

Merante Gifts

"The Italian Accent in Little Italy"

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Bloomfield

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Late Winter Early Spring 2010 Cooking Class Schedule

Sunday February 21 Our always popular monthly celebration of Italian Family Style Cooking! If you grew up in or near an Italian family you fondly remember that Sunday dinners were the highlight of the week! This class is presented in dinner format beginning with an array of delicious antipasto selections. We'll prepare the best of what we find at the market that morning, followed by some typical Italian Sunday fare. Today's highlight will be semolina and ricotta gnocchi with a hearty tomato sauce—you know the one with sausage and meatballs and succulent pieces of pork! We'll follow that with a beautiful chicken parmesan and gorgeous roasted winter veggies and a few other special side dishes. The crowning glory will be a zippy Caesar Salad. We'll even make the croutons! You have to have a big slice of Limoncello cake and a cup of espresso for dessert—come on ---you can do it. Make Nonna happy!!!

February 28th A new Milanese Menu today. Our last class was such a success that we have to expand and improve even more! We'll start with the famous Panzanella Salad. Delicate seasoned cubes of Italian bread over greens and goodies laced in a light and tasty dressing, a great way to start! There's nothing better than a creamy golden risotto. Today saffron and wild mushrooms blend together with Italian rice to make a scrumptious dish. You'll love the cotoletta alla Milanese! A tender pork chop drizzled with an incredible lemon herb sauce. A beautiful cauliflower in sfoglia stars as the veggie. The salad is gorgeous with roasted beets, oranges and gorgonzola. A light dessert will hit the spot—let's do chocolate crepes and real whipped crème!—okay we'll make espresso!

March 6th Another much requested class! From a guaranteed successful dough recipe you will wow your friends with a delicious pizza! We're not limited to just the pepperoni and cheese variety though—lots of good things come from pizza dough. Zeppole, some sweet and others savory are always a hit. A wonderful pepperoni bread—that won't leak! A foccacia that will accompany your favorite meats and cheeses and finally a dessert pizza you'll love to surprise everyone with! Not just a fun morning but lots of tips to make you a pretty good "Pizzaiolo"

March 7th By Special Request for this wonderful meal is a very special Dinner at Nonna's. This class has been a great day to celebrate a special occasion and re-tell stories of great Sunday dinners at the typical Italian table! Join us from antipasto to dessert as we work our way through old recipes and traditional dishes that Nonna woke up at the crack of dawn to lovingly prepare— wedding soup, homemade ravioli, a gorgeous rumcake and lots of in betweens....

March 13th Hippity Hoppity Easter's on it's way—Italian style! Let's do some fancy springtime baking! Today's treats—homemade cannoli --yes you can make your own shells! Light and airy cream puffs filled with fresh whipped cream are so impressive. Those favorite almond paste cookies that are the first to disappear from every Italian cookie tray are a cinch with our recipe! Let's make some Napoleans the shortcut way – come for this sweet filled morning , we'll put the coffee on!

March 20th More Easter baking! Today we'll demonstrate that pretty Easter bread that Nonna used to make, you remember the one with egg on top! A delicious nut roll and a beautiful lemon filled jelly roll are a beautiful addition to Easter brunch. What about some buttery filled croissants, no they're really not that hard once you know the trick! We think some pineapple macadamia nut biscotti fit in nicely with Italian Easter goodies—don't you!

March 27th Our popular “Two Lasagnas and a Chicken” class is always a great day! We'll assemble the best Portobello mushroom lasagna you've ever tasted and our surprisingly beautiful favorite—prosciutto and arugula lasagna. Accompanied by our favorite Chicken Calabria with artichokes and sun dried tomatoes – all that remains is a refreshing salad of field greens and homemade croutons with a lemon herb dressing to finish off this easily prepared special meal!

April 10th I know you'll recall that we spent a few days in Positano last fall with our cooking tour! Situated on the Amalfi Coast on a breathtaking hillside—the seafood is spectacular. Our welcome dinner included a creamy saffron risotto with tiny shrimp, a great seafood pasta and we'll do a gorgeous swordfish steak –it's a seafood lover's dream. I think some great crispy fried calamari might make a yummy antipasto! Of course, dessert is a must! A Torta Caprese is a simple, elegant and delicious dessert—and FLOURLESS!!

April 17th Flavored pasta is quite gourmet! In this, one of our most popular classes, we'll show how easy it is to present your dinner guests with wonderful basil fettuccine, garlic and pepper linguine and some beautiful red pasta which we'll turn into light filled ravioli. Spinach gnocchi are delicate and colorful especially served with a fresh tomato and basil sauce—now that's Italian!

April 25th---Ya gotta love lemons! An entire class dedicated to this tart and luscious fruit! We' ll start off with a lemon fettuccine in a creamy parmesan and pepper sauce,

follow that with some delicious chicken Piccata accompanied by our wonderful salad laced with a lemon herb dressing. We brought back Limon cello from Positano—it'll make it's guest appearance in a Limoncello cake for dessert! Not to go too far—but how about a twist of lemon with your espresso?

May 1st An absolute must for basic Italian cooking is the know how of making fresh pasta! Today we'll start from scratch with beautiful egg fettuccine accompanied by a spicy Putanesca sauce—we'll fill you in later on the history of that sultry recipe! Light and fluffy gnocchi are no problem after you learn this very do-able technique. A beautiful accompaniment of basil béchamel will coat these little dumplings. For the grand finale we'll easily assemble some homemade ravioli. Topped with a great Bolognese sauce—it will become a new special occasion dish at your house! We love this hands on class—join us for a fantastic day!

May 9th If you love to reminisce about being at Nonna's on Sunday—you'll love this class! The smell of sauce simmering away will pull you up the stairs to the dining room where antipasto will be waiting while we make homemade egg fettuccine, fantastic meatballs and braciola, some great roasted veggies a big salad and a creamy tirimisu for dessert! You'll re create these old fashion and still loved dishes so that your family can make their own memories!

May 15th Let's get ready for some spring and summer parties. The cookie table is one of the main attractions at the coming showers, weddings and graduation parties. Our buttery apricot envelopes, nut horns, raspberry walnut bars and of course the famous Italian Love Knots are all great favorites on any cookie tray! You'll whip up batches of these all party season long and be the hit of the party

May 22nd As we come to the end of the spring session, we think we should have an Italian Picnic!! A big pan of our famous Italian picnic pasta, sausage and potatoes, bread and butter chicken our great Italian potato salad our new favorite –That's Amore Cake—made with ricotta and cake mix and an éclair cake that will knock your socks off—and it's sugar and fat free! Come on summer!

Classes are \$40 per person per session. We serve all that we prepare and printed recipes are distributed to take home. Prepayment guarantees your place in class. Early registration is suggested as classes tend to fill quickly.

Private group classes are \$50 per person. Call for information on availability of dates, topics and menus. We strictly limit private groups to 10 guests. (minimum of 8)

We cannot make refunds if you cancel however you may reschedule for a future class. We reserve the right to cancel any class should there be a lack of enrollment and will make refunds in this case only.

Please feel free to call 412 682 3370 or email maria@merante-gifts.com with any questions or to schedule your private class.