

# *LA VOCE DI GCICS*

GULF COAST ITALIAN CULTURE SOCIETY, INC.

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[WWW.GCICS.ORG](http://WWW.GCICS.ORG)

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## *Special Edition*



## *Valentine Culinary Issue*

Try one of these delicious recipes for your significant other or yourself on Valentine's Day for a great meal or dessert. You will savor all the delectable flavors of Italy.



**GCICS VIRTUAL SOCIAL HOUR – January 26, 2021**  
**Article & Photos: Ellen Roderick, GCICS Secretary**

I am pleased to report on our 6th virtual Social Hour. Thirteen talented GCICS cooks shared **favorite Italian dishes**, some passed down from grandparents. We had 4 “First Timers” to our social hours: Noni & Vern St. Amand, Paola Tate, and Mary Lou Ferrari. Thank you, **Judy Herman**, for your wonderful facilitating. To quote one attendee: “What an enjoyable time today”. We are scheduling a Feb. Social Hour; Gordon Bloom will facilitate; and we will soon announce the topic and date (always 5-6 pm).

We began with **Noni & Vern St. Amand** who remain in their MI 55+ community for the winter season. Noni spoke about her **Roasted Potatoes with Rosemary**. When they were living in Rome, Noni was receiving informal cooking lessons from their Roman friends; she eventually abandoned the complex recipes and found some basic ones. Who does not love Patate al Forno!

**Penny Thomas** was raised by an Irish grandmother although her dad was first-generation Italian. Moving to FL, she began crafting her Italian cooking skills. She spoke about making a **Cubanelle Peppers & Scrambled Eggs** dish. Penny also shared her **Caponata** recipe, an eggplant dish served on bread or lettuce.

**Gordon & Joyce Bloom** were prepared with a power point illustrating the preparation of **Salsa di Pomodoro e Salciccia Italia con Polenta Cotto al Forno**. Gordon told us that his grandparents, Lorenzo & Catterina Garda, were fun to be around (Lorenzo was the chef and Catterina was the one tidying up). The recipe appears below as well as a photo of his grandparents.

**Mary Rinaldi** spoke lovingly about her Sicilian paternal grandmother and her yummy recipe of **pasta, salami, and broccoli rabe (rapini)**. This is a favorite dish of Mary's husband, Jack, and Mary makes it often. **Linda Mercurio** shared a cookbook entitled "Eclectic Recipes from Family & Friends" put together by her cousin, Eunice. A real favorite of Linda's is her Neapolitan grandmother's spaghetti recipe. **Paola Tate** described a popular Northern Italy side dish/appetizer prepared in the winter – **Farinata or Socca**. Gluten free, it is made with garbanzo flour, olive oil, fresh rosemary, and black pepper.

**Rosie Lumetta** shared her **Salmone alla Bocca** which she was introduced to in a classy Denver restaurant. Rosie identified the ingredients and showed us the products she purchases for the dish (e.g., Newman's Own Parmesan & Roasted Garlic salad dressing, Kraft Italian 5 Cheeses). The secret to its great flavor is marinating the salmon in salad dressing for hours. **Sandra Russell** spoke about her favorite spaghetti dish from Spoleto– **Spaghetti with Truffles or Mushrooms**. This was often a 1st course at her family's Seven Fishes dinners. Sandy praises her Spoleto recipes, including fried smelts.

Finally, **Joan Del Giudice** shared delicious traditional Italian desserts (see photos). During the holidays, she made the sweets -- **Struffoli** (Honey Balls), deep-fried balls of sweet dough, an Italian Easter & Christmas staple; and **Cucidati**, a Sicilian fig cookie. Both involve weeks of preparation. But how scrumptious they appeared on the zoom screen!!



**NONI ST. AMAND'S  
ROASTED POTATOES WITH ROSEMARY  
"Patate al Forno"**



**INGREDIENTS**

- \*1 to 2 lbs Yukon gold potatoes
- \*Olive oil approx. 1/3 to 1/2 cups
- \*2 heaping Tablespoons of fresh Rosemary
- \*Salt & Pepper to taste.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wash the potatoes and boil them with skins on for approx. 10 minutes to soften them (cuts time in oven). If you boil them in salted water, you will not need to sprinkle with salt at the end. Drain and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. Put the oil and Rosemary into a large bowl. Cut the potatoes in either quarters or cubes and add them to the bowl. Carefully mix together making sure the potatoes are evenly coated with the oil and Rosemary. Place the coated potatoes on a lightly oiled sheet pan and roast for 35-55 min., stirring periodically until they are golden brown but not burnt. You can also use Thyme leaves instead of the Rosemary along with 1-2 tsp. of garlic powder.

I have made a variation of this by slicing the raw potatoes and coating them with the oil, Rosemary or Thyme, garlic powder, and freshly ground Parmesan cheese before placing them into lightly oiled muffin tins. I top each with more Parmesan and a sprinkling of black pepper. Bake for approx. 60 min., watching them after 45 min. to make sure they do not burn

## CAPONATA RECIPE

Penny Thomas, GCICS Treasure



### Ingredients:

1 medium to large eggplant, about 1-1 ½ pounds, unpeeled and cut into ¾ inch cubes

Salt

¾ cup olive oil or more, if needed

2 cups diced celery

2 cups chopped onions

1/3 cup red wine vinegar

1 tsp sugar

2 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced or 1 16 oz can of dice tomatoes

2 tbl capers, drained

½ cup sliced pimiento-stuffed green olives

2 anchovy fillets, chopped (optional)

3 tbl finely chopped parsley

1 tsp fennel seeds

Pepper

Toss the eggplant cubes generously with salt and drain in a colander in the sink for at least 30 minutes. In a large frying pan, heat ¼ cup olive oil over medium heat. Put in the celery and onions, stirring frequently. Cook until the vegetables soften, about 10 minutes. Remove the onion/celery mixture from the pan and set aside.

Wash the eggplant well under running water, and pat dry with paper towels. Reheat the skillet over medium heat, add the remaining olive oil and cook the eggplant, stirring occasionally, until it is lightly browned and each piece is quite soft, about 10-15 minutes.

While the eggplant is cooking, mix together the vinegar, sugar and tomatoes in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer until a smooth sauce forms. If the sauce seems too thick, add a little water. Add the cooked onion/celery mixture to the eggplant. Pour the tomato sauce over all and add the capers, olives, optional anchovies, parsley, and fennel seeds. Simmer over low heat for 20 minutes adding more water if the caponata begins to dry out. Season with salt and pepper to taste and refrigerate until cool. The caponata should sit for a while to marry the flavors even as much as a day.

This recipe can be doubled nicely.

Salsa di Pomodoro e SalcicciaItalia con  
Polenta cotto al forno di Nonno Lorenzo



Lorenzo and Catterina Garda Sono di  
Albiano d'Ivrea  
provenienza Piemonte



## Mio Nonno Garda's Recetta for salsa del pomodoro con la Polenta



Gordon Bloom

Serves 4 to 6 – If your guest does not like sausage then cook a few chicken tenders and serve them covered with the sauce. This has work really well at dinner parties.

2 cloves garlic  
Tablespoon dried basil or ½ cup fresh  
Canned whole tomatoes – One 28 oz. and One 14 oz.  
½ cup chopped onions  
Olive oil  
1-cup dry red wine  
1 to 1 1/4 lbs Italian sausage (5 links) mild or hot as preferred  
9 oz. package fresh spinach  
1-cup cornmeal  
2 cups water  
1-cup heavy cream  
½ to ¾ cup shredded asiago cheese (aged at least 12 months)

### Sauce Preparation

With a large frying pan that can be covered, sauté garlic in the oil until just brown and add onions. Continue until the onions are soft, add the wine and cook down for a few minutes. Add the tomatoes, basil and bring to a boil. Add the sausage and the spinach and then simmer on low heat for at least two to three hours. Salt to taste.

Prior to sauce preparation, partially cook sausages in a separate pan so they do not lose too much fat. Hold on side to add to the saucepan

### Polenta Preparation

In saucepan bring the water to a boil and slowly whisk in all the cornmeal, then whisk in the cream. I also add a tablespoon of oil and teaspoon of salt. Cook on low heat for 45 minutes stirring every few minutes until very thick.

Take a baking sheet, cover with parchment paper, lightly coat the paper with olive oil, pour out the cooked polenta on the sheet and spread out on the entire surface to an even thickness. Cover and place in the refrigerator for a few hours.

Set oven to 425 degrees, lightly coat the polenta with olive oil bake for 20 minutes and then cover with a half cup of shredded asiago cheese and return to the oven for another 10 minutes. Remove from oven, let cool for a few minutes and cut into 3-inch squares for serving.

*Buon Appetito*

Pasta with Broccoli and Salami Recipe  
By Mary Rinaldi, Newsletter Editor



Ingredients

- 1 lb. of rigatoni, penne, or gemelli
- 1 or 2 bunches of Broccoli Rabe (rapini)
- 1 small ricotta (15 oz.)
- ½ cup grated parmesan chesse
- ½ lb. of salami (genoa, soppressata, or mixed) sliced in the deli and then you cut it length wise strips
- 2 cloves of garlic
- Olive oil

Start cooking the pasta.

Slice broccoli rabe and boil in salt water for 10 min to remove bitterness, then fry in garlic and olive oil.

In large pasta bowl put the ricotta, the parmesan cheese, broccoli rabe, pasta, and salami with 2 dippers of water from the pasta. Mix and serve.



## Penne alla Vodka with Salmon Recipe By Rosie Lumetta



**This recipe makes a 9 x 13 oblong casserole dish. BAKE assembled casserole at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until piping hot. I make mine early in day, refrigerate and then bake it right before guests arrive.**

### Ingredients



- 1 16 oz Box Barilla Collezione Penne Pasta  
(It's not as good with a cheaper brand pasta)
- 1 jar of Neuman's Own Parmesan Roasted Garlic salad dressing
- 12 oz of Salmon cut into bite size pieces
- 1 24 oz jar Bertolli's Vodka sauce. (have another on hand in case you want more sauce)
- 1 8 oz package of Kraft Italian five cheeses. OR 8 oz of fresh mozzarella cut into small pieces. I prefer the fresh Bel Gioioso from COSTO.



- 1 medium onion finally chopped
- 2 finely minced garlic cloves (more or less to your taste) 6 to 8 ounce of sliced mushrooms fresh or in a jar. (optional)



### **Plating for Main Course**

Fill dinner sized bowls.

Garnish with Fresh shaved parmesan

Have a small bowl of red pepper flakes on table for guests who like it spicier

### **STEP 1. Salmon and Salad dressing**

12 oz of Salmon - Cut the Salmon into bite size pieces, like 1 by 1 inch squares. (I usually put the wrapped salmon in freezer for 30 minutes as it makes it easier to cut.) Put pieces in glass baking dish.

**Cover the salmon with the entire bottle of the Newman's salad dressing.**

Cover with Saran wrap. Put in refrigerator for 2 hours to marinate.

After 2 hours, scoop out with a slotted spoon and put on a 'PAM' sprayed baking sheet or clean baking dish.

**DO NOT COOK in the salad dressing as it will get very mushy.** Cover and **BAKE @ 350 degrees** for 20-25 minutes. No longer as it will be reheated with the sauce later. I wipe off any of the white fat that you see after baking. Set aside for later

### **STEP 2. Cooking Pasta**

While the salmon is baking cook the pasta according to box directions but make it 'al dente'. It will not taste as good if you use cheaper pasta.

After pasta is cooked, drain and rinse if you want. I do.

### **STEP 3. Sauce and other ingredients.**

In a large mixing bowl, mix all other ingredients except mushrooms. Then mix in the pasta.

### **STEP 4. Assembling casserole.**

Spray casserole dish with PAM or olive oil. Put the pasta/sauce mixture into dish. Spread evenly. Then evenly spread-out mushrooms. Then evenly put the salmon pieces on top of that. Add a light sauce covering on top.

Bake covered at 375 degrees in a preheated oven.

**SANDRA RUSSELL'S**  
**Spaghetti with Truffles or Mushrooms**



**INGREDIENTS**

- \*Two canned truffles or a pound of fresh mushrooms
- \*2/3 cup of olive oil
- \*1 lb. spaghetti
- \*1/2 tsp salt
- \*Grated pecorino cheese

\*Slice the truffles very thin with a sharp knife or on a box cheese grater. Place the truffles in a shallow dish and pour the olive oil over them. Refrigerate for several hours or overnight. If using fresh mushrooms, slice them just before you use them.

\*Cook the spaghetti in a large pot. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil that the truffles are marinating in and cook the garlic until it is soft but not brown. Turn off the heat and add the remaining olive oil and truffles or mushrooms.

\*Drain the spaghetti holding back 2 tablespoons of the cooking water. Add the spaghetti and the reserved water to the skillet. Reheat the mixture over a low heat until it is hot. Stir in the salt and place on the serving platter. Serve the cheese on the side.



# Struffoli and Cucidati Recipes

## By Joan Del Giudice



**STRUFFOLI** (Neapolitan- fried Honey Balls) and **CUCIDATI** (fig/citrus/spices/ nuts/ baked filled cookies) Sicilian tradition taught to me by a Sicilian. I make both annually and they are well liked and anticipated. These desserts are prepared in advance and spread over a few days.

**STRUFFOLI:** This is my mother's recipe that is highly flavored with citrus oils, sugar, butter; not just eggs and flour. I prepare the dough in advance over a few days: refrigerate it, roll it, and make pipes, cut, and then fry outside with a helper. The Sicilians call this dessert **Pinolati** as they prepare the final product dressed with pine nuts or pinoli.

**CUCIDATI:** I use the same Struffoli dough to make the Cucidati. The fig filling can be made in advance and stored in a cool place for a long time. It is sweet, cooked, etc. (see recipe below).

**Dough:** I use the basic dough recipe of ingredients with 6 eggs, etc. and then multiply it depending on how much I want to make. This year I made 3 x basic dough recipe with 18 eggs, 8 lbs flour, etc. (see recipe below).



Philomena  
Del Giudice

# STRUFFOLI

NEOPOLITAN HONEY  
BALLS + BOWTIES

## BASIC

2004

4 cup  
1 cup  
1/2 t

1. C  
2. E  
3. C

Make  
Column  
Fill  
hold

6 eggs-beaten	12	Beat Egg, Sugar & butter - Beaters
ORANGE RIND (1) GRATED	2	add FLOUR as much as it will take then
1 1/2 @ SUGAR	3	place on Board
3-4 oz VERMOUTH or 5 CAPS SAMBUCA or ANISE OIL/EXTRACT		Refrig. → Rm Temp
1/2 STICK BUTTER SOFT	1st	Roller to cut → pipes then cut pieces
1 1/2 TSP BAKING POWDR	3 TSP	FRY CRISCO Oil
1/4 " SALT	1/2 TSP	BRN PAPER BAGS ONLY
4+ CUPS FLOUR CINNAMON	8+	YIELD →

- 1 lb white figs chopped (white)
- 2 lbs mustat seeded raisins
- 1/2 cups chopped citran
- 1 orange rind grated & 1 lemon rind
- 1 cup honey → about - add more if necessary
- 2 cups water → necessary

## FILLING FIG

## CUCIATI

Cook the above ingredients over low heat till fruit is cooked (about 1/2 hour) stirring often to prevent sticking or burning. Add more honey and water mixture if necessary. Then add 1/2 cup pinollas.

- 1/2 cup pinoklas
- 1/2 cup slivered blanched almonds
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts
- 1 teasp canella

Remove from heat and put filling in a caserole to cool. When cold sprinkle top with -

- 1 cup chopped toasted filberts
- 1 square grated bitter chocolate
- 1 teasp canella

Cooking time may have to be increased if more ingredients are used.

