

## Champagne Limoncello Cocktail

### Ingredients:

8 (3 x 1/2-inch) lemon rind strips  
16 tablespoons Limoncello (lemon-flavored liqueur)  
8 teaspoons fresh lemon juice  
2 (750-milliliter) bottle brut Champagne, chilled

### Preparation:

Roll up each strip of lemon rind.  
Place 1 into each of the Champagne flutes.  
Add 1 tablespoon liqueur and 1/2 teaspoon juice to each glass.  
Divide Champagne evenly among glasses.  
Serve immediately.

## Balsamic Bruschetta

### Ingredients:

12 roma (plum) tomatoes, diced  
1/3 cup chopped fresh basil  
1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 loaves French bread, toasted and sliced

### Preparation:

In a bowl, toss together the tomatoes, basil, Parmesan cheese, and garlic.  
Mix in the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, kosher salt, and pepper.  
Serve on toasted bread slices.

## Mama's Italian Wedding Soup

### Ingredients:

1 ½ pounds extra-lean ground beef  
3 eggs, beaten  
1/2 cup dried bread crumbs  
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese  
2 teaspoon dried basil  
4 tablespoons minced onion  
3 quarts chicken broth  
2 cups spinach - packed, rinsed and thinly sliced  
2 cups seashell pasta  
1 cup diced carrots

### Preparation:

In a medium bowl, combine the beef, egg, bread crumbs, cheese, basil and onion.  
Shape mixture into 3/4-inch balls and set aside.  
In a large stockpot heat chicken broth to boiling.  
Stir in the spinach, pasta, carrot and meatballs.  
Return to boil.  
Reduce heat to medium.  
Cook, stirring frequently, at a slow boil for 10 minutes or until pasta is al dente, and meatballs are no longer pink inside.  
Serve hot with Parmesan cheese sprinkled on top.

## Sweet Peas with Prosciutto

### Ingredients:

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
4 oz. prosciutto, roughly chopped  
2 small white onions, minced  
2 lbs. fresh or frozen green peas  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### Preparation:

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat.  
Add prosciutto and onions.  
Cook until onions are soft and prosciutto begins to crisp, 6–8 minutes.  
Add peas and 2 tbsp. water.  
Cook, tossing, until hot, about 3 minutes.  
Season with salt and pepper.

## Wild Mushroom and Asparagus Risotto

### Ingredients:

6 cups chicken broth  
1 cup dry white wine  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 cup finely chopped onion  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 cups Arborio rice  
5 ounces wild mushrooms, cooked and coarsely chopped, approximately 3/4 cup  
7 ounces asparagus, cooked and cut into 1-inch pieces, approximately 1 1/2 cups  
2 ounces grated Parmesan, approximately 1/2 cup  
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest  
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

### Preparation:

In an electric kettle or medium saucepan with a lid, combine chicken broth and white wine and heat just to simmering.

Keep warm.

In a large 3 to 4-quart heavy saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter.

Add the onions and a pinch of salt and sweat until translucent, about 5 minutes.

Add the rice and stir.

Cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until the grains are translucent around the edges.

Be careful not to allow the grains or the onions to brown.

Reduce the heat to low.

Add enough of the wine and chicken stock just to cover the top of the rice.

Stir or move the pan often, until the liquid is completely absorbed into rice.

Once absorbed, add another amount of liquid just to cover the rice and continue stirring or moving as before.

There should be just enough liquid left to repeat 1 more time.

It should take approximately 35 to 40 minutes for all of the liquid to be absorbed.

After the last addition of liquid has been mostly absorbed, add the mushrooms and asparagus and stir until risotto is creamy and asparagus is heated through.

Remove from the heat and stir in the Parmesan, lemon zest, and nutmeg.

Taste and season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Note: If fresh wild mushrooms are not available, reconstituted dried mushrooms can be used instead.

Place 2 ounces of dried mushrooms into a bowl and cover with warm water.

Allow to sit for about 30 minutes or until all the mushrooms are soft and pliable.

## Braised Pork Ravioloni

### Ingredients:

#### For the pasta:

400 grams of flour (or, even better, use a mixture of half plain flour, half fine semolina flour)  
4 eggs

#### For the filling:

1 kg pork cheeks, roughly chopped  
1 large red pepper (capsicum)  
1 large yellow pepper  
Plenty of fresh sage and rosemary  
2 fresh bay leaves  
1 cup of white wine  
2-3 tablespoons of tomato paste (optional)  
40 grams of good quality butter  
Parmesan cheese, shaved  
Olive oil  
Salt and pepper

### Preparation:

Prepare the peppers by chopping them in half, removing the seeds and then laying them on a baking sheet, cut side down, and placing under a grill until well-browned (or even blackened). Set aside, covered with some foil, until cool enough to handle and remove the skin and stems. Chop into small pieces and set aside.

Prepare a herb mixture by chopping in a food processor equal amounts of fresh sage and rosemary leaves. Pulse until the herbs are very finely chopped, then place in a small, clean jar and fill with olive oil to cover.

Season the roughly chopped pork cheeks with salt and pepper.

Heat a small amount of olive oil gently in a large saucepan, add a tablespoon of the herb mixture, then the pork cheeks. Let the pork cheeks brown, cooking them for a couple of minutes on each side then deglaze the pan with the wine. Add the bay leaves, the tomato paste and water to cover.

Cover the pan with a lid and let it slowly simmer away for a couple of hours or until the meat falls apart easily and the liquid has reduced to a thick sauce. Before taking off from the heat, add the peppers.

Strain the stew to separate the liquid from the solid, setting aside in separate bowls or containers. If using immediately, make sure to allow the meat to cool before filling the ravioli. If you are using it the next day, be aware that refrigerating the pork cheeks will result in a solid block, like a terrine! Don't worry about it, it will melt back down when you cook the ravioloni, but you may want to think about this and put it in an appropriately shaped container – square or rectangular makes easy cutting into the right size and shape to fill your ravioloni later.

You want pasta as thin as you can get it, so thin that you can see your fingers through it. Roll the dough into wide strips, place a square or spoonful of pork cheek along one side of the strip lengthways with a space of about an inch between each one.

Brush the surrounding pasta dough with water. Fold over the strip lengthways to close the ravioli and – this is the slightly tricky part – working from one end to the other to avoid trapping air inside which could cause the ravioli to open during cooking, use the side of your palm to gently press down the edges of the dough to seal.

Cut the ravioloni with a sharp knife or a pastry cutter (if you have one, I prefer the crimped edge, it just helps hold a little more sauce). These are quite large and hearty, I would suggest 4 per person is a good portion – but you may want to make a few extra!

For the sauce, simply heat the braising liquid with some fresh, whole sage leaves and the butter (make sure it's a delicious butter, this is part of your sauce!). Season to taste. When the butter has melted and has turned the sauce into a glossy, shiny thing, set the pan aside while you cook the ravioloni.

Heat a wide pot with water and bring it to a simmer. Salt your water before adding the ravioloni. They will only take about 3 minutes to cook. Remove them carefully with a slotted spoon and place into the pan of sauce. Toss over a gentle heat until the ravioloni are coated then serve with some shaved Parmesan cheese.

## Tiramisu

### Ingredients:

12 egg yolks  
6 tablespoons sugar  
2 pound mascarpone cheese  
3 cups strong espresso, cooled  
4 teaspoons dark rum  
48 packaged ladyfingers  
1 cup bittersweet chocolate shavings, for garnish

### Preparation:

In a large bowl, using an electric mixer with whisk attachment, beat egg yolks and sugar until thick and pale, about 5 minutes. Add mascarpone cheese and beat until smooth. Add 2 tablespoon of espresso and mix until thoroughly combined.

In a small shallow dish, add remaining espresso and rum. Dip each ladyfinger into espresso for only 5 seconds. Letting the ladyfingers soak too long will cause them to fall apart. Place the soaked ladyfinger on the bottom of large baking dish, breaking them in half if necessary in order to fit the bottom.

Spread evenly 1/2 of the mascarpone mixture over the ladyfingers. Arrange another layer of soaked ladyfingers and top with remaining mascarpone mixture.

Cover tiramisu with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, up to 8 hours.

Before serving, sprinkle with chocolate shavings.