



Mario Batali's At-Home Comfort Food

Chicken, Baked Pasta With Ricotta and Ham, and Italian Trifle

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Culinary superstar Mario Batali still likes to keep things simple in his own kitchen, using ingredients people can actually pronounce.

In "Molto Italiano: 327 Simple Italian Recipes to Cook at Home" (Ecco), Batali presents delicious and easy-to-make dishes that are sure to please everyone.

He served up some of his favorite recipes from the collection for "Good Morning America" on Wednesday: chicken with "cooked wine," baked pasta with ricotta and ham, and Italian trifle.

You can find the recipes below. To print, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the "Print This Article" icon. (All recipes courtesy of Mario Batali.)

Chicken with "Cooked Wine"

Pollo al Vin Cotto

You can buy bottles of vin cotto (which translates as "cooked wine") in fancy specialty shops, but it is quite easy to make a version of it at home. And it is a great way to use up those less-than-acceptable wine gifts.

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

4½ cups red wine

½ cup honey

2 cinnamon sticks

3 cloves

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil plus more for drizzling

Salt

One (3-pound) chicken, cut into 8 serving pieces, rinsed, and patted dry

1 large onion, cut into large dice

2 carrots, diced

½ cup green olives (such as Sicilian), halved and pitted

3 tablespoons raisins

1 tablespoon capers, rinsed and drained

1 tablespoon pine nuts, toasted

3 tablespoons blanched almonds, toasted

1 cup red wine vinegar

½ cup sugar

freshly ground black pepper

cracked black pepper

1 tablespoon hot red pepper flakes

¼ cup finely-chopped Italian Parsley

Directions:

1. To make the vin cotto, combine all the ingredients in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced to 1 cup (about 20 minutes). Remove from the heat and let cool; remove the cinnamon sticks and cloves before using.
2. In a 10- to 12-inch sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over high heat until very hot but not smoking. Season the chicken with salt, add skin side down to the pan, and brown on both sides, about 4 minutes per side. Reduce the heat to medium, add the onion and carrots, and cook, stirring, until deep golden brown. Add the olives, raisins, capers, pine nuts and almonds to the pan, stirring well. Add ½cup of the vin cotto to deglaze the pan, stirring up the browned bits on the bottom, then boil until reduced by half. Add the remaining ½cup vin cotto, and bring to a boil.
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the vinegar and sugar. Add to the pan and cook, stirring, until the liquid has reduced to a glaze. Season, to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Transfer the chicken to a warmed platter and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with cracked black pepper, the red pepper flakes and parsley, and serve.

Baked Pasta with Ricotta and Ham

Pasticcio di Maccheroni

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound Italian cooked ham, preferably parmacotto, cut into ½-inch cubes

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 small carrot, cut into ¼-inch dice

1 onion, cut into ¼-inch dice

1 rib celery, thinly sliced

1 cup dry red wine

3 ½ cups basic tomato sauce (Recipe below)

1 ½ pounds ziti

1 pound fresh ricotta

8 ounces caciotta or hard provolone, cut into small dice

½ cup freshly-grated parmigiano-reggiano

Directions:

1. In a Dutch oven, heat the oil over high heat until smoking. Add the ham cubes and brown for 5 to 6 minutes. Add the carrot, onion and celery and cook until the vegetables are golden brown, about 10 minutes.
2. Add the wine, bring to a boil, and cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add the tomato sauce, and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover the pan, and cook until the meat is just about falling apart, about 50 minutes. Transfer the meat to a large bowl. Keep the sauce warm.
3. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 450°F. Bring 6 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot, and add 2 tablespoons salt.
4. Cook the ziti in the boiling water for 1 minutes less than the package directions, until still very al dente. While the pasta is cooking, place the ricotta in a small bowl and stir in a ladle of the pasta cooking water to "melt" it.
5. Drain the pasta and add it to the bowl with the meat. Add the ricotta and caciotta and stir to combine.
6. Grease a 9-by-12-inch baking dish with extra-virgin olive oil. Place a ladleful of sauce in the bottom of the casserole, followed by a layer of the pasta and meat mixture. Sprinkle 2 to 3 tablespoons of the parmigiano-reggiano over, then repeat with another layer of sauce, then pasta and meat, and parmigiano. Continue until all ingredients are used up.
7. Bake for 25 minutes, until bubbling and heated through. Serve in warmed pasta bowls.

Basic Tomato Sauce

Makes 4 cups*Ingredients:*

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

1 Spanish onion, chopped in ¼-inch dice

4 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced

3 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme leaves, or 1 tablespoon dried

½ medium carrot, finely-shredded

2 28-ounce cans peeled whole tomatoes, crushed by hand and juices reserved

Salt to taste

Directions:

In a 3-quart saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until soft and light golden brown, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add the thyme and carrot and cook 5 minutes more, until the carrot is quite soft. Add the tomatoes and juice and bring to a boil, stirring often. Lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes until as thick as hot cereal. Season with salt and serve. This sauce holds one week in the refrigerator or up to six months in the freezer.

Italian Trifle*Zuppa Inglese***Makes 8 servings***Ingredients:*

3 ¼ cups whole milk

Grated zest of 1 lemon

1 vanilla bean, split

7 large egg yolks

1 cup sugar

½ cup all-purpose flour

Five tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces unsweetened chocolate

24 ladyfingers

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Limoncello or other sweet citrus liqueur

Directions:

1. In a large heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the milk and lemon zest. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean, and add the seeds and bean to the pan. Bring a very brisk simmer over medium-high heat; do not allow to boil.
2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the egg yolks, flour and sugar and whisk until the mixture is pale yellow and forms a ribbon when the whisk is lifted from the bowl. Gradually pour $\frac{1}{2}$ of the hot milk into the egg mixture, whisking constantly. Return the mixture back to the saucepan and cook over high heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the pastry cream coats the back of the spoon. Pour half the cream into a stainless steel bowl and set in an ice bath to cool. Stir the cocoa and chocolate into the remaining pastry cream, making sure that the chocolate is completely melted. Then pour the chocolate cream into another bowl and set over an ice bath to cool. Whisk the creams occasionally as they cool.
3. Split each ladyfinger in half. Sprinkle the cut sides with the liqueur. Place a layer of the soaked ladyfingers in a large glass serving bowl. Top with a layer of the vanilla pastry cream, another layer of ladyfingers, and a layer of the chocolate cream; repeating the layering until all ingredients are used. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour before serving.

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