

Fresh peas make these Italian dishes sparkle

Many Americans identify spaghetti and meatballs, veal parmesan and pizza as favorite Italian foods, but these dishes are not as quintessentially Italian as we have come to believe.

Even the carefully tended sauces that simmer for hours in the kitchens of Italian-American households are considerably different from the lighter tomato sauces used in traditional Italian cooking.

In her new book "Italian Fast & Fresh" (Harper & Row, \$15.95), Julie Dannebaum provides a sampling of these two related, yet distinctly separate, culinary traditions.

Having spent the past nine summers as a cooking instructor at the Grillo Palace Hotel in Venice, Dannebaum has had extensive contact with Italian

chefs, and this association has given her a first-hand knowledge of regional Italian cooking.

DANNEBAUM DISCUSSES the similarities and differences between the styles of cooking she observed at Grillo and the Italian-American cooking that she was exposed to during her childhood in Philadelphia.

She also discusses their connections to a common culture and a common way of cooking, and she shows that Americanized Italian food has evolved after years of gradual adjustments and "tinkering" with recipes.

It is evident that Dannebaum has a love for both types of Italian food. Dannebaum reminisces about learning

from Italian chefs as warmly as she recounts fond memories of the pungent smells that emanated from the home of Mrs. Pellegrino, an Italian-American neighbor from whom she first learned of the joys of Italian food.

Dannebaum proclaims that, whether "in Italy or America, Italian food is fun food."

HER RECIPES can be made in an hour or less, which makes for relaxed meal preparation as well as enjoyable dining and, although she sometimes offers information on the origin of a recipe, or an explanation of the differences between Italian and Italian-American preparation methods, Dannebaum presents both cooking styles with equal gusto.

Dannebaum's recipe for Fettuccine with Shrimp and Fresh Peas, reprinted here, is an ideal way to take advantage of fresh peas that are at their peak during the late spring and early summer or fall. Also reprinted is a recipe for Chicken Breasts with Sausage which combines the delicacy of tender chicken breasts with the distinctive flavoring of sweet Italian sausage.

CHICKEN BREASTS WITH SAUSAGE
3 whole chicken breasts, skinned, boned, and halved
2 tbsp. oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, chopped

1/2 lb. sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
1/4 cup fresh bread crumbs
1 tsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 tsp. chopped rosemary
Salt and fresh pepper to taste
4 tbsp. butter

8 finger-size pieces mozzarella or Fontina
1/4 cup dry white wine
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Flatten the 6 pieces of chicken by pounding with a wet mallet or pound between sheets of wax paper or foil.

Heat the garlic in a skillet. When hot, add the onion, garlic, and sausage meat. Cook, while stirring with wooden spatula, for about 5 minutes, or until the sausage is cooked through. Using a slotted spoon, remove the mixture to a bowl. Pour off the fat.

Mix the bread crumbs, parsley and rosemary with the sausage. Season with salt and pepper.

Melt the butter in the same skillet. When the foam subsides, sauté the chicken pieces, a few at a time, about 2 minutes a side.

Remove the chicken pieces. Lay them on a board or countertop and divide the filling evenly. Lay cheese on each. Roll up the chicken, tucking in the edges. Tie to secure or fasten with toothpicks. Lay in a baking dish, seam side down.

Add the wine and lemon juice to the skillet. Boil up to deglaze. Swirl around over heat for 1-2 minutes. Pour over the chicken. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Remove strings or toothpicks.
Serves 6.

FETTUCCINE WITH SHRIMP AND FRESH PEAS

1 1/2 lbs. shrimp, peeled and deveined, shells reserved
1 lb. peas, shelled
1 small onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup sliced mushrooms
1/4 cup dry vermouth

2 cups heavy cream
Salt and fresh pepper to taste
1 lb. spinach fettuccine

Place the shrimp shells in water to cover. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook on moderate heat 20 minutes. Strain. Reserve 1 1/2 cups of stock.

Place the peas in a saucepan with just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to moderate, and cook 10 minutes, or until barely tender.

Add the shrimp to the peas (it may be necessary to add more water but do not add too much). Cook until the shrimp are just poached, 2-3 minutes.

Strain and reserve the juices. Place the shrimp and peas back in the pan.

In another saucepan, place the onions, mushrooms, dry vermouth, reserved shrimp stock, and strained juices from shrimp and peas. Reduce over moderate heat to approximately 1 cup.

Add the heavy cream and cook until the mixture coats the back of a metal spoon.

Combine the reduced mixture with the peas and shrimp. Reheat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve over hot pasta.
Serves 4-6.

Microwave basics

Any microwave owner may be overcome by the amount of microwave containers and accessories on the market today. But don't run out and buy every accessory that looks and sounds terrific until you know your needs.

Many of the basic microwave essentials will already be in your kitchen and suitable for microwave cooking. Always use your microwave owners manual as a guideline for testing these containers for microwave use.

BASIC CONTAINERS
• Glass measuring cups
• Glass pie plates

• Oblong and round glass casseroles
• Glass custard cups
• Plates or platters

If you find that you want to do more complicated microwave cooking, here is a list of optional accessories you may want to purchase:

Optional Accessories
• Browning tray for cookin meats
• Rack for meats
• Plated or tube bundt pan for making cakes
• Muffin ring for muffins, cupcakes or mini-meats

This BBQ is taste pleaser

Here's a barbecue idea which will appeal to men! Let dad prepare a beef barbecue in the backyard for a wonderful and memorable meal. He will welcome the opportunity to share his culinary skills with the rest of the family.

A slow charcoal fire cooks beef to its most flavorful, tender and juicy best by cooking at low to moderate temperatures. Beef easily picks up the smoky barbecue flavor to enhance its own flavorful taste. Some like their beef unadorned, but other outdoor cooks add flavor variety with marinades, sauces, wood chips or chunks.

The whole family will enjoy the following recipe.

TERIYAKI STEAK WITH ONIONS
1 1/2 lb. beef flanks steak
1/4 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup dry white wine
2 tbsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. grated ginger root
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 large sweet onion, sliced
1 tbsp. butter or margarine

Combine soy sauce, wine, brown sugar, ginger and garlic. Place steak in plastic bag. Add marinade, turning to coat. Tie bag securely and marinate in refrigerator 6 to 8 hours (or overnight), turning at least once. Drain marinade from steak; and reserve. Broil steak over medium coals 10 to 15 minutes, to doneness desired (rare or medium); turn once. Meanwhile, cook onion in butter in frying pan until soft. Stir in 1/4 cup reserved marinade; cook 4 to 5 minutes. Carve steak into thin slices. Serve with onion, 5 to 6 servings.

More creative cookout ideas can be found in a booklet called: "American Beef Cookouts." For a copy, send your name and address and 75 cents to the Meat Board Test Kitchens & Beef Industry Council, 444 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

'Thin' skin is first line of defense

Even if you're on the skinny side, your skin is your body's largest organ.

The average human epidermis measures about 19 square feet and weighs more than 7 pounds. Your skin is a fortress which protects you against invading bacteria and viruses. It can do this because the outer layer is really made up of dead cells which don't become infected easily.

Below the top cells, which you slough off and replace by the millions each day, lie highly specialized cells which produce a substance called melanin. If you're a pale face, it's because you have less melanin, or pigment, in your skin than someone with a swarther complexion.

A portion of your skin no bigger than a postage stamp contains four yards of nerves and 25 nerve endings. In all, you have millions of these nerve endings fanning through your skin, or dermis, each specially constructed to deliver only one type of message — heat or cold, pain or pressure.

Here's a final fact about your skin you may be glad to know: you're actually "skinner" in some places than in others.

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