

The following dishes are featured in my novel, *Carissima*.



*Biscotti d'Anise*  
(Anise Cookies)

- **1 ½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **½ teaspoon baking powder**
- **¼ teaspoon salt**
- **8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened**
- **½ cup sugar**
- **2 large eggs, at room temperature**
- **2 teaspoons anise extract**
- **1 cup lightly toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped (optional)**

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Butter and flour a large baking sheet.

Combine the flour, baking powder, and salt.

In the large bowl of an electric mixer, beat the butter until light and creamy. Beat in the sugar until fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time. Beat in the anise extract. On low speed, beat in the flour mixture until combined. Stir in the nuts if using them.

Shape the dough into two 12- by 1 ½-inch logs on the prepared baking sheet. Smooth the sides with a rubber spatula. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the logs are lightly browned and firm when pressed lightly in the center. Remove from the oven but do not turn it off. Let the logs cool for 10 minutes.

Slide the logs onto a cutting board and cut diagonally into ½-inch-thick slices. Stand the biscotti on the baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes, or until the cookies are lightly toasted. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

***Muffuletta***  
**(Submarine-style Sandwich)**

- **1 large round Italian bread**
- **extra virgin olive oil**
- **olive paste**
- **sundried tomatoes**
- **3-4 plum tomatoes, sliced**
- **1 tablespoon capers**
- **2 tablespoons marinated artichoke hearts**
- **1 tablespoon fresh parsley**
- **4 or 5 scallions**
- **ground black pepper to taste**
- **¼ lb sliced prosciutto**
- **block of fontina or any other sharp cheese of your liking, sliced thin.**

Cut loaf of Italian bread in half. Scoop out the excess bread crumbs from both halves. Place top half aside.

Drizzle extra virgin olive oil on bottom half of the loaf of bread.

Spread olive paste on bottom half of loaf.

Add sundried tomatoes.

Add the plum tomato slices, followed by the capers, artichoke hearts, parsley, and scallions.

Add the black pepper.

Lastly, add the slices of prosciutto and fontina cheese.

Drizzle extra virgin olive oil on top half of loaf. Place top half on top of bottom half of loaf that has all the ingredients.

Wrap muffuletta tightly with wax paper.

Place three dinner plates on top of wrapped muffuletta and place in the refrigerator overnight if time allows. If time does not allow, then let the plates rest on top of the muffuletta for at least 15 minutes.

***Ravioli Fritti***  
**(Fried Pastry Ravioli)**

Shell:

- **4 cups flour**
- **2 eggs**
- **3 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- **1 tablespoon sugar**
- **1 cup warm water**

Filling:

- **3 pounds ricotta**
- **2 cups sugar (taste for desired sweetness)**
- **1 egg yolk**
- **1-2 teaspoons cinnamon (taste for desired sweetness)**

Additional ingredients:

- **2 egg yolks beaten with 1 teaspoon water, for egg wash**
- **¾ cup vegetable oil**
- **confectioners' sugar**

Dust a large, flat, clean surface with flour. Then pour 4 cups of flour and form a small hill with your hands. With the end of a wooden spoon, dig a small hole in the center of the flour.

Crack your eggs, dropping them into the hole of the flour hill. Then pour oil, sugar, and water into the hole.

Knead dough. If dough is tough, add more water. Only add 1 teaspoon of water at a time. Knead the dough again until the consistency is smooth. If not smooth, repeat, adding 1 teaspoon of water and kneading the dough.

Mix all of the above ingredients for the filling in a large mixing bowl.

Roll out the dough you made above with a rolling pin. The sheet of dough should be about a ½ inch thick.

Place about 1 tablespoon of filling onto a corner of the rolled out dough. Using a pastry cutter, cut around the dough. Be sure to leave about an inch from where you placed the filling to the edge of the dough so that the filling doesn't leak out when frying the raviolis.

Carefully fold over the dough, covering the filling in the center. If it seems like you might have placed too much filling in the center of the ravioli shell, then scoop some of it out. You'll know if you placed too much when you fold over the dough and the filling spreads to the edge of the shell. Repeat process until all of your raviolis are made.

With a fork's prongs, press the edges of the raviolis to seal them shut.

Carefully separate the yolks from 2 eggs into a small bowl. Beat the yolks. Stir 1 teaspoon of water into the yolks to create an egg wash.

With a pastry brush, lightly brush the egg wash onto the raviolis.

Add ¾ cup of vegetable oil to a skillet. Turn heat up to medium. Let oil heat for about 1 minute.

Carefully drop the raviolis into the skillet. Watch them closely and turn them over with a spatula after about 1-2 minutes. Fry until each side of the raviolis is golden brown.

Place fried raviolis onto a large plate lined with paper towels to absorb the excess oil.

Once raviolis have cooled, dust with confectioners' sugar.

Once raviolis are cooled, they can be served. Any leftover raviolis should be covered with plastic wrap and placed in the refrigerator.

*Riso Nero di Pasqua*  
**(Black Easter Rice Pudding)**

- **1 1/8 pounds short grain rice**
- **1 quart milk**
- **1/4 teaspoon salt**
- **3 1/2 cups sugar**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla**
- **1 pound unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **1 1/2 teaspoons orange zest**
- **1 pound roughly chopped almonds**
- **1 1/2 tablespoons triple sec or orange liqueur**
- **1/4 pound semisweet chocolate, crumbled**
- **ground cinnamon**

Place rice in a large pot. Add the milk, salt, sugar, and vanilla, and stir. Cook according to rice package directions. When the rice is almost cooked, lower temperature to a simmer, and stir in the cocoa, little by little. Then stir in the grated orange zest. Keep stirring. Be careful that the rice doesn't overcook or stick to the bottom of the pot.

Remove the pot from the heat, and stir in the chopped almonds. Let the rice cool for about 15 minutes. Then stir in the orange liqueur and semisweet chocolate.

Scoop rice pudding into small dessert bowls. Sprinkle cinnamon generously on top of rice pudding. Can serve either once pudding has completely cooled or can chill in refrigerator and serve later.

*Spiedini di Vitello*  
(Skewers of Breaded Veal)

- **1 pound veal cutlets**
- **½ - 1 cup extra virgin olive oil**
- **½ - ¾ pounds seasoned Italian bread crumbs**
- **½ - ¾ cup Pecorino Romano cheese**
- **ground black pepper**
- **1 tablespoon minced parsley**
- **skewers (If using wooden skewers, soak them in water for an hour beforehand.)**

Set your oven to the broil setting. Pound veal cutlets with a meat mallet until they're a nice, thin consistency. Be careful not to over pound them. You don't want the veal to be too thin.

Cut veal cutlets into long strips, about a half-inch wide.

Pour olive oil into a shallow dish. Set aside.

Mix bread crumbs, Romano cheese, black pepper, and parsley together in a shallow dish. Set aside.

Dip veal strips into the extra virgin olive oil. Then dip both sides of the veal strips into the bread crumbs mixture.

Roll one end of each of the veal strips all the way to the other end. Carefully slide them onto the skewers. You should be able to fit about 5 veal strips onto each skewer, depending on how thick your meat is and how long your skewers are.

Place the veal skewers under the broiler.

After about 4-5 minutes, turn the skewers over. Broil the other side for another 4-5 minutes. Keep a close watch on the skewers so as not to burn them.

The recipe for *Biscotti d'Anise* was adapted from the cookbook *La Dolce Vita*. The recipe for *Muffuletta* was adapted from *The Martha Stewart Cooking Show*. All the other recipes I received from my family. *Spiedini di Vitello* and *Ravioli Fritti* were my grandmother's recipes, which she passed down to my mother who then passed them down to me. *Riso Nero di Pasqua* was passed down to me from my father, but instead of making it for Easter, he made it for Christmas. For more recipes, special reading group features, and blog posts, please visit [www.RosannaChiofalo.com](http://www.RosannaChiofalo.com)