tsp lemon juice

2 tsp almond extract

2 tsp vanilla extract

2 tsp anise extract

Pinch of salt

2 cups flour

Mix eggs, sugar, and Crisco. Then add baking powder, lemon juice, salt, flour, almond, vanilla, or anise extract. Refrigerate. Roll dough into snake shapes and tie into a knot. A lot of flour is needed because the dough is sticky. Place knots on sprayed (Pam) or on parchment paper. Bake at 350° for about 12 minutes until slightly golden brown. For icing, stir together 1 ½ cups of confectioners’ sugar, 4 tbsp milk, and 1 tsp almond extract. Decorate with colored sprinkles.

**Chicken Caceiatore**

*Ingredients:*

1 ½ lb chicken breast meat. Cubed

¾ tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper

1 medium onion

½ green pepper

½ red pepper

2 cloves garlic

¼ cup broth

1 14oz can chopped tomatoes

Oregano

Parsley

Cook chicken with salt and pepper. Remove meat to a side dish. Add together until tender. Add broth, tomatoes, and seasoning. Add chicken and cook on low until flavors meld. Serve with garlic bread or over spaghetti.

**Chunky Garlic Tomato and Onion Italian Sauce**

*Ingredients:*

¾ cup onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed, minced

3 tbsp oil

6 cups chopped tomatoes (canned or 6 to 8 fresh peeled tomatoes)

1 can tomato paste

¾ cup dry red wine

¼ cup carrots, shredded

¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/3 cup fresh basil, chopped

1 tsp sugar

1 tsp salt

Heat oil in pan over medium heat; add onion, cook until tender. Stir in garlic, tomatoes, wine, carrots, parsley, basil, sugar, and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 1 ½ hours, stirring frequently, until sauce is thick. Serve with meatballs and pasta.

**Italian Meatballs**

*Ingredients:*

2 lb ground beef

2 eggs

2 cloves garlic

¼ cup seasoned bread crumbs

Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all the above ingredients together, form into balls and brown in pan. Add some water and stream for a half hour. Add to sauce and serve.

**Swirl-Nutella Pound Cake**

*Ingredients:*

1 ½ cup flour plus more for dusting

4 large eggs, room temperature

2 tsp vanilla

¾ tsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened

1 ¼ cup sugar

1 (13oz) jar Nutella

Preheat oven to 325°. Lightly grease and flour 9x5 inch loaf pan. In a small bowl, beat eggs and vanilla. In a medium bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, and salt. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar on medium high until fluffy for 3 minutes. On medium low, gradually beat in the egg mixture until fluffy incorporated. Add flour mixture in 3 batches, beating at a low speed until just incorporated. Continue to beat 30 seconds longer. Spread 1/3 of batter in pan, and then spread ½ of the Nutella on top. Repeat batter then Nutella then top with butter. Lightly swirl Nutella in batter with butter knife. Do not over mix. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes, until toothpick comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 15 minutes. Invert onto wire rack, turn right side up and let cool completely for 2 hours. Cut into slices.

**Creamy Orzo**

*Ingredients:*

1 lb orzo

2 tbsp olive oil

1 large shallot, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, minced

1 (14.5oz) can diced tomatoes, drained

1 ¼ cups whipping cream

1 cup frozen peas, thawed

¾ cup grated Parmesan

Salt and pepper

Cook orzo in salted, boiling water until tender about 8 minutes. Reserve 1 cup cooking water. Drain noodles. Heat oil in frying pan and sauté shallot and garlic about 2 minutes until tender. Add tomatoes, cook until tender about 8 minutes. Stir in cream and peas. Add orzo and toss to coat. Remove from heat. Add Parmesan and toss to coat. Stir pasta until sauce coats thickly, add enough reserved cooking water to maintain creamy consistency. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

**Veal and Tip Steak with Peppers and Mushrooms**

*Ingredients:*

Olive oil

Onion, sliced

Veal scallopini, thinly sliced

Breakfast tip steaks, thinly sliced

Red pepper, sliced

Mushrooms, sliced

Pinot Grigio, white wine

Salt

Put olive oil in pan. Cook onion in oil for a little bit. Then add veal and tip steak that was cut in small pieces. Cook until browned. Add red peppers and mushrooms. Cook until meat is done and peppers are soft. While cooking, add white wine and salt meat to taste.

**Suppa Quatta-Al La Julia Wild Rosemary**

*Ingredients:*

3 cup onion, diced

4oz butter

2 cup tomatoes, chopped

4 cup chicken broth

2 cup beef broth

Thyme

Pinch of sugar

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Salt/pepper

Handful of greens, i.e. spinach, arugula

2 lb Crostini slices

Fontina cheese, grated

Cut thick slices of good Italian bread, spread with a little olive oil, and toast for several minutes at 400°. In heavy large pot, heat butter. Add diced onion, thyme, and pinch of sugar. Sauté until caramelized, about 15 minutes. Add chicken and beef stock, tomatoes, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Simmer for 1 hour. Place crostini in Pam sprayed 9x13 dish, top with Fontina cheese. Poke holes in bread with end of wooden spoon. Pour onion mixture over bread and cheese, pressing down to saturate the bread. If room, add a second layer, ending with cheese on top. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes, until cheese is golden.

**Hot Anchovy-Flavored Dip**

6 to 8 servings

*Ingredients:*

¾ cup olive oil

3 tbsp butter

2 tsp garlic, finely chopped

8 to 10 anchovy fillets, chopped

1 tsp salt

Heat the oil and butter until the butter is thoroughly liquefied and barely begins to foam. (Do not wait for the foam to subside or the butter will be too hot) Add the garlic and sauté very briefly. It must not take on any color. Add the anchovies and cook over very low heat, stirring frequently, until the anchovies dissolve into a paste. Add the salt, stir, and bring to the table along with crusty Italian bread, carrots, celery, cabbage, cauliflower, red peppers, mushrooms, etc.

**Amazing Muffaletta Olive Salad**

20 servings

*Ingredients:*

1 (6oz) can black olives, drained, brine reserved

1 (6oz) can pimento-stuffed green olives, drained, brine reserved

1 (14oz) can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped

1 onion, chopped

3 stalks celery, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tbsp capers, rinsed, chopped

¼ cup Italian dressing

2 tbsp reserved olive brine or as needed

Salt and ground black pepper to taste.

Place the black olives, pimento stuffed green olives, artichoke hearts, onion, celery, garlic, and capers in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until the ingredients are uniform in size and no larger than a popcorn kernel. Stir in the Italian dressing. Add equal amounts of green and black olive brine as needed for a moist consistency. Season with salt and black pepper. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 12 hours before serving.

**Rapini Pasta**

*Ingredients:*

2 bunches of Rapini broccoli

1 lb of hot sausage bulk

1 lb of Penne pasta

Salt

½ cup olive oil

Cut the bottoms of the broccoli to the tender part of the broccoli stem. Wash and trim broccoli well to get sand off. Fill a large pot ¾ full of water and bring to a boil. Set another pot for pasta. Right before putting the broccoli into the pot, shake a good bit of salt into the water. Put all of the broccolis into the boiling water. Cook pasta until tender. Cook broccoli until you can squish it between your fingers. After 10 or 15 minutes, flip bunches over so the bottom broccolis now on top to cook evenly. Strain the broccoli and pasta, let broccoli continue to strain. Put the pasta back into hot pot. At the same time you are putting the pasta into the boiling water, prepare the sausage. Pour ½ cup of olive oil into skillet, medium hot, so that it makes a small amount of sauce at the bottom. Break the sausage up into nickel sized pieces and put into skillet. Fry until cooked. Pour sausage into pot with warm pasta. In a large bowl, pour sausage in, then the pot with the pasta and sausage. Serve.

**Amaretto Butter Balls**

24 cookies

*Ingredients for butter balls:*

1 cup butter

½ cup confectioners’ sugar

2 ½ cups all purpose flour

1 tsp salt

¼ cup amaretto liqueur

¾ almonds, finely chopped (optional)

½ cup confectioners’ sugar for rolling

Preheat oven to 350°. In a medium bowl, cream together the butter and ½ cup confectioners’ sugar until smooth. Stir in the flour and salt until well blended, and then mix in the amaretto liqueur. Fold in chopped almonds if desired. Roll the dough into walnut sized balls. Place the cookies 2 inches apart onto the cookie sheet. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in a preheated oven. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely. Roll cookies in remaining ½ cup confectioners’ sugar while still warm.

*Ingredients for amaretto liqueur:*

1 cup water

1 cup white sugar

½ cup brown sugar

2 cups vodka

2 tbsp almond extract

2 tsp vanilla extract

Combine water and sugars in a sauce pan over medium heat. Heat until the mixture is boiling, and all of the sugar is dissolved. Remove the pan from the heat and let the mixture cool for 10 minutes. Stir vodka, almond extract into the mixture. Store in a sealed bottle.

**Italian Wafers**

4 dozen wafers

*Ingredients:*

½ cup butter, softened

½ cup (2oz) shredded mozzarella cheese

¼ cup (1oz) grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

1 cup all purpose flour

½ tsp dried whole oregano

Pinch of salt

Dash of red pepper

1 tbsp diced pimiento

Combine first three ingredients in a large bowl, stirring to mix. Stir in flour and next three ingredients. Add diced pimiento, and mix well. Divide dough in half; shape into two 6 inch rolls. Cover and chill several hours or overnight. Slice dough into ¼ inch slices; place on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake wafers at 375° for 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer wafers to wire racks, and let cool completely.

**Potato Gnocchi**

6 to 8 servings

*Ingredients:*

2 lbs yellow fleshed potatoes, such as Yukon Gold, unpeeled

Salt to taste

1 ¾ cups unbleached all purpose flour

Tomato sauce or ragu and grated cheese to dress gnocchi

Place potatoes on a vegetable rack over a large pot of boiling water. Stream until tender all the way through but not falling apart. It is important that the potatoes not be overcooked. If overdone, they will absorb too much water and take up so much flour that the gnocchi will sink like heavy little stones to the stomach. As soon as potatoes are tender, remove from rack, peel them, and pass them through the vegetable mill into a large bowl. Do not put through food processor. Add a healthy pinch of salt and all the flour to the potatoes, working in the flour with a wooden spoon; then knead the dough gently for about 5 minutes on a lightly floured board or wooden surface. Taste and knead in more salt if needed, but be careful not to overwork the dough, it should be soft and supple. Divide the dough into 6 to 8 pieces. Roll each piece into a snake about ¾ inches in diameter and 8 to 10 inches long. Cut each snake into regular pieces about ¾ inches long. Continue until all the dough has been rolled and cut. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a rolling boil and drop in the gnocchi. Do this in two batches if it is easier. Boil the gnocchi until they rise to the top, then remove them with a slotted skimmer and transfer them to a heated platter or bowl. Serve with ragu and grated cheese.

**Braised Sweet Pepper Stew**

6 to 8 servings

*Ingredients:*

6 sweet bell peppers, red, yellow, and green

2 medium yellow onions, halved and thinly sliced

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

3 ripe medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

Cut the peppers in lengthwise strips about ¾ inches wise, discarding cores, seeds, and white membranes. In a saucepan large enough to hold all the ingredients, gently sauté the onion slices in the oil over medium low heat until the onion is soft and golden but not brown, about 10 minutes. Add the pepper slices with a little salt and pepper to taste, cover the pan, and cook for about 20 minutes, or until the peppers are soft and just starting to brown. Remove the cover and raise the heat slightly to medium or medium high. Stir in the tomatoes and continue cooking, stirring frequently, an additional 10 minutes, or until the tomatoes are just starting to break down into a sauce. If the tomatoes release a great deal of water, raise the heat to high and cook rapidly, stirring constantly, until the juices is reduced. Serve immediately or allow to cool to room temperature.

**Antipasto Misto**

4 servings

*Ingredients:*

4oz Italian salami, finely sliced

12 each, black and green olives

4 hard boil eggs

1 small can anchovies in oil

2oz raw button mushrooms, sliced

1 can red pimento

3oz cooked green beans, French or snap

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp lemon juice

Seasoning to taste

Arrange the salami and olives on a long platter. Cut the eggs into wedges and stand on top of the salami. Drape the drained anchovies over the eggs. Put the mushrooms into a bowl. Chop the pimento and add to the bowl with green beans. Beat the oil, lemon juice, and seasoning well together. Add to the mushroom mixture and toss well. Arrange in small heaps round the edge of the platter.

**Antipasto di Peperoni e Pomodori**

4 servings

*Ingredients:*

4 pickled red and yellow pimentos

4 large tomatoes, skinned, sliced

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp lemon juice

Seasoning to taste

1 small onion, chopped

1 heaped tbsp parsley, finely, chopped

Cut the pimentos into strips and arrange on a platter, then top with tomato slices. Beat the oil, lemon juice, and seasoning well together and pour over the pimentos and tomatoes. Sprinkle with onion and parsley.