

Dinner and A Book Episode #510

Menu:

Mozzarella and Tomatoes
Pasta e Fagioli
Sausage and Peppers
Zabaglioni
Wedding Cookies
Chianti

Recipes:

Mozzarella and Tomatoes- Serves 4-6

1-pound fresh mozzarella
2 large fresh tomatoes
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Slice the cheese and tomatoes about 1/4 inch thick. Place on a plate in a circular pattern. Drizzle the olive oil over the tomatoes and mozzarella and season with salt and pepper.

Pasta e Fagioli- Serves 8

3 cups cooked cannelloni (white kidney) beans
10 cups water
Salt to taste
1-cup olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
4 cups cooked pasta such as orecchiette
1/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or Romano
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large saucepan, combine the beans, water, salt, oil, onion and parsley. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, or until the beans are tender. Add the pasta and allow to simmer another 10 minutes. Toss the beans and pasta together in a large bowl with the cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve in bowls and sprinkle with cheese.

Sausage and Peppers- Serves 8

3 pounds Italian sausage, mild or hot, cut into large (3-4inch) chunks

8 green, red and yellow peppers, sliced into wide strips
2 large onions, sliced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Using a bit of water and just the fat from the sausage itself, cook sausage in a skillet. Just before it begins to brown, add the vegetables and season with the salt and pepper. Serve with a good, hearty bread and a salad.

Zabaglione

5 egg yolks
1 whole egg
2 Tablespoons sugar
1/2 cup Marsala wine

In the top of the double boiler, place the egg yolks, whole egg and sugar. Set over a simmering pot of water. Beat, by hand, with a wire whisk until the mixture is yellow and frothy.

Gradually blend in the Marsala, a small amount at a time.

Continue using the whisk, over the simmering water, until the mixture increases in volume. This should take no more than 10 minutes.

When the mixture holds its shape on a spoon, it is ready to serve. Serve warm in dessert bowls or in stemware.

Wedding Cookies- Makes 3 dozen

Pastry:

1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter
1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted margarine
1-cup sugar
1/2-cup milk
3 1/4 to 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
Pinch of salt
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
5 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, cream the butter, margarine, sugar and eggs together. Add the almond extract, milk, flour, salt, and baking powder.

Keeping your hands wet, shape a piece of dough into a ball. Bake on an ungreased baking sheet for 13 minutes, or until lightly brown. Cool.

Icing:

1/2-pound (1/2 box) confectioners' sugar
2 tablespoons butter
1-tablespoon milk, plus more if needed
Almond flavoring to taste
Food coloring, if desired.

Colors are added to match the wedding colors of the bride.

Shredded sweetened coconut, for dipping.

For a perfect Italian dinner, use colorful Italian pottery and play a CD of Luciano Pavarotti, Andrea Bocelli or Dean Martin.