



# An Italian Buffet

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## *Tuscan Pastries*

*Artichoke and Mushroom Lasagna*

*Penne alla Vodka*

*Italian Stew Osso Buco Style Orzo*

*Tri-Pepper Salad Parmesan Pita Crostini*

*Green Beans with Balsamic Butter*

*Quick Tiramisu or Frozen Cream Baskets with Strawberries*

### **TUSCAN PASTRIES**

3/4 cup (175 mL) milk	1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) cayenne pepper
3 tbsp (40 mL) butter	Dash freshly ground nutmeg
1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) oregano, crumbled	3/4 cup (175 mL) flour
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt	3 eggs
1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) freshly ground pepper	1/4 cup (50 mL) shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Combine first 7 ingredients (milk through nutmeg) in a medium saucepan. Bring mixture to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and add flour all at once. Stir until mixture is smooth and pulls away from sides of pan forming a ball, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and cool 5 minutes. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until mixture is smooth and glossy. Stir in cheese. Place mixture in a pastry bag fitted with a star tip. Pipe small mounds of dough 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart onto a greased cookie sheet. Alternatively, dough may be dropped from a spoon onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 400°F (200°C) for 22 - 25 minutes or until puffed and golden. Serve warm or at room temperature. Pastries may be cooled on racks and frozen for up to 1 month. Reheat pastries at 350°F (180°C) until heated through, about 10 minutes. **Yield:** 3 - 3 1/2 dozen pastries.

### **PENNE ALLA VODKA**

1 cup (250 mL) finely chopped onion	2/3 cup (150 mL) vodka
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped	1 can (14 oz/398 mL) crushed tomatoes
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt	1 cup (250 mL) whipping cream
1/4 tsp (1 mL) freshly ground pepper	16 oz (500 g) penne pasta, cooked and drained
1/4 tsp (1 mL) red pepper flakes	2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp (25 mL) olive oil	Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

To prepare sauce, sauté onion, garlic, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes in oil for 5 minutes. Stir in vodka and simmer 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and cream. Simmer gently over low heat for 5 minutes. Place hot cooked pasta in a bowl and toss with sauce. Sprinkle with parsley. Serve with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately. Serves 4 - 6.

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## ARTICHOKE AND MUSHROOM LASAGNA

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| 2 cups (500 mL) sliced fresh mushrooms                             | 1 pkg (10 oz/300 g) frozen chopped spinach,<br>thawed and squeezed dry |
| 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped                                    |  |
| 2 tbsp (25 mL) butter  | 9 lasagna noodles, cooked and drained                                  |
| 2 cans (14 oz/398 mL each) artichoke<br>hearts, drained and sliced | Bechamel Sauce, recipe follows   |
| 1 cup (250 mL) dry white wine                                      | 3 cups (750 mL) shredded mozzarella cheese                             |

In a frypan, sauté mushrooms and garlic in butter until mushrooms are golden brown, about 5 - 7 minutes. Stir in artichokes and wine. Cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is absorbed. Stir in spinach. Place 3 noodles on bottom of a greased 9x13 inch (23x33 cm) baking dish. Spoon half of artichoke mixture over noodles. Pour one-third of Bechamel Sauce over artichoke mixture and sprinkle with 1 cup (250 mL) cheese. Repeat layering procedure once. Top with remaining noodles, Bechamel Sauce and cheese. May be prepared to this point and refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Bake, covered, at 350°F (180°C) for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake 15 minutes longer or until light golden in colour and lasagna is bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Serves 8 - 10.

### **Bechamel Sauce**

In a medium saucepan, melt 1/4 cup (50 mL) butter over medium heat. Add 1/4 cup (50 mL) flour; cook and stir for 1 minute. Gradually stir in 4 cups (1 L) homo milk. Stir in 1/4 tsp (1 mL) each salt and freshly ground pepper and 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) freshly ground nutmeg. Cook over low heat, stirring frequently, until sauce is thickened. If desired, stir in 2 cups (500 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese until melted. Remove from heat.

## ITALIAN STEW OSSO BUCO STYLE

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| 1/4 cup (50 mL) flour                         | 1 can (10 oz/284 mL) beef broth     |
| 1/4 tsp (1 mL) paprika                        | 1 can (14 oz/398 mL) diced tomatoes |
| 3/4 tsp (3 mL) salt, divided                  | 2 cups (500 mL) small carrot sticks |
| 3/4 tsp (3 mL) freshly ground pepper, divided | 1 cup (250 mL) sliced celery        |
| 2 lb (1 kg) pork or veal, cubed               | 1/4 tsp (1 mL) thyme, crumbled      |
| 1/4 cup (50 mL) olive oil, divided            | 2 bay leaves                        |
| 2 cups (500 mL) sliced onions                 | 2 long strips lemon peel            |
| 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped               | Gremolata, recipe follows           |
| 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) dry white wine            |                                     |

Combine flour, paprika and 1/4 tsp (1 mL) each salt and pepper in a plastic bag. Add pork to flour mixture and toss to coat. Reserve any remaining flour mixture in bag. Heat 2 tbsp (25 mL) oil in a Dutch oven. Add pork in batches and brown on all sides. Remove pork from pan; keep warm. Heat remaining 2 tbsp (25 mL) oil in pan. Add onions and garlic and sauté 5 minutes. Stir in reserved flour mixture until blended. Gradually stir in wine. Add pork and remaining 1/2 tsp (2 mL) each salt and pepper. Stir in next 7 ingredients (broth through lemon peel). Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer, stirring occasionally until pork is tender and stew is thickened, about 1 hour. Remove bay leaves. Stew may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Reheat over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with Gremolata and serve. Serves 8.

### **Gremolata**

Combine 2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh parsley, 1 tsp (5 mL) grated lemon peel and 1 clove finely chopped garlic. Sprinkle over stew.

### **TRI-PEPPER SALAD**

1/2 cup (125 mL) olive oil	6 bell peppers (2 each of green, red and yellow), thinly sliced
1/4 cup (50 mL) red wine vinegar	3 cups (750 mL) sliced fresh mushrooms
1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh parsley	2 cups (500 mL) thinly sliced red onions
1 clove garlic, finely chopped	2 cups (500 mL) thinly sliced celery
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt	1 cup (250 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp (2 mL) freshly ground pepper	

To prepare dressing, whisk together oil, vinegar, parsley, garlic, salt and pepper. Combine remaining ingredients (bell peppers through Parmesan cheese) in a large bowl. Toss with dressing to coat. Cover and refrigerate until serving or for up to 4 hours. Serves 10 - 12.

### **PARMESAN PITA CROSTINI**

4 pita bread	1/2 cup (125 mL) mayonnaise
1 cup (250 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese	1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) Italian seasoning, crumbled
	1 tsp (5 mL) fresh lemon juice

Cut each pita into 6 wedges. Combine Parmesan cheese, mayonnaise, Italian seasoning and lemon juice. Spread mixture evenly over one side of each wedge. Place wedges, cheese side up, on two jelly-roll pans. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 12 - 15 minutes. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 24 crostini.

### **GREEN BEANS WITH BALSAMIC BUTTER**

1/2 cup (125 mL) balsamic vinegar	1/4 cup (50 mL) butter, softened
2 tbsp (25 mL) finely chopped onion	6 cups (1.5 L) trimmed green beans

Combine vinegar and onion in a small nonreactive saucepan. Bring to a boil. Boil over medium heat, stirring frequently, until liquid is reduced to 1 tbsp (15 mL). Transfer mixture to a small bowl; cool. Blend in butter. May be prepared to this point and refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Cook beans in boiling salted water until tender, about 6 minutes; drain. Add butter mixture to beans and toss until butter is melted. Serve immediately. Serves 8.

### **QUICK TIRAMISU**

1 cup (250 mL) ricotta cheese	24 - 32 ladyfingers
8 oz (250 g) cream cheese, softened	1/2 cup (125 mL) coffee liqueur
1/2 cup (125 mL) sugar	1 tbsp (15 mL) cocoa
1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla	

Combine ricotta cheese, cream cheese, sugar and vanilla in a food processor; process until smooth. Cover bottom of an 8 inch (20 cm) square glass baking dish with a single layer of ladyfingers; drizzle with half of coffee liqueur. Spread half of cheese mixture over ladyfingers. Repeat layering procedure with remaining ladyfingers, liqueur and cheese mixture. Sift cocoa over top. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours. Serves 6 - 8.

## **FROZEN CREAM BASKETS WITH STRAWBERRIES**

8 oz (250 g) cream cheese, softened  
3/4 cup (175 mL) sugar  
1/4 cup (50 mL) amaretto or orange liqueur

1 cup (250 mL) whipping cream, whipped  
Frozen sweetened strawberries, thawed

Using medium speed of an electric mixer, beat together cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Beat in amaretto. Fold in whipped cream. Spoon 8 - 10 rounded mounds of mixture onto a foil-lined cookie sheet. Using back of a spoon, make a depression in center of each mound to form a basket. Freeze baskets until firm, about 4 hours. Remove foil from baskets. Use immediately or place frozen baskets in a single layer in an airtight container. Keep frozen for up to 2 weeks. To serve, place each frozen basket on an individual serving plate or in a sherbet glass. Spoon strawberries into center of each basket. Serve immediately. Serves 8 - 10.

**Preparation Tip:** To make cream baskets, a hinged ice cream scoop may be used to make even mounds.