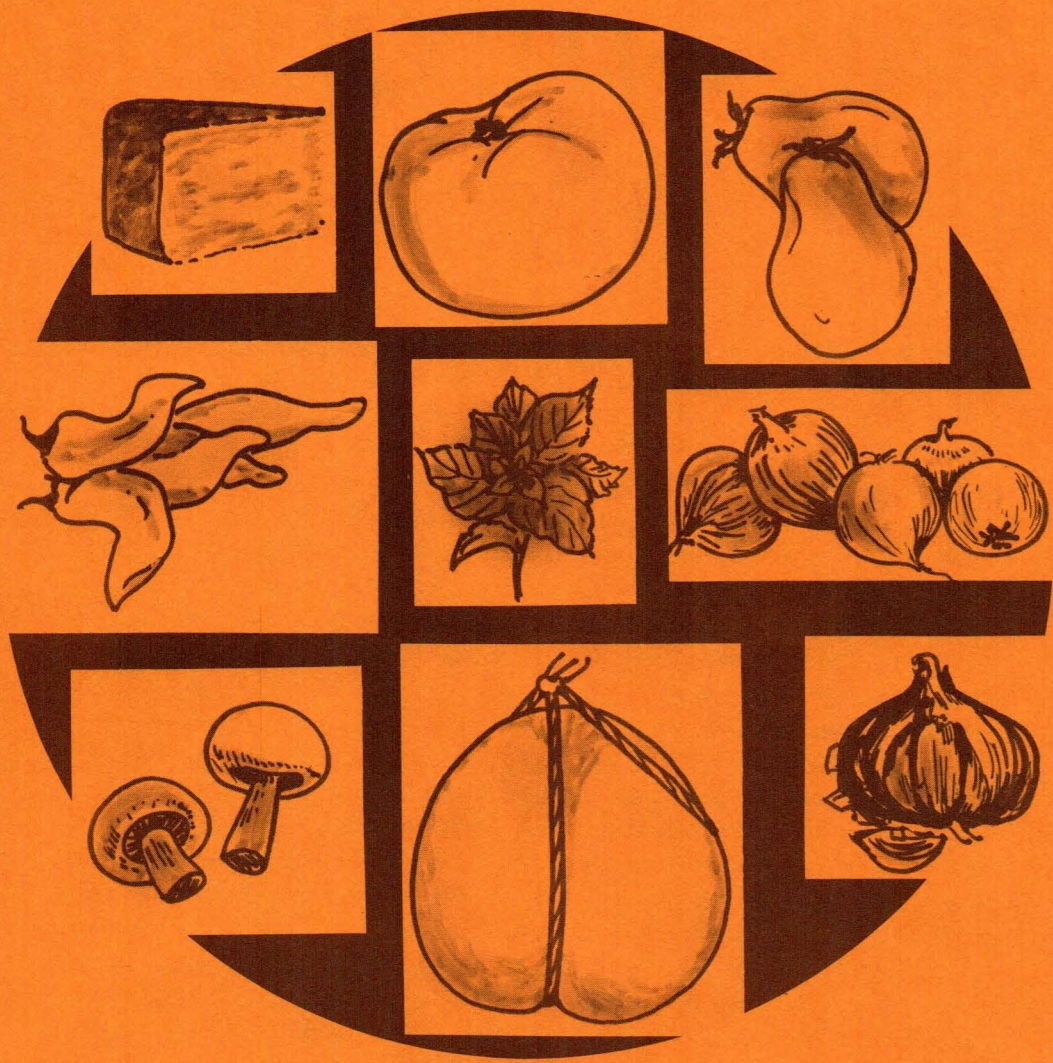


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POPULAR ITALIAN FOODS

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Italians really enjoy their food. They are fond of spicy flavors, delightful aromas. For many years Americans have shared their love of spaghetti. Since the advent of pizza, it is difficult to say which is the most popular. Other enjoyable foods are pastes and dessert tortoni.

Pizza (pronounced peet-za) is a huge pancake topped with tomato-cheese mixture, baked until the crust is crisp and golden brown. Hot out of the oven, it is cut into wedges, folded and eaten with the fingers. It is used as an appetizer, a main course for lunch or supper--or as an evening snack.

In many Southern European countries--Spain, France, Italy--the tomato plays a prominent part in native dishes. Did you know the tomato has a long and fascinating history?

When Cortez invaded Mexico in 1519, the Aztec farmers were cultivating irrigated fields in which a strange new plant--the tomato--was growing. What really captured the epicurean hearts of the Spanish were the piquant sauces made from the pulp and the juices of this fruit. Among them was a peppery concoction that stung the senses with its fire--and brought out the best in baked turkey and suckling pig. The Spaniards promptly brought tomato seeds and Mexican recipes back to Europe.

However, a curious fate befell the tomato in Europe. Because of superstition, it was shunned as a poisonous "love apple." And so it was feared and forgotten for three centuries. The French Revolution reintroduced the tomato. Great chefs, no longer employed by noble patrons, opened restaurants to the public and dared to serve the revolutionary tomato as a symbol of liberty, equality and fraternity. Then all Europe bowed to the flavor of this lush fruit. The ancient Aztec sauce recipes were hunted up, and the French, Italian and Spanish added their own variations of spices and herbs. Immigrants from these countries brought the tomato back to the New World.

PIPING HOT PIZZA

Make your own variations. Pizza is as personalized as a monogram. Some cooks make a thin dough and pat it into a circle so that a piece of hot pizza can be folded in half and eaten sandwich fashion. Others prefer a thicker dough spread out in a large oblong pan.

Some cooks use the familiar topping of tomato, anchovy, and cheese. Others abandon custom and use a wider range of ingredients for their topping, for example:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Tomato | Tomato sauce, canned tomatoes, tomato paste, or sliced tomatoes. |
| Cheese | Sliced Monterey, Mozzarella, or Swiss cheese; grated Parmesan, Romano, or Pecorino, or sharp Cheddar. |
| Meats and Fish | Anchovies, salami, pork sausage, bacon, proscuitto (Italian ham), boiled or baked ham, bits of roast or chicken, tuna, or shrimp. |
| Miscellaneous | Fresh, canned, or dried mushrooms; ripe or green olives; green onions or dry onions. |
| Herbs | Oregano, sweet basil, thyme, or parsley. |

The whole pizza doesn't have to be topped with the same foods, of course. If half the family likes anchovy and the other half doesn't, it's easy to substitute salami, chicken, or sausage on part of the dough.

Pizza is best when freshly baked and piping hot, but you can make it ahead and reheat it satisfactorily. Just be sure to pour a little oil over the topping before it goes back into the oven. Pizza pies may also be purchased in frozen form in many markets, or as a package mix including roll mix and a can of sauce.

Nice companions for a pizza lunch or supper would be a tossed green salad seasoned with an oil and vinegar dressing, a light, dry red wine (Italian variety is known as Tipo), a simple dessert of fresh fruits or tortoni, and lots of piping hot coffee.

PIZZA DOUGH

The dough may be regular bread dough, French bread dough, hot roll, pastry, or biscuit mix. Some experts believe the dough should be kneaded until silky and then rhythmically spanked to shape. Others prefer a very soft dough--so soft you can't possibly knead it.

SOFT PIZZA DOUGH

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | yeast cake or 1 package dry yeast | 2-1/3 cups lukewarm water |
| 3 | tablespoons lukewarm water (or very warm for dry yeast) | 6 cups all-purpose flour |
| 1 | teaspoon salt | Olive oil |

Soften yeast cake or dissolve dry yeast in 3 tablespoons of lukewarm (or very lukewarm) water and salt in the 2-1/3 cups lukewarm water. Gradually add flour and blend thoroughly. Oil the dough, cover, and let rise until doubled in bulk. Oil your hands, then pat dough into a large shallow baking pan. Indent with fingertips, brush well with oil, arrange toppings. Let rise 1 hour, then bake in hot oven (400 F) for 20 to 25 minutes or until dough is brown and crispy.

Regardless of what dough you use or which toppings you select, you'll need plenty of olive or salad oil to grease the pan, to pour over the dough, and to combine with the topping. It helps, too, to have plenty of oil on your hands when you pat the dough into shape and when you make fingertip dents over all the surface of the dough. These indentations hold extra oil to give the pizza a rich crustiness and also help to spread the seasonings all through the bread as it bakes.

ITALIAN PIZZA

(6 to 8 servings)

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----|--|
| 1 | package hot roll mix | 1/4 | teaspoon oregano |
| 1/2 | cup minced onion | 1/8 | teaspoon garlic |
| 1 | tablespoon olive oil | 1/8 | teaspoon pepper |
| 1 | can (8 ounces) tomato sauce | 1/2 | pound Italian or other white cheese (Swiss), sliced thin |
| 1 | can (6 ounces) tomato paste | 1/4 | cup finely cut parsley |
| Parmesan cheese | | | |

Additional Toppings:

Mushrooms: 1 cup, chopped or sliced

Anchovies: 12 to 14, whole or pieces

Ham (cooked): 1 cup, diced or sliced thin

Salami: 1 cup, cut into thin strips

Pork sausage: 1 cup, cooked

Prepare hot roll mix as directed on package. Let rise until light (30 to 60 minutes). Saute minced onion in olive oil until golden brown. Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, salt, oregano, garlic salt and pepper.

Divide dough into four parts. Flatten each piece and pat into bottoms of four 9- or 10-inch piepans. (Or divide dough in half, roll out and place on

ungreased baking sheets.) Brush with additional olive oil or salad oil. Make fingertip dents over all the surface.

Arrange the cheese on top of dough. Cover with tomato sauce. Top with remaining cheese and additional topping desired. Sprinkle with parsley and Parmesan cheese, if desired. Bake immediately in hot oven (450 F) 15 to 20 minutes. Serve hot.

AMERICAN PIZZA

(6 to 8 servings)

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | package pastry mix | 2 | tablespoons Worcestershire sauce |
| 2 | cans sardines | $\frac{3}{4}$ | teaspoon oregano |
| 4 | medium tomatoes | $1\frac{1}{2}$ | teaspoons salt |
| 2 | tablespoons flour | $\frac{1}{4}$ | teaspoon monosodium glutamate |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ | cup minced parsley | 2 | cups grated cheese |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ | cup minced onion | 8 | large stuffed olives, sliced |

Prepare pastry according to directions on package. Roll to fit an 8- or 9-inch pie plate. Prick shell and bake 10 minutes in hot oven (425 F). Remove from oven and arrange drained sardines on the pastry. Add layer of tomatoes, and sprinkle flour, parsley, onion, Worcestershire sauce, oregano, salt and pepper over tomatoes. Add the cheese layer. Overlap the tomato slices in a circle around the pie. Reduce oven temperature to 350 F, and bake for 30 minutes. Garnish with sliced olives; serve immediately.

QUICKIE PIZZA SANDWICH

(4 servings)

| | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|---------------------------------|
| $\frac{1}{2}$ | pound brown 'n serve sausage (or cooked, regular sausage) | $\frac{1}{2}$ | cup tomato paste or chili sauce |
| 4 | English muffins, split, buttered, and toasted | 1 | cup shredded cheese |
| | | | Oregano |

Cut each sausage link into 5 or 6 pieces. On each toasted English muffin half, spread 1 tablespoon of tomato paste. Top each with the sausage (one link per muffin half) and the shredded cheese. Season lightly with oregano. Broil until hot.

Pizza Appetizers: Cut the sandwich into wedge-shaped pieces (8 wedges from each muffin half) and serve hot.

Variation: Use hamburger buns in place of English muffins.

PASTES

A paste is the dry form of a dough made from hard wheat flour and water, such as macaroni, spaghetti and noodles.

A few of the more familiar types of pastes and their cooking time and methods are listed for your convenience:

| Paste Type | Cooking Time (minutes) | General Directions |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Macaroni | | |
| Elbow | 7-10 | |
| Long | 9-12 | |
| Spaghetti | | |
| Thin | 6- — | 8 ounces of dry paste makes 4 generous servings or 6 to 8 medium servings. Add 1 tablespoon salt to 4-6 quarts boiling water. Gradually add paste, as water continues to boil.* When tender, drain immediately in colander. DO NOT rinse with cold water. Add small amount margarine or butter and put back in pot. |
| Regular | 8-10 | |
| Egg Noodles | | |
| Fine | 6- 8 | |
| Regular | 8-10 | |
| Wide | 10-12 | |
| Variety | | |
| Alphabets | 6- 8 | |
| Farfalli (bow ties) | 9-12 | |
| Sea shells | 7-10 | |
| Lasagna | 6-10 | → Rinse in cold, running water. Put back in pot. |
| Manicotti | 6-10 | |

*Tip: A few drops of salad or olive oil in the boiling water prevents paste from boiling over.

LASAGNE CASSEROLE

A favorite Italian main dish made from a paste is known as lasagne (pronounced la-san-ya). This casserole consists of an Italian paste cooked, alternated with tomato-meat sauce and cheeses. The entire dish is then baked in the oven. Lasagne paste is 1½ inches wide in the dry form and expands to about 3 inches when cooked.

(6 to 8 servings)

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | 8 oz package lasagne noodles | 1½ | teaspoons salt |
| 2 | tablespoons salad oil | ¼ | teaspoon pepper |
| 1 | pound hamburger | ½ | teaspoon oregano |
| 2 | cloves garlic, crushed | 3 | tablespoons parsley, chopped |
| ½ | cup onions, chopped | ¾ | pound Ricotta (or cottage) cheese |
| 1 | 8 oz can tomato sauce | ½ | pound Mozzarella or Swiss cheese |
| 1 | No. 2 can tomatoes | ½ | cup grated Parmesan cheese |

Brown together the hamburger, crushed garlic and chopped onion in salad oil. Add tomato sauce, tomatoes, spices and parsley and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until slightly thickened. Cook lasagne noodles in boiling salted water until tender. Drain and rinse under cold, running water. Fill rectangular casserole with alternate layers of noodles, sliced Mozzarella cheese, Ricotta cheese, tomato-meat sauce and grated Parmesan cheese. Bake in moderately hot oven 375 F for 15 to 20 minutes.

Serve with tossed salad of lettuce, fresh spinach leaves and radishes. And for dessert, serve a fresh fruit bowl.

TORTONI

Tortoni is the Italian version of ice cream. It is good and easy to make.

ITALIAN BISCUIT TORTONI

(6 servings)

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | cup heavy cream, whipped | 1 | egg white |
| ¼ | cup granulated sugar | 1 | tablespoon vanilla (or brandy extract) |
| ½ | cup macaroon (or cookie) crumbs | 2 | tablespoons maraschino cherry juice |

Beat egg white stiff, add sugar gradually, beating it well. Fold in whipped cream gently. Fold in all but 6 teaspoons macaroon crumbs. Add vanilla (or extract) and cherry juice to the mixture. Fill Dixie cups and top each with a cream rosette and a few crumbs. Freeze 3 to 4 hours.

TONI-TORTS

| | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| 12 | shortbread cookies, crushed | 1 | tablespoon lemon juice |
| 1 | teaspoon unflavored gelatin | 2 | tablespoons sugar |
| ¼ | cup cold water | 12 | marshmallows, cut fine |
| 1 | cup chilled evaporated milk, whipped | ¼ | cup chopped maraschino cherries |

Crush cookies between waxed paper with rolling pin or a glass. Soak gelatin in ¼ cup cold water, dissolve over hot water and cool. Add 1 tablespoon lemon juice and sugar to the well-chilled evaporated milk and whip until stiff. Fold whipped milk and finely cut marshmallows into cooled gelatin mixture. Fill Dixie cups and garnish with chopped cherries. Chill and serve cold.

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