

Food & Drink

THAT'S ITALIAN

Each region of Italy has its own proud food traditions

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This past week I have had the pleasure of participating in an Italian Culinary Course at George



Food
for
Thought

Lisa Cartwright

Many Italian foods available

Spaghetti with tomatoes, basil and Parmigiano-Reggiano

Need a change from your regular spaghetti dinner? Try Spaghetti with Tomatoes, Basil and Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Spaghetti is thinner than regular spaghetti and can be picked up at Village Grocer (they have a variety of pastas starting at \$1.69). Loeb and IGA also have a variety of Primo pastas on for \$.99.

A tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil is needed to saute garlic (which can be picked up at any grocery store) and onions which can be purchased at Loeb for \$.69 a bag.

Our Compliments olive oil can be purchased at IGA or The Garden Basket (Mastro) for \$4.99. Fortinos has San Paolo olive oil for \$5.49.

Hot House Tomatoes can be purchased at Loblaw's for \$1.49/lb, Loeb and Weston Produce for \$1.29/lb.

Plum tomatoes are on at Food Basics and No Frills has large tomatoes for \$.79/lb.

As for the spices, Village Grocer carries chili peppers for \$1.69/pkg and The Bulk Barn has ground basil for \$4.54/lb.

Red wine is also needed for this recipe and can be purchased at any liquor store.

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (a high-quality parmesan cheese) which is added to taste as well as to garnish can be picked up at Village Grocer for \$3.49 for a 100 gram package.

A couple slices of either garlic or regular Italian bread can be added to the side of this dish and can be purchased at A&P or Dominion for \$1.19.

Dessert

M&M Meat Shops have a box of cinnamon swirls on for \$1.99.

Heat them up in the microwave and serve.

Brown College. The course has been taught by Annabella di Montaperto Uberti, an Italian culinary expert who is conducting Italian Cooking skills courses world-wide on behalf of the Italian Trade Commission.

Over the past four days she has kept a diverse audience of food professionals captivated with stories about the history, culture and traditional cuisine of Italy.

Everybody loves Italian food. It is fresh, colorful and unquestionably delicious. But what really is Italian food? There really is no single Italian cuisine. In Italy, each of the regions has its own distinctive culinary character and traditions.

The style of cooking within each region is determined by availability of locally produced ingredients and cooking techniques specific to that particular area.

These traditions continue to be proudly preserved within the different regions of Italy ensuring a grand diversity and originality of cuisine throughout the country.

In Italy what is local is best and if there is one aspect of cooking shared by all regions of Italy, it is the importance placed on the quality of the ingredients.

All over Italy, Italians treat their food with great respect. Their cooking is designed to emphasize the natural flavors of the ingredi-



ITALIAN FEAST: Vince Tortorci, assistant store manager of The Garden Basket, shows some of the popular food items used in Italian cooking. Photo by LORI EMMERSON

ents. Italian food is brightly colored in the marketplace, and just as brightly colored when it reappears on the plate.

It is wholesome, hearty and delicious food - endlessly varied - and essentially home-

cooking that requires very few special skills to master.

In Canada we are extremely fortunate to have access to many of the delicious ingredients that make Italian cuisine so unique.

Take a stroll through your

local supermarket and experiment with some of the traditional ingredients from Italy. These foods will delight you and your family with some new and exciting flavors and recipe ideas.

Ciao!

Spaghetti and Insalata Caprese on menu

SPAGHETTI WITH TOMATOES, BASIL AND PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO

Serves four to six

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 5-6 ripe tomatoes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup red wine
- 1/4 tsp. crushed chili peppers
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil
- As desired freshly grated parmigiano-reggiano
- 1 lb. spaghetti (approx. 120 grams of dry pasta/person)

PREPARATION

- 1.) Blanch tomatoes in boiling water for 20 seconds, then plunge into cold water to stop cooking. Peel, seed and chop tomatoes. Set aside.
- 2.) Heat oil in skillet. Add garlic and saute gently until fragrant, but not brown. Remove garlic from skillet.
- 3.) Add onion to skillet and saute until transparent. Stir in tomatoes, wine and chili peppers and continue cooking for 2-3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
- 4.) Meanwhile, bring large pot of water to a boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente. Drain well.
- 5.) Toss sauce with freshly-cooked pasta. Gradually add parmigiano-reggiano and freshly chopped basil to pasta. Toss pasta and

RECIPES

adjust seasoning if necessary.

- 6.) Garnish pasta with additional parmigiano-reggiano and basil.

INSALATA CAPRESE Six Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tomatoes
- 300 g. mozzarella cheese
- 6 anchovy fillets (optional)
- 6 basil leaves, small
- 12 green olives, pitted
- As desired extra virgin olive oil
- As desired salt, pepper, oregano

PREPARATION

- 1.) Wash tomatoes and slice evenly.
- 2.) Cut the mozzarella into evenly-sized slices
- 3.) Drizzle olive oil on the bottom of a serving dish. Sprinkle oil with salt, pepper and oregano. Place alternate slices of tomato and mozzarella cheese on the oil mixture.
- 4.) Sprinkle tomatoes and mozzarella slices with salt, pepper, oregano and some oil, and then top with the anchovy fillets, basil leaves and olives.