

The Supper Club

'THE ITALIAN NIGHT'

ISSUE ONE : FEB 2006

I think we would all agree that the first night of 'The Supper Club' was a resounding success. We aimed for about twelve people, but due to a variety of reasons the final numbers were six, which was perfect for this trial run. We managed well this time but an increase in numbers could mean a more heated kitchen and I don't just mean the cooking! The logistics of preparing and cooking the food still needs to be ironed out but

we are well on the way to more culinary delights. One thing to think about for next time is the possibility of more structuring beforehand. At the moment, apart from a couple of designated dessert makers, it is pretty much a free for all. If our numbers do increase we may need to start designating people for starters and main too. At least this should keep the kitchen cool and cooking stress at bay!

THE RECIPES

Bruschetta

1 punnet of cherry tomatoes roasted at 200 for about 20 - 30 mins in herb/garlic infused olive oil at this time also roast 2 whole heads of garlic, wrapped in foil and drizzled in olive oil remove toms and garlic and allow to cool - skin toms and transfer to a saucepan along with any cooking juices - bring to boil and add fresh chilli, tomato puree and dried oregano to taste and reduce over a medium heat until thick squeeze garlic and mash with sea salt (the coarseness of the salt acts as an abrasive to puree the garlic) to assemble - top ciabatta or crusty bread with a generous smear of the roast garlic, add the tom mix and top with finely sliced fresh mozzarella and a few basil leaves - warm under a hot grill until melted.

Crostini topped with green olive tapenade & garlic

Take a big tub of good green olives and the zest & juice of an unwaxed lemon and a good few sprigs of fresh thyme and pulse in a processor - then add basil infused extra virgin olive oil until a loose consistency is achieved. serve on warm baguette rubbed with a clove of garlic

Risotto

200g arborio rice
1/2 onion or a couple of shallots finely sliced
1-2oz butter
garlic - couple of cloves very finely chopped
good half glass of dry white wine
pint of mushroom stock
small jar of la sacla pesto
200-250 grams of any mushroom
good wedge of parmesan or pecorino cheese, grated
cream
seasoning - salt if required depending on stock but plenty of black pepper is good

add the mushrooms and continue to add the stock - this should take about 15-20 mins from adding rice stage and when the rice is cooked al dente add the cheese and cream and serve, seasoned to taste.



Gently does it with risotto I find so over a low heat melt the butter and add the garlic and onion and melt them without colouring - add the rice and stir to coat for a few mins in the mix - add the wine and allow the rice to absorb it with a beautiful sigh (it will make that noise!). Then turn up the heat to about medium and add the pesto, wait until absorbed by the rice, then gradually add the stock, ladle by ladle, allowing the rice to absorb every last drop before moving on. after about 10 mins.

"The bruschetta was the first lunch Paul and I enjoyed on our 10th wedding anniversary holiday in Sorrento and couldn't believe how good cheese and toast could be!! The others were inspired by a trip to two local restaurants."

(Jenny)

Peperonata with Bubbling Goats Cheese

(serves 4)

Heat 4 tbsp of chilli-infused oil in a large heavy based frying pan. Deseed & thinly slice 2 red & 2 yellow peppers and place in pan with 2 tsp cumin seeds. Fry over high heat for 2-3 minutes then season generously, reduce heat and stir in 1 large crushed garlic clove.

Cook for another 10 mins, stirring occasionally until the peppers have caramelized around the edges. Remove from heat and leave to cool. Preheat grill.

Cut 150g round goats cheese into 4 equal slices. Cut 1 ciabatta loaf in half length ways then widthways to give 4 equal pieces.

Spoon on peppers, place goats cheese on top and place under grill until bubbling. Sprinkle with fresh parsley.

"Thanks to Ainsley Harriot and his 'Friends & Family Cookbook' for this."

(Maxine)

Vegetable Pasta Bake

1 aubergine
1 kg plum tomatoes
2 cloves of garlic
500g penne pasta
3 oz olives
3 balls mozzarella
Parmesan
Light brown sugar

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 3/ 160°C /325 °C

Half tomatoes and place on baking tray.

The Supper Club

'THE ITALIAN NIGHT'

ISSUE ONE : FEB 2006

THE RECIPES CONT.

Season well, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle on sugar. Bake for 45 mins.

Cut aubergine into round slices and baste with olive oil on both sides. Place on baking tray and bake for 45 mins. Tomatoes remain in the oven whilst aubergines are cooking.



Meanwhile cook pasta until al dente. Drain well and then add chopped olives, crushed garlic and mix well.

Place half the pasta into a 2.5 litre casserole dish. Add half the tomatoes. Add 2/3 of the mozzarella, thinly sliced. Add the aubergine and the remaining pasta. Also add the rest of the tomatoes and the last mozzarella ball.

Grate 2oz of parmesan and cook for 20 minutes at Gas Mark 7/180°C

(Judith)

Duoni di Bosca (Italian Summer Fruit Pudding)

2 bags of frozen summer fruits
1 tin strawberries
1 cup of apple juice
2 tbsp sugar
1 loaf of white bread
Preheat the oven to / 325°C/Gas Mark 3

Stew all the fruit in the apple juice until soft but so that they still retain their shape. Cut bread into pieces and line dish or mould.

Strain some of the juice off the fruit and pour over the bread until pink and soggy all the way through. (keep some juices for later).

Lift fruit through straining spoon and put into lined bowls/moulds. Cover with more bread and pour some more juice over until pink, while keeping some of the juice for later.

Leave in fridge over night.

Serve with mascarpone and pour over the remaining juice.

(Susan)



Torta di Polenta, Mandorle e Limone (Polenta, Almond & Lemon Cake)

serves 10

450g (1 lb) unsalted butter, softened
450g (1 lb) caster sugar
450g (1 lb) ground almonds
2 teaspoons good vanilla essence
6 eggs
zest of 4 lemons
juice 1 lemon
225g (8 oz) polenta flour

Beat the butter and sugar together until pale and light. Stir in the ground almonds and vanilla. Beat in the eggs, one at a time.

Fold in the lemon zest and lemon juice, the polenta, baking powder and salt.

Spoon into the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 45-50 minutes or until set. The cake will be deep brown on top.

"Thanks to Ruth Rogers & Rose Gray and their 'River Cafe Cookbook' for this."

(Karen)

Breads

The Italian night wouldn't be complete without a selection of breads and garlic breads.

(Lorna)

'THE IRISH NIGHT'

The next night is confirmed as Saturday the 18th March at Lorna's house.

As it is so close to St. Patrick's day we thought it was only fitting tha the next Supper Club meeting had an Irish theme.

Jenny and Maxine are on puddings and everyone else is free to do whatever they fancy.

So here's to a night of champ & Guinness!