

RIA & LISA TUSCAN COOKERY WITH PAOLO AT LA PAGGERIA, JULY 2010.

(All recipes feed about 8 people)

ANTIPASTI

Porcini mushrooms (for crostini topping or pasta sauce):

Ingredients –

- 3 large porcini mushrooms
- 2 cloves garlic
- Olive oil
- 1 tomato peeled
- Tuscan mint (small leaved)



Separate the mushroom stalks from the caps, remove the dirt from the stalks by scraping with a knife and chop into rough half inch squares (do not wash mushrooms with water as they absorb the water). Place in a large pan with whole garlic cloves and a liberal splash of olive oil and fry gently. Clean the caps again by scraping gently and rub with a tissue if necessary to remove dirt. Chop caps so that sections contain both the light and dark parts of the cap, again into half inch sections and add to the already cooking stalks. Peel the tomato, chop into cubes and add to the mixture. Stir fry for around 5 mins, adding more oil and the mint, then leave to rest before serving.



Mozzarella, tomato and anchovy crostini

Ingredients –

- 2 small fist size balls of buffalo mozzarella, sliced.
- 1 large tomato
- 6 anchovies, cut into thirds
- Rustic white bread, sliced into ¼" thin slices
- Pink pepper (Bache Rosa) ground



Place white bread slices in oven until just beginning to brown and crisp. On each slice layer a piece of mozzarella, a slice of tomato and one piece of anchovy. Place on serving plate, with the mushroom crostini if using, sprinkle with pepper and serve.



Fried Courgette Flowers

Ingredients -

- 15-20 courgette flowers, stalks and stamen removed.
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tbsp Plain flour
- Vegetable oil for frying

Add oil to deep pan so that it is at least ¼” deep, coat flowers in egg, add flour and mix to coat. Deep fry the flowers until golden.



Fried baby Sardines (Alici)

Ingredients –

- 15-20 small sardines
- Flour for coating
- Vegetable oil for frying

Remove the head from the fish, pulling out the gut in the process. Check the gills are red to check the fish is fresh and wash in cold water. Shake dry and coat generously with flour. Fry in the oil until golden. Serve with the fried courgette flowers and a salad garnish, adding salt and pepper.



PASTA COURSE (PRIMI PIATTI)

Raviolini with vegetable and ricotta sauce

Ingredients –

- 25-30 large fresh ravioli (raviolini) stuffed with ricotta and spinach or any fresh pasta
- 6 medium carrots
- 1 red onion



- Olive oil
- Vegetable stock powder
- 2 tbsp Bache Rosa whole pink peppercorns
- 6 heaped tablespoons ricotta cheese
- Whole milk
- ¼ tsp paprika

Top and tail the carrots, scrape and cut into thick slices. Peel the onion and cut into quarters. Add the carrot and onion to a blender and blend until finely diced. Transfer to a large pan, add olive oil and fry until soft. Add the ricotta cheese, stir into the mixture then add milk to mix to thick sauce consistency. Add the paprika, peppercorns and finally ensure a consistent mix by mashing the mixture with a fork to even the ricotta. Take off the heat, add a dash more olive oil and leave while cooking the fresh pasta.

SECONDI PIATTI

Fish (Dorada or Orata) with Potatoes

Ingredients –

- 3 large white fish, gutted
- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 tomato
- 1 scoop (2 tsp) vegetable stock powder
- Salt & ground pepper
- Fresh parsley
- Olive oil



Wash and thickly slice the potatoes, layer in an ovenproof dish. Peel the tomato, dice and add to the potatoes then sprinkle over the vegetable stock powder. Coat the fish on both sides generously with salt, stuff with parsley and place on top of the potatoes. Pour over olive oil, sprinkle with pepper and place in hot oven (200-220°C) for 10 minutes uncovered. Take out, spoon over the liquid and put back in oven for another 10 minutes. Turn fish, spoon over liquid and put back in for final 10 minutes. Remove fish and place on plate, stir potatoes and place back into oven for 20-30 minutes until crisp. When ready to serve, place fish back on top of potatoes and pop in oven to warm with a little water if looking dry.

Savoury Fruit Salad

Serve a savoury fruit salad following the fish to cleanse palate. Use any fruit in season layered on leaves and drizzled with olive oil, salt and pepper. Squeeze over half a lemon just before serving.



DESSERT

Mascarpone with Gran Marnier

Ingredients –

- 500g mascarpone
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 whole egg
- 5 heaped tbsp of sugar
- 2 generous tbsp Gran Marnier
- Whole milk
- Dark chocolate
- Thin sweet biscuits

Whisk the mascarpone, egg yolks, whole egg, sugar and Gran Marnier. Add milk to the mixture until it is the consistency of thick custard. Pour into glasses and place in the fridge for at least an hour. When ready to serve, break chocolate pieces on top and add 2 biscuits.