

Classic Italian Dishes You Can Make in Your Own Kitchen

Garlic Knots

Serves: 24

Preparation Time: 45 minutes plus 2 hours proofing time

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 recipe Basic Pizza Dough (recipe below)
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- ¼ cup grated Pecorino Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Directions

1. Prepare a batch of Basic Pizza Dough and set it aside to rise.
2. Cook the garlic in the butter in a small saucepan over low heat until fragrant (about 3 minutes).
3. Cover, remove the saucepan from the heat, and set it aside, keeping it warm.
4. Preheat the oven to 375°F, and grease 2 large baking sheets. Set them aside.
5. Place the risen dough on a lightly floured surface.
6. Roll the dough out using a floured rolling pin. Shape it into a rectangle, about 16x12 inches.
7. Brush the dough with olive oil.
8. Cut the dough in half lengthwise.
9. Cut the dough crosswise into 1 ¼-inch strips.
10. Tie each strip loosely into a knot, and place them on the prepared baking sheets, leaving a 2-inch space in between. Sprinkle the tops of the knots with salt.
11. Cover with a towel and let them rise in a warm place for about 30 minutes.
12. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes.
13. Meanwhile, add the cheese and parsley to the warm butter mixture and mix well.
14. Coat the newly baked knots in the cheese-and-butter mixture, and serve warm.

Basic Pizza Dough

Serves: 2 crusts, medium to large in size

Preparation Time: 2 hours 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 6-8 minutes (pre-baking)

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups warm water (105°F)
- 1 ($\frac{1}{4}$ ounce) packet active dry yeast (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons)
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing
- 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt

Directions

1. Dissolve the sugar in warm water, and add the yeast. Let it sit until the water becomes frothy (about 10 minutes). Stir in the olive oil.
2. In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt together.
3. Make a well in the center and pour in the yeast mixture.
4. Using a wooden spoon, mix until a rough dough is formed.
5. Place the dough on a floured surface and knead until it becomes smooth and elastic (about 5 minutes).
6. Prepare two bowls and brush them with olive oil.
7. Divide the dough in half as equally as possible (about 1 pound per piece).
8. Place each portion of dough in a prepared bowl, and brush the surface with oil.
9. Cover with plastic wrap and allow the dough to expand to double its size (about 1 hour and 30 minutes).
10. Roll out into desired shape and diameter. The dough may be covered with plastic wrap and stored, frozen, for 1 month.
11. If a pre-baked crust is required, bake at 425°F until lightly browned (about 6-8 minutes).

Deep-Fried Rice Balls (Arancini Di Riso)

Serves: 4-6

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup Italian style seasoned breadcrumbs

For filling

- 2 cups cooked risotto, cooled
- ½ cup Italian style seasoned breadcrumbs
- ½ cup Parmesan, finely grated
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 ounces Gorgonzola, cut into ½-inch cubes
- Vegetable oil, for frying

Directions

1. Put the bread crumbs in a medium bowl, and set them aside.
2. Combine the risotto, bread crumbs, Parmesan, basil, and eggs.
3. Scoop out about 2 tablespoons of the risotto mixture at a time, and shape it into 1 ¾-inch balls. Dampen your hands so the rice doesn't stick them.
4. Insert a cube of Gorgonzola into each ball, and seal to cover the cheese.
5. Coat the balls with bread crumbs.
6. Fill a heavy-bottomed skillet or saucepan with oil to about 2-3 inches deep.
7. Heat over medium heat until a cube of bread will brown in about 2 minutes (350°F).
8. Fry the balls, turning occasionally, until golden, about 4 to 5 minutes. Do not overcrowd the pan.
9. Drain on paper towels and serve.

Eggplant Parmesan (Parmigiana Di Melanzane)

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 eggplants, peeled and cut into ½-inch slices

For eggplant slices

- 1 tablespoon salt, or as needed, preferably kosher or sea salt
- 1 cup Italian style breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten

For eggplant parmigiana layers

- 1 (28 ounce) jar garlic-and-tomato pasta sauce or homemade pasta sauce
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 cups or 16 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded
- ½ teaspoon dried basil

Directions

1. Sprinkle both sides of each slice of eggplant generously with salt. Place the eggplant slices in a colander and allow them to “sweat” for 1-3 hours.
2. After the standing time, wipe the eggplant slices dry with paper towels.
3. When the eggplant slices are ready, preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a baking sheet.
4. In a bowl, mix the bread crumbs with Parmesan.
5. Dip the eggplant into the beaten eggs and then coat with the breadcrumb mixture.
6. Place the pieces on the baking sheet in a single layer.
7. Bake until lightly browned on both sides (about 6-10 minutes per side)
8. Now prepare to layer the sauce, eggplant, and cheeses.
9. In a 9x13 baking pan, start with a layer of pasta sauce.
10. Follow this with a layer of eggplant.
11. Sprinkle the eggplant with about 1 tablespoon of Parmesan and 1 to 1 ⅓ cups shredded mozzarella.
12. Continue layering, making sure to end with a cheese layer.
13. Sprinkle with basil and bake until the cheese turns golden brown (about 35 minutes).

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce (Bolognese)

Serves: 10

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 (24 ounce) jars Marinara sauce or 3 cups homemade pasta sauce
- 1 (16 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound Italian sausage, casings removed
- ½ cup pepperoni, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasonings or a combination of basil, oregano, rosemary, and thyme to taste
- ¼ cup red wine (preferably Chianti or Sangiovese)
- 10 ounces spaghetti noodles, cooked according to the packaging instructions

Directions

1. In a large pot, heat the olive oil and onions over medium-high heat. Cook until the onions are translucent.
2. Add the marina sauce and crushed tomatoes, and reduce the heat to simmer.
3. Meanwhile, in a skillet, brown the ground beef and Italian sausage until well done.
4. Drain out any excess fat, and add the meat to the pot with the sauce.
5. Add the chopped pepperoni, Italian seasonings, and red wine.
6. Simmer for about 20 minutes and season with salt and pepper.
7. Pour the sauce over cooked spaghetti noodles. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan, if desired.

Super Meat Pizza

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- Pizza dough, rolled out to make 15-inch crust or 15- by 10-inch rectangular crust
- ½ pound lean ground beef
- ½ pound Italian sausage, casing removed
- ½ cup pizza sauce
- ½ cup sliced pepperoni
- 1 ounce thinly sliced salami, cut into quarters
- ½ cup prosciutto or bacon, diced
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Grease the pan for the pizza dough. Press the dough to fit the pan.
3. Using a nonstick frying pan, cook the beef and sausage over medium-high heat, with constant stirring. The beef should be well done and the sausage no longer pink (about 6 to 8 minutes). Remove from the pan and drain on paper towels.
4. Spread the pizza sauce to within half an inch of the edges of the dough.
5. Add the drained beef and sausage.
6. Arrange all the other ingredients over the pizza.
7. Bake until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is melted (13 to 16 minutes).

Chicken Marsala

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves, pounded thin
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- Pinch each of marjoram and thyme (optional)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup pancetta or bacon, chopped
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- ½ pound mushrooms, sliced
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ cup dry Marsala
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish

Directions

1. Pound the chicken breasts to an even thickness.
2. Season with salt, pepper, and oregano (marjoram and thyme also, if desired).
3. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium-high heat, and sear the chicken until golden brown (about 2 minutes on each side). Transfer to a plate and set aside.
4. Melt the remaining butter in the pan and add the pancetta, shallots, mushrooms, and garlic powder.
5. Cook until the mushrooms and shallots are lightly browned.
6. Add the Marsala and bring it to a boil, scraping any browned bits from the bottom of the pan.
7. Add the cream and lemon juice, and return it to a boil.
8. Simmer until the sauce is reduced and begins to thicken.
9. Return the chicken to pan to heat through (about 3 minutes).
10. Serve garnished with parsley.

Homemade Cannoli

Serves: 12-25

Preparation Time: 20 minutes plus 2 hours refrigeration

Cooking Time: 10-15 minutes

Ingredients

- Egg white, for sealing
- Oil for frying, 3 inches deep

Cannoli shell

- 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Marsala dry wine

Cream Filling

- 2 cups ricotta cheese
- 2 cups confectioner's sugar, sifted
- 2 tablespoons rum
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 ounces bitter chocolate, broken into tiny chips

Directions

To make the shells

1. In a large bowl, mix the shell ingredients together to make a smooth, slightly sticky dough.
2. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours to overnight.
3. Cut the dough into two pieces. Keep the remaining dough covered and cold while you work.
4. Lightly flour a work surface and roll out the dough to about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick.
5. Cut out circles, 3 to 5 inches in diameter.
6. Roll each cut out circle into an oval.
7. Oil the outside of the cannoli tubes. You can also use cannelloni pasta as tubes.
8. Roll the ovals around each tube and dab a little egg white on the dough where the edges overlap. Press well to seal. Let them sit for the egg white to set.
9. In a heavy saucepan or electric deep-fryer, heat the oil to 375°F, or until a small piece of the dough sizzles and browns in 1 minute.
10. Fry the shells until golden, turning halfway through (about 2 minutes).
11. Lift with a wire skimmer or large slotted spoon. Using tongs, grasp the cannoli vertically over the fryer to let the oil flow back into the pan.
12. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining tubes.
13. While still hot, grasp the tubes with a potholder and, using a pair of tongs, pull the cannoli shells off.
14. Let cool completely on the paper towels.

For the filling

15. In a large bowl, cream the ricotta with a wire whisk.
16. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix thoroughly.
17. Fill a pastry tube, and pipe the filling into the shells.
18. Dust with confectioner's sugar, and serve.

***These recipes and more are found in Lina Chang’s *Italian Takeout Cookbook: Easy Italian Recipes to Make at Home Including Pizza and Pasta*. To get your own copy, click on the cover below or click [here](#).

