



Slow Food® Upstate



“Capturing Summer for the Winter Months” Cooking Class

20 August 2011

Enjoy the bounty of summer with many of the in-season vegetables learning to pickle them in traditional Italian style by preserving in oil and vinegar PLUS quite a few other recipes.

Progression of topics – dishes

During the lesson we will work hands-on with many of the following preparations, but not all, as the vast majority of them take a lot longer than a single day to be done. Some preparations are marked as Partial hands-on, specifically to indicate that part of the preparation has already taken place and you will only finish assembling the recipe.

Tomatoes

- Italian salsa di pomodoro all'antica (**Partial Hands-on**)
- Home-made Ketchup (**Hands-on**)

Eggplants

- Imam Bayildi (stuffed eggplants) (**Hands-on**)

Peppers

- Hot pepper jam (**Hands-on**)
- Roasted peppers (**Hands-on**)
- Stuffed Cherry peppers (**Hands-on**)

Basil

- Pesto Sauce (**Hands-on**)

Pickling cucumbers

- Pickled Burr gherkins (**Partial Hands-on**)
- Giardiniera (**Partial Hands-on**)

Besides these listed recipes, quite a few more will also be given to you. Although the class itself is quite long, it is definitely not sufficient for all the possible preparations. In the pages provided additionally you will find some of the preparations served, as well as some very different and intriguing recipes that you could easily try at home.

Lunch Menu

Home-made sausage "my style" *
with Pickled Burr Gherkins, Pickled Eggplants and Giardiniera *
Roasted peppers & Stuffed cherry peppers *
Southern style vegetable soup *
Pasta with fresh pesto *
"Bollito" of beef with different sauces *
Imam Bayildi (stuffed eggplants) *
Chocolate "salami" *

For this Cooking Class **Renato Vicario** will be helped and assisted by **Eve King**, Educator and Farm Assistant at the Roper Mountain Science Center

LUNCH RECIPES

* Sausage "my stile"

- 2 kg pork
- 225 gram pork fat
- 35 gram salt
- 7 gram pepper
- 12 gram minced garlic
- 1 gram hot pepper flakes/powder
- 4 gram ground coriander seeds
- 20 gram chopped fresh oregano leaves
- 20 gram chopped fresh basil leaves
- 10 gram finely chopped sage
- 250 ml cold red wine

Cut the meat and fat into small chunks and lay them on a sheet tray covering with foil. Place in freezer (meat needs to be very cold – nearly stiff – before grinding). Grind the lean and fat into a chilled mixing bowl where you will place all ingredients. Mix in the wine using the large spatula of the Kitchen-Aid mixer; you will see that as the materials blend the meat will grow firm and compact. Stuff in casings and hang them to dry in a ventilated area till they lose the surface moisture (you can also just roll the meat into sausage like bundles and cover with aluminum foil or parchment paper if you intend to use it within a few days. Freeze or keep in the refrigerator for 4/5 days

* Pickled Burr Gherkin - (*Partial hands-on*)

The Burr Gherkin is a small ovoid shaped, spiny cucumber introduced into the United States around 1793. The Spanish and Portuguese brought the fruit from West Africa to the Caribbean islands, in the 1500's, where it has been used in many traditional dishes from the region. This prolific vegetable can be eaten raw, cooked like squash or pickled (the most common use). The pickled recipe we will use is an adaptation from a 1747 cookbook, "the Art of Cookery" by Hannah Glasse. This recipe produces a slightly spicy, tangy pickle, a nice change from the traditional dill flavor.

- Approximately 4 lbs of Burr Gherkins
- 3 large onions thinly sliced
- whole peppercorns
- blade mace
- 2" piece of ginger root , peeled & thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup of pickling salt or kosher salt
- 1 quart white wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar

Wash and slice gherkins 1/4" thick, discarding blossom and stem ends. Place in a nonreactive bowl with sliced onions. Add salt and mix well, cover and let stand at least 3 hours or overnight. Drain thoroughly. To each hot, sterilized jar add 2-3 peppercorns, a small piece of mace and 2 slices of ginger root. Add onion and gherkin mixture. Meanwhile heat vinegar to boiling. When jars are filled, pour in the vinegar leaving a 1/4" head space. Close jars and process in a hot water bath for 15 minutes. "They will be fit to eat in 3 or 4 days". **Note:** The pre-salting can be omitted but you will have a less crispy pickle. Also spices can be adjusted to taste and vinegar quantity can be adjusted to the amount of Gherkins you have on hand to pickle.

Roasted Peppers in Oil (Peperoni Arrostiti Sotto Olio) - (*Hands-on*)

- 1 red bell pepper + 1 yellow bell pepper + 1 orange bell pepper
- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 5 leaves fresh basil leaves, finely sliced
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

Preheat an outdoor grill for high heat and lightly oil the grate. Reduce grill heat to medium. Grill whole peppers until charred on all sides, turning about every 5 minutes. Alternatively place peppers on a grilling pan or char them directly on a flame. Place charred peppers in a plastic food storage bag and tie shut. Allow peppers to cool in bag.

To eat immediately: Combine olive oil, garlic, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper in a 1-pint glass jar (or larger, depending on size of peppers). Remove cooled peppers from bag and scrape off charred skins. Cut peppers in half and remove seeds and stems. Slice peppers into long strips and place in oil mixture. Mix well, assuring peppers are covered in oil. Serve.

To store: Bring to boil ½ liter vinegar and ½ liter dry white wine with a spoon of salt. Put in the peppers for about 3 minutes, then drain and line them on a towel to dry overnight. Distribute the peppers in the jars sprinkling a little oil on every layer. Fill up the jars to ½ inch of opening making sure that all air bubbles are out. Put them in a cool dark place to rest, checking every other day that the oil stays at level. Add more oil if necessary.

* **Southern style Vegetable Soup - (Hands-on)**

A quick easy way to deal with an abundant garden harvest or if you bought more of those wonderful vegetables at the market than you were able to use, is to make soup. You can use beef, vegetable or chicken broth and change the vegetables according to the season.

- 2 quarts good broth (we will use the bollito broth)
- seasonal vegetables (okra, corn, green beans, onions, carrots, pumpkin, etc.)
- Herbs and spices to taste

Slice or cube vegetables, remove corn from the cob. Wash and dry herbs, chop or tie with string to add to pot. Place all ingredients in a pot, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are cooked. If adding leafy vegetables or tomatoes, add them during the last five minutes of cooking to prevent them from becoming mushy or overcooked. Allow soup to cool. Fill muffin tins, place tins on a tray with edges, freeze. Pop out muffin soup, and store in containers in freezer. Alternately, you can fill hot, freezer jars with hot soup and freeze.

* **Pasta with Fresh Basil Pesto - (Hands-on)**

- 1 pack of 1 pound of trenette or linguine or spaghetti
- 2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano and Pecorino cheese
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup pine nuts
- 3 medium sized garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Put a pot of water to boil (the secret of great pasta is 1 liter of water every 100 grams of pasta), when boiling add the pasta (1 pack of 1 pound will be more than enough for 4 people). Meanwhile, in a mortar, combine the basil with the pine nuts and salt, and pound it into a paste (about 5 minutes), then add the garlic and cream together (about 10 minutes). Add the olive oil in a constant stream while pounding till all is incorporated. Scrape down the sides of the mortar with a rubber spatula and add the grated cheese blending it with the pestle. Add a pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Pour in a large bowl; add about 2 tablespoonful of the water where the pasta is cooking. When "al dente" drain the pasta and add it to the bowl mixing well with the pesto sauce.

* **Summer Bollito - (Partial Hands-on)**

Unlike the traditional winter "Bollito Misto", this summer variation is much lighter and can be eaten hot or cold, as you prefer, with some traditional sauces or a simple mixed salad. You will start by making a broth as per this recipe.

Making Broth - Italian Recipe - Broth is one of the great inventions of all time. It serves as an ingredient in all sorts of things, from stew to risotto, and in its own right a bowl of broth is the

perfect supper after a filling midday meal. A good bowl of broth will warm you in the winter, refresh you in the summer, and is perfect year round if you're on a diet.

- 3 quarts of water
- 2 pounds of beef pieces, shanks, short plate, short ribs, or brisket.
- A piece of spongy bone, or a joint, split (optional)
- Piece of chicken or capon
- 1 stick of celery
- 1 carrot
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 small onion
- 3 to 5 pepper corns
- 3 cloves
- Salt to taste (go VERY easy, because the broth will evaporate and get saltier as it cooks)

Meat from older animals is better because it has more flavor, and the beef should not be too lean. A piece of spongy bone, or a joint, split, enriches the broth, though it also makes it greasier. If you want to keep the meat of the fowl from discoloring put it in a finely woven bag – it will cook just the same, and the broth will not be affected. Start with cold water; figure about a quart of water per pound of meat. Add the meat, vegetables, and seasonings to the water at the same time. Heat the pot over a high flame until the broth comes to a boil, and then turn the heat down. Simmer the broth for a couple of hours, or until a fork easily penetrates the meat. Check the seasoning, strain the broth, let it cool, and skim the fat that rises to the surface (the best way to do this is to chill the broth and remove the fat once congealed).

Bollito - Once prepared and with all fat fully removed, you will use this broth as the base for the preparation of the summer bollito. You will not need to add any additional vegetables, just the meat you will be cooking.

- Prepared broth
- 2 pounds eye of round
- 2 pounds top round or brisket

Take an eye of round and a small brisket or top round and cut all fat and any silver skin from the meat while you put the broth in a pot to boil. Once the broth is boiling, lower the meats into it and cook till the meat is tender (about 1 ½ hours depending on the cuts). Once ready, let it cool in the broth then slice into portions.

* **Chocolate "salami"**

- 250 gram dry cookies
- 150 gram bitter cocoa powder
- 160 gram walnuts
- 250 gram butter
- 250 gram sugar
- Vanilla to taste
- 2 eggs
- 2 yolks

Crumble the cookies and chop the walnuts. Melt the butter without cooking it. In a bowl, mix thoroughly the sugar, a little vanilla and the eggs until it all becomes a homogeneous and soft cream, then fold in the cocoa powder. Add the melted butter, cookie crumbs and walnuts, mixing gently. Pour the dough onto a piece of parchment paper and roll it in a cylindrical form securing the paper around it. Put in the refrigerator and let it cool for 1 day. To serve it, take out of the refrigerator at least 1 hour in advance and slice as you would salami.

COOKING COURSE RECIPES

Italian salsa di pomodoro all'antica - (*Partial Hands-on*)

- 4 kg fully ripe unblemished tomatoes
- 300 gram carrots
- 200 grams onion
- 1 celery stalk
- 20 basil leaves
- 1 spring of parsley
- 1 small handful of salt
- Extra virgin olive oil

I used to help my great-grandmother make this sauce when I was a little kid and was in charge of providing her with all the necessary items She used to set up a huge, witches' like cauldron outside, in the garden, and keep it going all day...

Wash the vegetables and chop the carrots and celery, while you will break and squash with your hands the parsley, basil and peppers (quite emotionally satisfying I have to say). Add to your cauldron with the salt and boil it, on moderate heat, for at least a couple of hours (it will depend on the water content of the tomatoes). Let the compost cool, and then process it through a tomato mill (or a regular vegetable mill). Once pureed bottle it in jars, add some olive oil to the top of each jar and sterilize in a pot for about 40 minutes (time from when the water starts boiling again. Let cool and repeat the boiling process once more. Let the jars cool in the water before taking them out and storing in a cool dry and dark place. They will keep for a very long time.

Ketchup style sauce - (*Hands-on*)

- 2 kg fully ripe tomatoes
- 2 meaty yellow or red peppers
- 1 onion
- 1 hot pepper or some black pepper
- 8 cloves
- 1 glass or red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Salt to taste

Wash the vegetables and add them to a pot with the cloves. Cook on low flame for about 2 hours, and then pass through a mill. Return the puree to the pot and add the other ingredients. Cook for another 30 minutes till the sauce thickens, taste and adjust the salt and pepper. Immediately bottle (you can actually use small bottles like beer bottles) and let cool without stoppers. When cold seal the bottles with crown caps.

Italian Pickled Vegetables – Giardiniera - (*Partial Hands-on*)

- 1 Kg mixed vegetables (pearl or button onion, peppers, celery, tiny cucumbers (gherkins), carrots, etc.)
- 1 ½ liter wine vinegar
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pinch of sugar (optional)
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 clove
- 5 peppercorns
- salt
- 1 pinch of mixed spices (thyme, sage, rosemary, etc.)
- 1 tsp. olive oil

Clean, wash and cut the vegetables according to the various types. Boil half the amount of vinegar, let cool and set aside. In a large saucepan bring to a boil the remaining vinegar with 1/2 bay leaf, a pinch of sugar, the clove garlic, the clove, 5 peppercorns, and a pinch of salt. Add the vegetables and let cook for at least 3 mins, according to the type of greens.

Remove the pot from the heat and, when the vinegar has cooled, drain the vegetables and place them in a jar. Add the remaining bay leaf and the peppercorn, spices, oil and vinegar that had been set aside. Cover the jar with an air-tight cover. Store for later use.

* **Stuffed Cherry peppers - Peperoncini al Tonno - (*Hands-on*)**

- 500 gram small, round, hot peppers
- 200 g tuna packed in oil (drained weight; you may need less, but won't want to come up short)
- 4 salted anchovies
- 2 tablespoon capers
- 1 liter olive oil
- 250 ml white (or red) wine vinegar
- 250 ml white wine
- 3 cloves, ½ teaspoon oregano
- 3 juniper berries
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt & pepper

Clean the peppers using a sharp paring knife, remove the stems, seed them, and remove the ribs, being careful not to puncture them. In a pot add the white wine, vinegar, spices and salt bringing to a boil. Add the hot peppers and let cook for about 3 minutes on moderate flame, then drain them well on a clean cloth, upside down, till very dry (it may take overnight). Meanwhile, desalt the capers and the anchovies. Prepare the stuffing blending (just for a few short pulses) the tuna, capers and anchovies that you will have already partially chopped (the tuna should NOT become creamy). Use this paste to fill the peppers, with the help of a small spoon and tamping it down gently lest they split. Arrange the peppers in glass jars, with the opening upright, add olive oil to cover, seal them, and let them rest in a cool dark place for a week before enjoying them. They'll keep for at least 6 months. These can be addictive, and don't be too surprised if people ignore everything else when they see them among the antipasti, and then beg out of the rest of the meal.

Note: If, when you go to open a jar, you find the lid has bulged up, or you hear the hiss of escaping air as the seal is broken, do not eat the peppers! I have never heard of this happening, but I think it is better to be warned than sorry.

Hot peppers jam - (*Hands-on*)

- 500 gram Red and Yellow peppers
- 300 gram Cherry hot peppers
- 200 gram Habanero peppers
- 500 gram Sugar
- ½ glass red wine
- 1 large lemon zest and juice
- 1 pinch salt

Clean the peppers with a cloth and cut stems (Wear gloves when handling hot peppers - keep hands away from eyes!). Open the regular and cherry hot peppers and deseed them cutting off the ribs of the sweet peppers only. Chop the peppers (keep the seeds of the habaneros in the preparation) in a non-reactive pot and add the sugar, zest and lemon juice. Mix and put in the refrigerator overnight. Next day mix in the ½ glass of red wine and put on the stove to boil on low heat for about 2 hours. Process through a mill and return the puree to the pot. Boil till it thickens then bottle in hot sterilized jars. Seal and overturn the bottle covering with a warm flannel. Once cold store the jam. Enjoy!
Variant: add 300 grams of mango for a sweeter base to the sauce.

* Imam Bayildi (Stuffed Eggplant Turkish style) - (*Hands-on*)

Before launching into the preparation of this delightful dish, we need to talk about the curious origin of its name. In Turkish "imam bayildi" literally means "the priest fainted" and there are two schools on the interpretation of the origins of this term.

One is that eggplants are k to absorb a lot of oil. When you read the recipe, you'll understand why, when the imam asked his wife how much oil she used in making the dish, he "fainted" at her answer. She replied, "Why, dear husband, I used only half a gallon"

The other has it that when the imam tasted this dish for the first time, he loved it so much to declare he *fainted* over it. In Turkish the expression "Aman, bayildim!" literally means "Oh, I fainted" but is really used to express one's delight in something, akin to the expression "To die for!"

- 6- 8 small, thin Italian eggplants
- 2 large onions, quartered and sliced
- 3-4 cloves of garlic, sliced.
- 3-5 Roma tomatoes, diced
- Parsley, chopped
- salt and ground pepper to taste.
- ½ cup olive oil

Wash eggplants, dry and remove stems. Peel in alternate strips. In medium hot oil, fry them whole, turning occasionally, until slightly golden and softened but NOT fully cooked. Remove to a plate and set aside. To the oil remaining in pan add onions, sauté until translucent and golden. Add tomatoes, garlic, seasonings and cook another 3 minutes. Add chopped parsley. Cool a little to handle. With a spoon and a fork, part each eggplant lengthwise in the middle to open a slit. Do not go all the way down to the bottom. Into these "boats" spoon as much filling as possible, pushing gently and pulling the sides over on the filling. Repeat until all are done. Place stuffed eggplant "boats" in an oven-proof casserole and bake uncovered for 30-40 minutes at 350 degrees. Do not add any liquid as the liquids exude during baking. Cool. Before serving, sprinkle with more finely chopped parsley. Store in the refrigerator for up to a week.