



Luncheon in Umbria

Eggplant Caponata
Bruschetta

Insalata Caprese

Umbrian Turkey Breast
Baked Fennel with Prosciutto

Chocolate Peppermint Torte



Hosted by Nancy, Betsy, Judy & Lynn
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Pat's Eggplant Caponata

(from a friend of Lynn's)

½ cup olive oil
1 large onion, chopped (1½ cups)
1 large stalk celery cut in ½" cubes
1 small eggplant (¾ lb) cut in ½" cubes
½ pint cherry tomatoes quartered
½ cup quartered pitted black olives
½ cup quartered pimento green olives
1 8 oz. can tomato sauce
½ cup sugar
½ cup tomato paste
½ cup red wine vinegar
1½ tsp salt
1 tsp dried basil
¾ tsp pepper



1. Place olive oil and onion in a large microwave safe bowl. Cover with plastic wrap. Turn back one corner to vent. Microwave 6 minutes on HIGH stirring every 2 minutes.
2. Add celery to onion; cover and vent. Microwave 3 minutes on HIGH. Stir in eggplant; cover and vent. Microwave 6 minutes on HIGH stirring every 2 minutes.
3. Add remaining ingredients; cover and vent. Microwave on HIGH until boiling, about 10 minutes, stirring every 3 minutes. Let stand covered, stirring occasionally until cooled.

Keeps in refrigerator 1 month. Makes about 4½ cups.

Hailey's Special and Amazing Bruschetta

(from Betsy's daughter)

Ingredients:

Trader Joe's Parmesan and Garlic Crackers
Fresh basil
Ripe, juicy cherry tomatoes or other small tomato varietal
Extra virgin olive oil
Gorgonzola cheese (sliced, if possible, although crumbled will work)

Clean and separate basil leaves from stems. Dry leaves.

Slice tomatoes into thin, small wheels and slice gorgonzola cheese into thin slices.

Arrange crackers on a cookie sheet and layer the cheese, tomatoes and basil on top. Drizzle with olive oil, and salt and pepper each slice. Place under the broiler for 3-5 minutes (watch closely) until cheese melts and tomatoes start to shrivel. Remove from broiler and allow to cool before serving. Blot on a paper towel if there is excess oil on edges of crackers.

Yummy!!

Insalata Caprese

Ingredients:

Large ripe tomatoes (preferably vine ripened Beefsteak or Heirloom varietal)

Fresh, cleaned whole basil leaves, de-stemmed

**True Italian Bufala Mozzarella* made from water buffalo's milk (hard to find, but worth the effort!)

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Slice the tomatoes and cheese into equal thickness and stack tomato, cheese and a large basil leaf together. Artfully layer these colorful stacks in a ring on a serving platter. Add fresh salt and pepper to taste. Just before serving, drizzle olive oil over all.

**This mozzarella is entirely different from the rubbery kind we get here. If you cannot find the authentic stuff (or don't want to pay the price) get fresh, whole milk mozzarella from dairy cows packed in brine. Never uses the yellow, rubbery stuff packed in plastic wrap! Bufala Mozzarella can be found at Costco and other specialty cheese stores.*



Umbrian Butterflied Turkey Breast

(from Nancy & Sheree's cooking class in Umbria)

Butterflied and pounded turkey breast (have your butcher do it)
Bottle of white wine (you are going to taste it in the sauce, so choose something you like)
Olive oil
10-12 ounces of tapenade (my class made it from scratch - I purchased it)
1/2 - 3/4 lb pecorino cheese
rosemary springs
salt and pepper

Spread the butterflied turkey breast out flat. Pound between pieces of waxed paper to make it as even a thickness as you can.

Spread the tapenade over the breast.
Cover this with slices of pecorino cheese.
Salt and pepper to your own taste.

Starting at the thinnest end, roll the turkey breast like a jelly roll.

Tie the breast together with cooking twine. Stick the rosemary sprigs under the twine in several places

Pour some olive oil into a roasting pan and set the tied breast in the pan.

Drizzle more olive oil over the turkey breast.
Pour two cups of white wine over the breast.

Place the turkey in a preheated 400 degree oven.



Every 15 - 20 minutes pour a bit more wine over the turkey.
Bake until internal temperature is 165 degrees. Take out and let it rest for 20 minutes before slicing. The temperature should rise to 170 degrees. (4 lb boneless breast took about 1 hr 30 minutes)

Remove the string and slice.

Heat the wine and olive oil left in the pan over medium heat. Add 1T cornstarch mixed with 1T or a bit more wine. Stir until thickened. Drizzle over the slices of turkey.

Many glasses of wine were consumed while our group of 13 cooked together in Umbria. Some of us remember a layer of baked radicchio being spread on top of the tapenade under the cheese, and some of us don't remember it at all. I have made this three times without the radicchio, experimenting with different tapenades. I haven't made a version my family did not like. If you are feeling adventurous, bake some radicchio drenched in olive oil with salt and pepper sprinkled on it (I don't know how long or at what temperature, but I remember the olive oil part- lots!) and spread it on the tapenade with the cheese on top of the radicchio. And let me know what you think!

Nancy



Baked Fennel with Prosciutto

(from "Lydia's Italy by Lydia Matticchio Bastianich)

2½ pounds fresh fennel, trimmed and cut into wedges
3 oz. thinly sliced prosciutto (preferably di Parma or di San Daniele)
1/3 cup melted butter
½ tsp coarse sea salt or kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 cup freshly grated Grana Padano or Parmigiano Reggiano

Bring about 4 quarts of water to boil in a large pot. Drop in the fennel wedges and cook at a gentle boil for 10 to 15 minutes, just until you can pierce them with a sharp knife tip. Lift out wedges and drain well.

Cut prosciutto slices crosswise into strips about ¼ inch wide. Set a rack in the middle of the oven; preheat to 350 degrees.

Coat bottom of a 9 x 13 inch baking dish with a tablespoon or two of melted butter. Lay fennel wedges in one layer, filling the dish, and scatter prosciutto strips over and in between wedges. Add salt and pepper. Drizzle remaining butter over all. Finally, sprinkle over it the grated cheese, covering whole dish evenly.

Bake 25 minutes, or until top is crusty and golden and edges of prosciutto and fennel are also colored and crisp.



Chocolate Peppermint Torte

Chocolate crumb crust:

1 C choc. wafer crumbs (I chop Oreos in my Cuisinart)
2 T melted butter
Mix together and pat into a 9" spring form pan.
Bake at 350 for 7 minutes

Filling

½ C butter or margarine (I use butter)
¾ C sugar
3oz melted unsweetened chocolate (I microwave it to melt. It may be melted after 1 min on high, but it holds its shape, so microwave and stir, then microwave more if needed)
1 t vanilla
¾ t peppermint extract
3 eggs
½ C whipped cream (I measure ½ C then whip it)

Beat butter and sugar until fluffy.

Add and beat the melted unsweetened chocolate, vanilla and peppermint extract until well blended.

Add the eggs one at a time and beat each 3 (three!) minutes.

Fold in the whipped cream.

Spoon into crust; cover and chill in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours.

