

Virtual

April 2021



Cookbook Club

April 5 Meeting Notes

Participants: Gladys, Joan, Pamela, JoEllen, Megan, Judy, Iveta

Gladys got us started with her Ultimate Garlic Pasta. She made it with bucatini, a pasta like spaghetti, but thicker, with a hole down the middle. This recipe called for roasting a medium head of garlic, as well as slicing and then frying 4 additional cloves of garlic. The recipe also called for reserving 2 cups of the water from cooking the pasta to add to a skillet in which the cooked garlic cloves, red pepper flakes, and oil are cooking. This mixture simmers to make the sauce for the bucatini. Gladys served the pasta with chicken and spinach flavored with cream cheese and garlic.

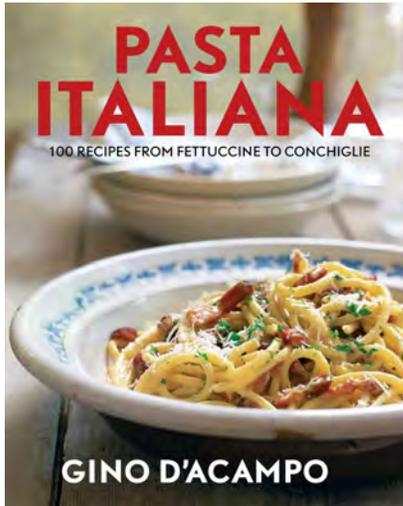
Gladys and her husband both enjoyed the dish. She would make it again with no changes.

This was the last major cooking Gladys will be doing in her kitchen for a while, since it will be getting remodeled over the next couple of months. Her refrigerator and microwave will move to her dining room for the time being. For a person who loves cooking as much as Gladys does, this could make the next couple of months a little difficult!



Gladys' Ultimate Garlic Pasta

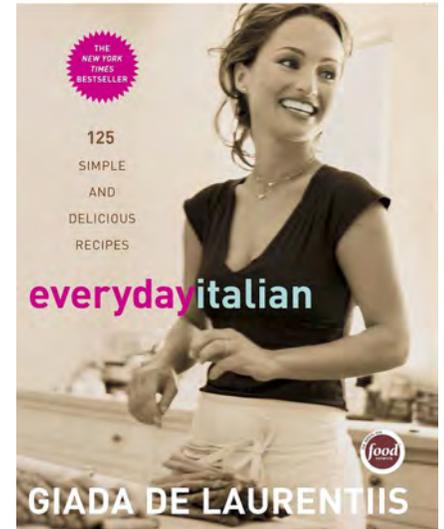
Pamela checked out the book **Pasta Italiana** by **Gino D'Acampo** but has not had a chance to try a recipe. She already enjoys making spaghetti and meatballs using packaged spaghetti noodles and Prego. She would like to try making a red sauce from scratch and serving it over spaghetti or rotini noodles. The recipe she wants to try calls for two 14 ounce



cans of diced tomatoes, onion, basil leaves, salt and pepper. In looking through the recipes in this book, she liked its layout, but noticed lots of recipes involving seafood that she would not be interested in trying. She is more attracted to the recipes for pork- or beef-based dishes.

Pamela and her daughter plan to make pasta dishes. Her daughter is going into culinary school and shares Pamela's interest in cooking.

JoEllen was just about to bring her **Eggplant Rollatini** over to **Gladys' house** when she realized it was time for the Virtual Cookbook Club meeting. She checked out **Everyday Italian** by **Giada De Laurentiis**. This recipe calls for ricotta, Parmesan, and mozzarella cheeses.



JoEllen peels the eggplant before cooking it, although some people prefer it unpeeled. In Romania, where she has visited, you *burn* off the peel.



Eggplant slices



Cheese mixture



Cheese rolled in eggplant slices



Baked with sauce

Megan tuned in as she was finishing preparing dinner for the family. Her little twin daughters made an appearance during the meeting. Megan prepared Bolognese, a recipe she got from her American Test Kitchen cookbook. She did not care for the cooking method, which called for slow cooking the sauce uncovered until it boils and thickens. She said it is a “nice meat sauce” but gave her husband Morgan credit for babysitting it while it cooked from 5 PM one day, overnight, until 11 AM the next morning. Megan confessed to being “mad at it”. She won’t repeat this recipe. It tasted good, but the cooking method “seemed pointless”. She might try cooking the same sauce in her Instapot.



Megan’s Bolognese

Judy tried out several recipes of Minestrone from three different cookbooks. The one pictured here called for 14 or 15 ingredients. Judy judged it to be very good. She used 4 ounces of rigatoni, a tubular pasta. Judy thought it absorbed too much liquid in this dish. She put spinach on top at the last minute, along with parmesan cheese. Judy said she will definitely make this recipe again. “I’ll make it over and over!”



Judy’s Minestrone

Gladys mentioned that minestrone is a thick Italian soup containing vegetables and pasta, which explains why Judy found so many recipes for this dish.

Judy mentioned that the Northern Italian sauces tend to be creamy, while those from Southern Italy are more tomato-based.

Iveta made Gnocchi with Parsley Pesto. She got the recipe for this a potato-based dumpling from *Frame by Frame Italian*. The recipe called for mashed potato, egg, flour, and parmesan cheese. She made a log out of the mixture, and cut slices from it which she then shaped. Iveta served the gnocchi with a pesto sauce made from walnuts, garlic, and parmesan cheese.



Iveta's Gnocchi with Parsley Pesto

Iveta said that the dish turned out “okay”. It was “sloppy but good”, especially the sauce. Her daughter and husband also liked it. She probably won't make it again, though, because the little dumplings were difficult to shape.

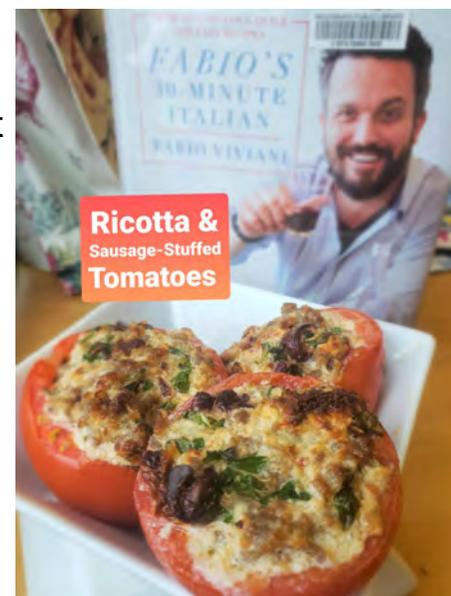
Iveta likes the book, with its step by step photos for each recipe. She wants to try the recipes for pizza dough, cannelloni, and risotto that look interesting.



Elissa made Ricotta And Sausage Stuffed Tomatoes from *Fabio's 30-Minute Italian* cookbook by Fabio Viviani. She was a little frustrated when shopping for a couple of the ingredients that her regular grocery stores did not carry. When she could not find Grana Padano cheese, she substituted an Italian cheese blend. Instead of Soppressata (an Italian salami), she used more of the Italian sausage that the recipe also called for. The Kalamata olives in this recipe were very strong tasting. She realized the recipe called for sweet Italian sausage; Elissa just used regular Italian sausage, but now thinks that a sweeter sausage might have helped to balance out the strong olive taste.

Elissa said it was fun to work with Beefsteak tomatoes. She could “really stuff a lot in there,” which made for generous portions.

Elissa said she and her husband and daughter loved this dish. It was easy to put together. She said she would definitely make this recipe again.



Elissa's Ricotta and Sausage Stuffed Tomatoes in the foreground

Before we ended the meeting, members chatted a bit about other memorable things they have made during the past month. Gladys said she burned a chicken on the grill trying the method where you put a can of beer up the inside of the bird. Iveta said she had burned a loaf of Challah bread while she was outside putting together a trampoline. She said she blames her husband. “It’s all right,” Iveta assured us. “He ate it.”

Recipe Sharing

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/eggplant-rollatini-recipe2-1913538>

Eggplant Rollatini

From JoEllen

Ingredients

3 medium-sized eggplants (about 4 pounds total)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Can vegetable spray
32 ounces ricotta cheese
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella
8 tablespoons grated Parmesan
3 tablespoons toasted pine nuts
20 basil leaves, chiffonaded
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
2 cups fresh tomato sauce, recipe follows

Simple Tomato Sauce

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 (32-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
2 dried bay leaves
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, optional

Directions

1. Preheat the grill pan and preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
 2. Place a rack over a large baking sheet. Cut the 2 ends off the eggplant. Cut the eggplants lengthwise, into 1/2-inch thick slices. Arrange eggplant slices onto rack. Sprinkle with sea salt to help remove excess moisture and any bitterness from the eggplants. Set aside for about 10 to 15 minutes. Rinse off the salt from the eggplants and pat dry with a towel. Spray hot grill pan liberally with vegetable spray and then place eggplant slices on the grill until lightly browned on each side and tender, about 4 minutes per side. Remove slices from the grill pan and allow to cool.
 3. In a large bowl, beat eggs until lightly scrambled. Mix the ricotta in with the egg. Add mozzarella, 3 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese and toasted pine nuts and gently combine. Fold in basil just to combine. Do not overmix.
- Place a tablespoon of the cheese mixture on 1 end of the eggplant and roll up tightly. Place the eggplant rollatini into a greased (with olive

oil) 13 by 9-inch baking dish, seam side down. Continue with remaining eggplant. Evenly distribute the tomato sauce on top of the eggplant rollatini. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with remaining 5 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese and bake for 15 minutes. When cooked, drizzle the top with extra-virgin olive oil.

Simple Tomato Sauce

Yield: 6 cups

1. In a large casserole pot, heat oil over medium high heat. Add onion and garlic and saute until soft and translucent, about 5 to 10 minutes. Add celery and carrots and season with salt and pepper. Saute until all the vegetables are soft, about 5 to 10 minutes. Add tomatoes and bay leaves and simmer uncovered on low heat for 1 hour or until thick. Remove bay leaves and check for seasoning. If sauce still tastes acidic, add unsalted butter, 1 tablespoon at a time to round out the flavors.

2. Add 1/2 the tomato sauce into the bowl of a food processor. Process until smooth. Continue with remaining tomato sauce.

If not using all the sauce, allow it to cool completely and pour 1 to 2 cup portions into freezer plastic bags. This will freeze up to 6 months.

<https://www.thekitchn.com/the-ultimate-garlic-pasta-recipe-23116494>

From Gladys

The Ultimate Garlic Pasta

YieldServes 4 to 6

Prep time 5 minutes to 10 minutes

Cook time 1 hour 10 minutes to 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients

1 medium head plus 4 cloves garlic, divided

4 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided

Kosher salt

1/3 cup loosely packed fresh parsley leaves

1 pound dried bucatini pasta

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

Instructions

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F.

2. Peel off and discard the excess papery skins from 1 medium head of the garlic, then slice a thin layer off the top to expose the cloves. Place cut-side up on a piece of aluminum foil. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon of the olive oil and sprinkle with a pinch of kosher salt. Wrap the garlic completely in the foil.

3. Roast until the garlic is tender and caramelized, 45 to 50 minutes. Meanwhile, thinly slice the remaining 4 garlic cloves. Coarsely chop 1/3 cup loosely packed fresh parsley leaves.

4. About 20 minutes before the garlic is ready, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add 1 pound dried bucatini pasta and cook 1 minute less than al dente, about 8 minutes or according to package instructions. Reserve 2 cups of the cooking water. Drain the pasta and set it aside.

5. When the garlic is ready, remove from the oven, unwrap, and set aside until the garlic is cool enough to handle, about 5 minutes. Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves out of their skins into a small bowl.

6. Pour 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet, then arrange the sliced garlic in a single layer in the oil. Turn the heat to medium. Cook, stirring frequently, until the garlic is golden-brown and crisp, about 5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the garlic chips to a paper towel-lined plate to drain and sprinkle with kosher salt.

7. Add the roasted garlic cloves and 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes to the oil in the skillet. Cook, breaking the cloves up with a wooden spoon, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.

8. Add the reserved pasta water and bring to a vigorous simmer over medium-high heat. Simmer until the liquid is reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add the bucatini and toss continuously until the sauce thickens and coats the pasta, 1 to 2 minutes.

Remove from the heat. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and parsley and toss to combine. Taste and season with kosher salt as needed. Serve immediately, topping each serving with lots of grated Parmesan cheese and a sprinkle of garlic chips.

Recipe Notes

Make ahead: The garlic can be roasted up to 1 day ahead. Let cool, then refrigerate the whole head still wrapped in its aluminum foil. Squeeze out the roasted cloves into a bowl before using.

Storage: Leftovers can be refrigerated in an airtight container up to 4 days.

Pasta variation: Spaghetti or linguine can be used in place of the bucatini.