

Holiday Recipes to Keep You Warm in Winter



Fagiolata (for 5 people)

5-8 cups of beans of various varieties (cannellini, rossi, borlotti)
Sage, basil, rosemary, cumin, tarragon
Garlic
Chopped shallots or tropea onions
Chopped tomatoes or tomato paste (optional)
Water
Extra virgin olive oil, at least ¼ cup
Salt

Tuscans are known as *mangiafagioli*, bean eaters. Even if you aren't a bean lover, this recipe may seduce you. The secret to the fagiolata is slow cooking in a heavy pot.

- Using dry beans, start 24 hours in advance.
- Rinse the beans, then cook them in cold water, bringing them slowly to a boil.
- If the beans are canned, you can avoid the long preparation time but allow several hours for best results.
- Begin by chopping the garlic and onions and cooking them in the oil.
- Add the beans, then the herbs (finely chopped).
- Cook them slowly until they are tender, even for several hours.
- Cover but stir frequently with a wooden spoon, adding water as needed and tomatoes if you wish. Salt to taste

Delicious, especially served with fresh warm bread.

Pumpkin risotto (for 5 people)

450 g pumpkin
270 g rice (Carnaroli)
2 shallots
Cup of white wine
3 T butter
2 bouillon cubes
¼ cup Parmesan cheese
Cumin, paprika
(approx 1 teaspoon each)



- Put the pumpkin in boiling water for 15 minutes, to make it easy to remove the skin.
- Cut the pumpkin into bite-sized pieces and cook these in olive oil or butter along with the chopped shallots.

- Cook the rice separately, adding the bouillon to flavor it.
- Stir the rice into the pumpkin, adding wine and spices during the last 10 minutes of cooking.
- Serve hot, topped with Parmesan cheese if desired.

Add a green salad to the above recipes, and you have a tasteful vegetarian feast for the holidays.

Zabaglione or Zabaione?

I grew up enjoying zabaglione, the custardy dessert that my mother made, deriving from my grandfather's tradition (he was from Bologna). When I made zabaione (as it's called in Tuscany) for my adopted family in Lucca, serving it during a Christmas dinner, Roberto said to me, *ma perché, non siamo malati!* It seems that in his family, zabaione was only given to sick people.

Checking with Frate Indovino's classic recipe book *La Buona Cucina Casalinga*, I discovered that Roberto was not wrong. Frate Indovino's recipe is a drinkable version (for 3-4 people). To prepare it as a custard, cook it longer or fold in meringue or whipped cream. With chocolate powder sprinkled on top and lingue di gatto or cantuccini alongside, or spooned over Panettone, it's an elegant finish to a meal, even if you aren't sick.



Ingredients: Eggs, sugar, marsala (for 3 people)

Beat 3 egg yolks well and place them over a hot bain-marie with 75 gr. of sugar and 1 tablespoon of water. Mix well until you obtain a homogeneous cream; then add 1 glass of marsala; mix again to obtain a frothy mixture. This is consumed as an excellent tonic for children suffering from loss of appetite.

– Translated from: *La Buona Cucina Casalinga*, 1000 ricette di Frate Indovino. 1972 (orig. 1966). N. 865, p. 412.

Notice that Frate Indovino does not tell us how large a glass of marsala we should use. I guess that depends on your child's age....

Allegria!

– by Norma Jean Bishop

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