

This recipe was brought to the United States in the early 1900's by Maria Teresa Marsala (Nannie), an immigrant of Sicily who came to this country with her husband John, by way of Ellis Island, NY (although it's in NJ now). NOTE: If you ask for Spadini or stuffed mushrooms in a Tuscan or restaurant, I guarantee that you will be disappointed! Sicilian only!

Nannie's Basic Spadini Stuffing

Can be cooked ahead, portioned, freezes well

2 lbs onions chopped well and sautéed until caramelized

12oz.(large) can tomato paste

1 can water

½ to ¾ cup grated Romano or Locatelli Cheese which are made with sheep's milk. Do not use Parmesan because it's made from cow's milk and isn't very strong.

Parsley Flakes

Salt and Pepper to taste (maybe but the cheese is salty)

Spadini on barbeque or broiled

add ¼ to ½ cup plain bread crumbs to ¼ of the above.

Using thinly sliced top sirloin or beef cutlets:

Spread on batter, roll and secure with skewer

Drizzle skewered meat with oil to coat lightly.

Rest skewers on bay leaves for 10 minutes each side (whole, the bay leaves cut/coke and are dangerous)

Dust with bread crumbs, s/p and broil or BBQ

Stuffed fresh whole mushrooms or artichoke bottoms (canned OK) or peppers

add bread crumbs (I like it this way for mushrooms or artichokes)

and/or add sauté chop meat or brown loose sausage meat (or take out of packing) I like peppers stuffed this way.

Place in a pan coated with olive oil. Bake at 375 until tender and the top is toasted. Check after 10 minutes.

Sloppy Joes

Basic + meat.

Chicken/Turkey Stuffing

Eliminate bread crumbs. Add 2 ½ cups cooked rice to each ½ portion of basic stuffing plus browned chopped beef or browned loose sausage.

Enjoy my grandmothers recipe. --- Maria TMarsala www.MariaMarsala.com

Sicilian Recipes NOT FAMILY recipes

These are recipes found on Sicilian Websites. I was looking for things I enjoyed eating as a child, where the family recipes have been lost.

Potato Croquettes

INGREDIENTS

Potatoes
Unseasoned Bread Crumbs
Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Eggs
Salt & Pepper

Boil your potatoes and then cut into small pieces so you can put them through a ricer. Add salt, chopped prosciutto, grated cheese, eggs and mix together well. Roll into miniature logs and roll in flour, then put into the eggwash, then roll gently in the unseasoned breadcrumbs until completely covered. Fry in extra virgin olive oil (about 3650F) until light golden brown.

From Sicilian Culture website

The Pisani Family's Marinated Eggplant

From Italian Cooking and Living, October/November 2002

This recipe can be doubled or tripled depending on how much you want to make.

3 small mason jars
3 medium- to large-sized eggplants
salt
1 quart white vinegar
1 head garlic, cloves peeled and chopped
1 small bunch fresh mint
3/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 small bunch oregano
1 quart extra-virgin olive oil
2 small, long hot red peppers, diced

Sterilize mason jars by boiling them in hot water or by running them through the dishwasher. Peel, slice and julienne eggplants. Put one layer of strips in a large colander, and sprinkle with salt. Repeat with additional layers of eggplant, and salt until all slices have been prepared. Place colander in the sink, add a plate and then weights to the top. Drain, at least 5 hours or overnight.

Boil the drained eggplant in white vinegar until al dente. Spread on a baking sheet, and cover with plastic wrap until cool. Using a ricer, carefully squeeze out all excess liquid without pushing eggplant through the ricer holes. Place eggplant in a large pot. Add all seasonings except diced hot peppers until the seasonings overpower the scent of the vinegar. Place enough olive oil on the bottom of each jar to cover (about 1/8 to 1/4 inch). Add eggplant, and fill to the rim with more olive oil. Add diced hot peppers.

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Amaretto Cookies
© Anna Maria Volpi

Ingredients

18 oz (500 gr) whole almonds, blanched
11 oz (300 gr) sugar
rind of 1 lemon, grated
3 egg whites
3-4 drops bitter almond extract

Method

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).

Place the almonds in a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Run the blade until the almonds are ground.

Add the sugar and continue to run the blade until the mixture is reduced to a very fine paste. Transfer to a bowl.

Beat the egg whites until forming peaks. Add the egg whites to the almond paste, mixing thoroughly with a spatula.

Combine the grated lemon rind and the bitter almond extract.

Line a cookie sheet or flat oven pan with parchment paper.

Form small balls the size of a walnut, place them on the pan approximately 2" (5 cm) apart.

Wet a kitchen towel, and pat lightly the top of the cookies, to make them smooth.

Bake for about 25 minutes or until light golden color.

Italian Amaretti Cookies

"These are served at weddings, christenings and family get-togethers."--Mary Sorci

Origin: Italian

Ingredients:

3/4 cup almonds

1/4 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. almond extract

2 egg whites

1 cup sugar

Preparation:

Cover cookie sheet with a cut brown paper bag. Blanch almonds and grind fine. Beat egg whites and salt until frothy. Add sugar 1 teaspoon at a time, beat until stiff peaks form. Fold in almonds and extract. Drop by teaspoon onto brown paper. Keep them small and uniform in size. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes until very light in color. Makes 3 dozen.

8 ounces (225 grams) canned almond paste

1 cup (200 grams) superfine or castor sugar

2 large (60 grams) egg whites

Extra granulated white sugar for dusting cookies

Note: Make your own superfine sugar by processing regular granulated white sugar in your food processor for about 30 seconds or until sugar is ground very fine.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) and line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Have ready a pastry bag fitted with a 1/2 inch (1.25 cm) plain tip.

Using Food Processor: Break the almond paste into small pieces and place in bowl of food processor, with the sugar. Pulse until the mixture is very fine. Add the egg whites in three additions, processing well after each addition. Continue processing the dough until very smooth (about one minute).

Using Electric Mixer: Break the almond paste into small pieces and place in bowl of electric mixer along with the sugar. Mix on low speed until very fine. Add the egg whites in three additions, mixing well after each addition. Continue mixing the dough until very smooth, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Fill the pastry bag with the almond mixture. Pipe 1 1/2 inch (3.75 cm) mounds onto the parchment paper, spacing about 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart. After you have filled the baking sheet with cookie mounds, take a damp paper towel and lightly press the top of each cookie to smooth out the surface (you want to smooth out the tip of dough at the top of each cookie caused from piping). Lightly sprinkle a little sugar on top of each cookie.

Bake for 15 minutes, or until the cookies have risen, are a deep golden color and have tiny cracks. Remove from the oven and place baking pan on a rack to cool. When cool gently peel cookies from parchment. If they stick to parchment, turn the paper over, take a damp paper towel and gently wipe the bottom of the parchment paper to loosen the cookie.

Makes 3 1/2 dozen.

Adapted from Great Italian Desserts by Nick Malgieri

1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
3 (7 ounce) tubes almond paste
1 teaspoon grated lemon or orange zest
4 egg whites
2 tablespoons confectioners sugar

Spray baking sheets with no-stick cooking spray and preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Combine granulated sugar, almond paste and orange zest using an electric mixer. Add the egg whites and beat until totally combined and smooth. Dough should be soft. Using a pastry tube, pipe 1/2-inch dots of dough 2 inches apart on a baking sheet. If you don't have a pastry tube or prefer not to use it, you can shape the cookies by using 2 spoons to make scant 1 tablespoon mounds of dough on the baking sheet.

Bake 10 minutes or until golden and set. Let sit on pan 5 minutes to cool. Remove to wire racks. Sprinkle with confectioners sugar.

Makes about 200 cookies using a pastry bag; 40 cookies using spoons.

Per cookie shaped with pastry bag: 20 calories, 37 percent calories from fat, .34 grams protein, 3 grams carbohydrates, .14 gram total fiber, .83 gram total fat, no cholesterol, 1 milligram sodium

Per cookie shaped with spoon: 100 calories, 37 percent calories from fat, 2 grams protein, 15 grams carbohydrates, .72 gram total fiber, 4 grams total fat, no cholesterol, 7 milligrams sodium

If Grandma finds out... I'm a dead Italian! :) Shhhhh.

Another one that is done by my mother is:

Try these popular Italian cookies at home. Your guests won't believe you made them yourself. (Hint: the Italian plural is amaretti.)

They're wonderful dunked in hot coffee or served alongside a custard or mousse.

Estimated Time(s)

Preparation Time: 15 min

Cooking Time: 12 min

1/2 cup butter, room temperature

2 tablespoons molasses

2 eggs

1 cup ground almonds

1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel

1 teaspoon almond extract

1/2 cup amaretto liqueur

1 cup whole wheat flour

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a bowl, with an electric mixer on medium speed, cream together butter and molasses.

Add eggs, almonds, lemon peel and almond extract; mix well.

Stir in amaretto liqueur alternately with whole wheat flour. Drop by teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown.

From Sicilian Culture.com

Chestnuts

If you are doing these in the oven (yea, I know, Nat King Cole, chestnuts roasting on an open fire, but if you want them to come out right, consistent, and cut out a lot of guess work, use the oven)

Preheat the oven to 450F.
Wash the chestnuts.

Take a steak knife, or one that is sharp enough to pierce the shell, and make a cross or X in them, one horizontal line, one diagonal one.

On a baking sheet, put down a piece of aluminum foil and place the chestnuts facing up where the cuts are.

Lower oven to 350F

Cook for 20 to 25 minutes. But look at after 10 minutes for burning.

When serving/eating, be sure to peel off the outer shell, as well as the thinner shell/lining covering the nut. Always look for anything odd like fungus, it happens, but that's the tradition, trying to find a pearl in an oyster, or in this case, a good chestnut in its shell.

#2

For those insisting on doing it the old fashioned way, split the shell with an X and hold them over the hot coals of a fire (popcorn popper works well) for about 10 to 15 minutes. If you do not pierce the shells with an X, you will have a real mess on your hands once they explode.