

"Pasta"

52 • MACCHERONI ALLA
NAPOLETANA I

NEAPOLITAN-STYLE MACARONI I

I guarantee that this recipe, supplied to me by a family from Santa Maria Capua Venere, is genuine. I also admit I wasn't sure that I should try it at first, since the mixture of ingredients didn't convince me at all. But to tell the truth, these macaroni aren't bad, and those who aren't devotees of simple foods may like them.

Take a piece of round and stick it with slivers of prosciutto, raisins, pine nuts, and a minced mixture of lard, garlic, and parsley. *[The quantities of these ingredients will depend upon the piece of meat. Press some of each into every slit you make in the meat.]* Tie the meat with string and sauté it in a mixture of finely minced onion and lard. Turn it frequently, and once it has browned on all sides, add 1 or 2 peeled, quartered, seeded tomatoes. When the tomatoes have fallen apart, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of tomato sauce, a bit at a time. When almost all the liquid has been absorbed, add an inch of boiling water, season the meat with salt and pepper, and simmer it until done, turning it occasionally and replenishing the liquid as it evaporates. The sauce is poured over pasta, which is served Neapolitan style, with sharp cheese, while the meat is served as a second course.

In the absence of fresh tomatoes, use canned ones.

53 · MACCHERONI ALLA NAPOLETANA II

NEAPOLITAN-STYLE MACARONI II

This recipe is simpler than the preceding one and so good that I suggest you try it.

You will need $\frac{3}{4}$ pound of macaroni, which will be sufficient for three people. Sauté two large slices of onion in 2 tablespoons of butter and 2 tablespoons of oil. The onion will split into rings as it cooks; when it has browned, press it down with a spoon, then remove it and discard it. Stir $1\frac{1}{4}$ pounds of peeled, seeded tomatoes into the pan, add a bunch of basil, minced, and season the sauce with salt and pepper. Simmer it until done, about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, or until it is no longer watery.

Use the sauce, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) of butter, and grated Parmigiano to flavor the macaroni, which will be especially liked by those who would swim in tomato sauce if they could.

Rather than long macaroni, penne can be used here: They absorb the sauce better.

54 · MACCHERONI ALLA BOLOGNESE

MACARONI, BOLOGNA STYLE

For this dish the people of Bologna use a medium-sized pasta called *denti di cavallo* [horse's teeth, pasta the size of rigatoni, but shaped like horse molars], and they seem best to me, too. Make sure the pasta's thick-walled though, lest it collapse in cooking. Tuscans, whose love of light foods leads them to prefer so-called genteel pasta, with thin walls that

collapse as it cooks, producing results disgusting to both tongue and eye, don't seem to mind this defect.

As everybody knows, the best pastas are made with durum-wheat flour. They can be distinguished by their tan color. Beware of yellow pasta that has been colored in an attempt to mask its derivation from normal grain; the dyes, at least in the past, were made from innocuous things like saffron.

These amounts will be sufficient for a pound or more of pasta:

<i>A quarter onion</i>	<i>A scant pinch of flour</i>
<i>Half a carrot</i>	<i>A small pot of broth</i>
<i>A stalk of celery twice the length of your palm</i>	<i>A pinch of salt</i>
<i>2 ounces pancetta</i>	<i>Pepper (optional)</i>
<i>3 tablespoons butter or olive oil</i>	<i>Nutmeg (optional)</i>
<i>6 ounces lean veal (fillet is best), minced</i>	<i>1 pound pasta</i>

Mince the vegetables and the pancetta, and sauté them in the butter until the onion is translucent. Add the minced veal and continue sautéing until it, too, is browned. Stir in the flour and the broth, salt and optional pepper and nutmeg to taste, and simmer the sauce until it's done, at least 2 hours, though more is better; the finished sauce should be thick.

Cook the pasta, drain it well, and stir the sauce and some grated Parmigiano into it. You can improve the sauce while it is simmering by adding chopped dried porcini, truffles, or a minced cooked chicken liver. If you want to make the sauce more delicate, add ½ cup of heavy cream just before you stir it into the pasta.

With regard to pasta, it's worth observing that this food is better when cooked less rather than more, *modus in rebus* (within reason). If the pasta's still a little hard, it tastes better and is easier to digest. This may seem strange, but it's true, because overly cooked pasta, which doesn't get chewed enough, descends to the stomach and forms a ball.

As Artusi notes, there's a great deal of room for improvisation with this sauce, especially with regard to the addition of pork. Some cooks use pancetta, which increases the saltiness; others prefer sausage, which makes it sweeter, or omit the pork entirely. You may also want to add ½ cup of dry red wine, when the ground veal has finished browning, and up to ½ cup (no more) of tomato sauce or tomato pulp.

☞ *Strozzapreti* translates as "priest chokers." Italy's strong anticlerical tradition is a legacy of popular resentment of theocratic government under the Papal States, which ruled about a third of northern Italy until the 1860s. With its convents and estates, the Church was one of the major landholders in the rest of the peninsula as well.

If, on the other hand, it is chewed, the very process of mastication produces saliva, which contains a yeast called *ptyalin* that serves to transform the starches into sugar and dextrin.

The physiological action of saliva is very important, because, in addition to softening foods and thereby making them easier to swallow, its alkaline nature stimulates the secretion of gastric juices as the foods enter the stomach. For this reason, the disgusting things nannies do, such as chew mouthfuls for their charges, are actually good.

It's said that the Neapolitans, famous devourers of pasta, drink a glass of water when they're finished to better digest it. I don't know if the water, in this case, acts as a solvent, or if it is useful because it takes the place of a glass of wine and therefore leaves the stomach lighter. *Denti di cavallo*, when they're thicker and longer, are called *cannelloni* in Tuscany, and *buoncotti* or *strozzapreti* in other parts of Italy.

☞ 55 • MACCHERONI CON LE SARDE ALLA SICILIANA ☞

MACARONI WITH SARDINES, SICILIAN STYLE

For this recipe I am indebted to a spry, spirited widow whose husband, a Sicilian, liked to cook the dishes of his native land.

<i>1 1/4 pounds fresh sardines</i>	<i>6 salted anchovies</i>
<i>2/3 pound bulb fennel</i>	<i>1/4 cup oil</i>
<i>1 pound Neapolitan-style long pasta</i>	

Remove the heads and tails from the sardines, split and bone them, flour them, and fry them. Salt them well and set them aside.

Boil the fennel, drain it, and mince it.

Cook the pasta, drain it, and set it aside.

"Roasts"

168 · CIGNALE FRA DUE FUOCHI

BOAR COOKED BETWEEN TWO FLAMES

Marinate the boar in the marinade given in recipe 310 for 12 to 14 hours, then dry it with a towel and prepare it as follows:

Line the bottom of an ovenproof pot with 3 or 4 paper-thin slices of lard. Place the boar over them, season it with salt and pepper, and add a whole onion, a bouquet garni, a bit of butter, and, assuming that the meat weighs $2\frac{1}{4}$ pounds, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dry white wine. Cover the meat with 3 or 4 more slices of lard and a sheet of buttered paper, pressing it down so it sticks to the meat. Transfer the pot, covered, to a 350°F oven and roast the meat until tender, sprinkling it as necessary with small amounts of broth to keep it from drying out. Strain and degrease the sauce, and pour it over the meat before serving it.

169 · COSTOLETTE DI DAINO

ALLA CACCIATORA

VENISON CUTLETS, HUNTER STYLE

The meat from deer, goat, and other similar creatures tends to be dry and tough, so it should be well aged to bring out its flavor. Use the flat part of the loin, cutting it into thin slices. Heat equal amounts of oil and butter (the total volume will depend upon the size of the pan—it should be coated liberally) with a clove of garlic and several leaves of sage. When the garlic has browned, add the cutlets, seasoning them with salt and pepper, and cook them quickly over a high flame, sprinkling them with marsala.

170 • COSCIOTTO O SPALLA
DI CASTRATO IN CAZZERUOLA

RUMP OR SHOULDER, POT-ROASTED

By association, the word *steer* [in Italian *castrato*, or "castrated"] brings to mind those servants who, to appease the ridiculous desires of their masters, trim their whiskers and sideburns, thus resembling a herd of steers.

For the same reason—the vanity of their masters—waitresses are forced to wear white hats known as "bonnets" when they are no longer young nor beautiful, and with those things on their heads look like hags. Nannies, on the other hand, being country-bred people who have little sense of personal dignity, adorn themselves with all sorts of colored ribbons and bows and swell with pride (excessive pomp, the imperfect teacher of servants), not realizing that they call to mind a cow being brought to market.

Getting back to the subject, these two cuts of meat can be very useful if cooked in the following manner: We will use the shoulder; adjust the proportions accordingly for the rump. I need not tell you that the meat should be of good quality and well marbled. Assuming that it weighs between 2½ and 3 pounds, bone it, stud it with seasoned lardons, rub the outside with salt and pepper, and tie it to give it an attractive shape. Brown it in a pot with ¼ cup (½ stick) of butter, and then add to it:

*Several strips of lard or
prosciutto*

*A bouquet garni consisting of
parsley stems, celery ribs,
and a carrot*

1 medium onion, whole

*Meat trimmings, if you have
any on hand*

1 cup broth

2 to 3 tablespoons brandy

Add enough boiling water to barely cover the meat. Cover the pot and simmer the meat until done, a task that may require 4 or more hours. Once it's done, strain and degrease the sauce, and serve it with the meat.

This dish can be served with carrots, turnips, or shelled beans. If you prefer carrots, cook 2 large ones with the meat, removing them when they're done and slicing them. If you prefer turnips, make sure that they don't taste strong and that they haven't felt the pinch of frost. Quarter and blanch them, dice them, and finish cooking them with the meat. If you prefer beans, cook them separately and reheat them with the sauce.

You can, if you wish, add several peeled, seeded tomatoes to the roast when you add the water. Mutton can be cooked this way, too; if the gaminess of the meat bothers you, trim the fat from it before cooking it.

171 • LOMBATA DI CASTRATO

RIPIENA

STUFFED LOIN OF BEEF

You will need a piece of loin that weighs about 2½ pounds; trim most of the fat from it, bone it, and season it with salt and pepper.

Make the stuffing with:

6 ounces lean veal

1 egg

2 ounces prosciutto

Salt and pepper

1 cup grated Parmigiano

Mince the veal and spread them over the inside of the piece of loin. Fold the meat over, sew the lips of the fold together so the filling doesn't spurt out, wrap it in the fat, and tie it up. Sauté the meat in ¼ cup (½ stick) of butter, and when it has browned on all sides, sprinkle it with ¼ cup of marsala. Once the marsala has been absorbed, add half a small onion cut in two, a rib of celery, cut into thirds, a carrot, cut likewise, and some stalks of parsley, and sprinkle the whole with a ladleful of water or broth. Simmer the meat until it is done, then strain and degrease the sauce. This dish, which I heartily recommend, will feed eight.

"Greens and legumes"

Provided they are not overused, greens are a wholesome part of the diet. They dilute the blood and, in conjunction with meat, make the latter easier to digest. However, the relative abundance of vegetables in the diet is dictated by the climate: Rich, meat-based dishes keep winter's chill at bay, while vegetables, being lighter, are better suited to the summer months and warm climes.

[As Artusi occasionally remarks, the consumption of vegetables varies considerably from region to region throughout Italy. In his day, of course, the poor survived on nothing but. The middle class, however, ate meat regularly, and since then, meat consumption in the population as a whole has increased tremendously, especially following the Second World War. Italians are now becoming more health-conscious: Meat consumption is declining, and vegetable consumption is on the rise.]

Italian vegetable crops are still seasonal, and while hothouse vegetables are available, most people prefer to buy what's in season, selecting locally grown produce if possible. Italian consumers are wary of pesticides and preservatives and prefer organically grown vegetables, especially if there is a child in the house.

In Artusi's time the vegetable dishes that follow would have been served as accompaniments to second-course dishes, while the timbales and the stuffed vegetables might have been served as entremets. These entremets would now be treated as second-course dishes and be served with a tossed salad.]

218 · ZUCCHINI COL REGAMO

ZUCCHINI WITH OREGANO

Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) is the aromatic seed of a wild plant of the labiate family.

You will need a goodly number of long zucchini, because they reduce considerably in cooking. Cut them crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices. Set a pan on the fire with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oil; when the oil begins to crackle, add the zucchini and stir frequently. When the zucchini slices are half cooked, season them with salt and pepper, and when they begin to brown, dust them with a healthy pinch of oregano and remove them at once with a slotted spoon. They will be well received, either by themselves or as a side dish.

219 · ZUCCHINI RIPIENI

STUFFED ZUCCHINI

Zucchini for filling can be halved lengthwise or crosswise, or left whole. I prefer the final option because the zucchini will appear more elegant. They do, in any case, have to be emptied to make space for the filling; to do so, pass a metal tube through them from top to bottom. If the zucchini are large enough, you may wish to enlarge the hole with a thin-bladed knife.

For the filling, sauté $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of veal in oil, with a *battuto* made with a tablespoon each of onion, celery, parsley, and carrot and a slice of pancetta. Season the mixture with salt and pepper to taste, stir it frequently, and when it begins to brown, add a ladleful of water and simmer it until the meat is done, adding water as necessary and keeping in mind that the filling should not be dry. When the meat is done, strain the contents of the pan, reserving the pan juices.

Next, separate the meat from the herbs and mince it, stirring in a beaten egg, 2 tablespoons of grated Parmigiano, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of *midolla di pane* boiled in broth or milk, and a pinch of mixed spices [see recipe 460]. Stuff the zucchini with this mixture and sauté them in butter. Add the reserved sauce when they've browned, and simmer them until done.

Zucchini can also be stuffed with the filling listed in recipe 200, and, in the absence of meat sauce, can be cooked simply in butter, or with the tomato sauce described in recipe 73.

As a variation, you can make a filling by mincing the flesh scooped from the zucchini with $\frac{1}{4}$ pound of tuna. Stir a beaten egg into the mixture to help it bind, and season it with a pinch of grated Parmigiano and pepper to taste. Sauté the zucchini in butter, and when they have browned, add some tomato sauce and simmer them until done.

220 • FAGIUOLINI E ZUCCHINI

ALLA SAUTÉ

SAUTÉED ZUCCHINI AND STRING BEANS

Cooked this way, these greens generally serve as a side dish. Today, the dictates of so-called refined cuisine have reduced the seasoning of dishes to utmost simplicity. It may be more hygienic, and the stomach may feel lighter, but flavor comes to naught, and many people fail to find the stimulus necessary for proper digestion. This will certainly be the case here. If you are cooking string beans, boil them halfway, and if you are cooking zucchini, slice or dice them, raw. In either case, sauté the vegetables in butter until done and season them lightly with salt and pepper.

If, while cooking the vegetables, you stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of either meat sauce or the tomato sauce listed in recipe 73, you will have gone counter to the dictates of foreign and modern cuisine. I expect, however, that you will find the dish to be better-tasting and more pleasing to the stomach. If you have neither meat sauce nor tomato sauce, at least dust the vegetables with grated Parmigiano upon removing them from the fire.

229 • FUNGHI MANGERECCI

EDIBLE MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms, because of the nitrogen compounds they contain, are among the most nutritious vegetables, while their distinctive aroma makes them one of the most highly esteemed of all foods. It's a great pity that some are poisonous and can only be identified by experts. Complete familiarity with an area in which it is known that there are no poisonous varieties can give some security.

Florence, for example, makes enormous use of the mushrooms collected in the surrounding hills. If the year happens to be rainy, they begin to appear in June, though the maximum production occurs in September. To tell the truth, the city has never suffered tragedies due to these vegetables (i.e., poisonings), perhaps because the Florentines limit themselves almost exclusively to bronze-brown porcini and ovoli [*Amanita caesarea*—see sidebar to recipe 18]. People are so certain of their goodness that they don't take any precautions, not even boiling them in acidulated water, a precaution suggested by some that would also improve their flavor.

With regard to porcini and ovoli, the former are best fried, stewed, or grilled, while the latter are best stewed with tomato sauce, or grilled.

Artusi may be wrong about the nutritious value of the mushroom, but he's right about their being valued. In Florence, porcini (*Boletus edulis*, a variety of mushroom that grows exclusively under chestnut trees) sell for 10 to 25 dollars a pound, depending upon quality.

His comment about safety is, alas, true, though you shouldn't believe the part about safe places. For safety's sake, never eat mushrooms unless they've been inspected by a mycologist. In other words, buy them.

230 • FUNGHI FRITTI

FRIED MUSHROOMS

Choose medium-sized mushrooms that are firm but not overly so. If they're too large, they come out soggy; too small and they come out hard.

Scrape the stems and wash them without soaking them, which would dissipate their aroma. Cut them into fairly thick slices and flour them before tossing them in the pan. Olive oil is best for frying mushrooms,

"Desserts"

☞ The etymology of this dish's name is unclear. One theory holds that the dish was made by Italian cooks in the homes of the wealthy English expatriates who settled in the hills around Florence during the last century.

and chill the cream for at least 3 hours before serving it. This cream can be made a day ahead, if it's convenient, and these quantities will serve eight. It is a very refined dessert.

☞ 390 · ZUPPA INGLESE ☞

ENGLISH SOUP

Tuscans, perhaps because of the climate, and because they've ruined their stomachs, make all their foods light, and, if possible, liquid—they even make runny custard, without starch or flour, and serve it in coffee cups. It is true that it comes out more delicate when made in this manner, but it's not suited for a *zuppa inglese* made in a mold, and it isn't elegant.

These are the ingredients necessary for making pastry cream, so called by chefs to distinguish it from cream made without flour:

4 egg yolks	1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar	2 cups milk
1/3 cup flour, or, better yet, 1/4 cup plus 2 teaspoons corn-starch	

Beat the yolks and the sugar; add the flour, the vanilla, and, finally, the milk, a little at a time. You can begin cooking the cream over a lively flame, stirring constantly, but as soon as it begins to steam, sprinkle a scoopful of ashes over the coals, or move the pot to the edge of the stove to keep it from curdling. After the cream has thickened, continue cooking it, stirring it gently, for 10 minutes, and then let it cool.

Grease a ribbed mold [see *Notes on Ingredients and Techniques*] well with cold butter, and begin to fill it as follows: If you have some good fruit jam, spread a layer of it first, followed by a cream layer, and then a layer of *savoiardi* dipped in clear *rosolio*. If, for example, the mold has 18

ribs, dip 9 *savoardi* in *alkermes* and nine more in clear *rosolio*, and set them in the ribs, alternating them. Pour more cream over the *savoardi*, put down another layer of the cookies, and continue alternating layers until the mold is full. (About 5 ounces of *savoardi* should be sufficient.)

Be careful not to soak the *savoardi* in the liquor, or they will spew it forth; should the liquor be too sweet, correct it with a few drops of rum or cognac. If the jam (which isn't really necessary) has become stiff with age, soften it by heating it over the fire with a few tablespoons of water, and let it cool.

This will serve seven to eight people.

Serve *zuppa inglese* chilled in the summer; wipe the mold with a cloth dipped in boiling water to melt the butter before unmolding it.

391 · DOLCE DI CIGLIEGE

CHERRY PUDDING

As a family dessert, this is quite good and worth making.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup minus 2 tablespoons (2 ounces) almonds	2 tablespoons <i>rosolio</i> Vanilla extract or lemon zest
4 eggs, separated	$\frac{1}{2}$ pound raw, stemmed cherries
1 cup confectioners' sugar	
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup bread crumbs	

Peel, dry, and mince the almonds, reducing them to half the size of a grain of rice.

Beat the yolks with the sugar until the mixture becomes frothy, then add the bread crumbs, the *rosolio*, and the flavoring, and stir the mixture for a few more minutes. Whip the whites until they're stiff and fold them in. Butter a smooth-sided mold [see *Notes on Ingredients and Techniques*] and sprinkle it with the almonds, then pour in the batter, and,

finally, the cherries. To keep the almonds from sinking to the bottom, mix some of them into the batter.

Bake the pudding in a preheated 350°F oven for about half an hour, or until it sets, and serve it, either hot or cold, to four or five people.

☞ *Visciole* are wild cherries.
You will want a tart variety,
of the kind known as pie
cherries.

☞ 392 · ZUPPA DI VISCIOLE ☞

VISCIOLO CHERRY STEW

This soup can be made with thinly sliced toasted bread, sponge cake, or *savoardi*.

Pit a quantity of cherries you deem sufficient and set them on the fire with a little bit of water and a piece of stick cinnamon, which you will later discard. When the water comes to a boil, add sugar to taste, stir the fruit gently to avoid damaging it, and taste for sweetness. Remove the cherries from the fire when their skins begin to wrinkle and they no longer look raw. Moisten the bread or *savoardi* with *rosolio* and interlayer them with the cherries, to form a mound on a platter. You can also give this stew a more regular appearance by layering it in a mold and chilling it before unmolding it. Indeed, chilled dishes are enjoyable during the period cherries are in season. A volume of sugar weighing one third the weight of the cherries will be sufficient.