



We have no idea what Christopher Columbus' favorite meal was, but because Monday is his "Day," we've rolled out a few Italian specialties we're sure he would have loved.

OSSO BUCCO

1/4 cup flour

2 teaspoons salt

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

2 pounds veal shank

3 tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup chopped onion

1 cup thinly sliced carrots

1/2 cup chopped celery

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup white wine

1 teaspoon dried basil

1 teaspoon dried thyme

3 sprigs fresh parsley

1 bay leaf

In a shallow dish, stir together flour, salt and black pepper. Dredge meat in seasoned flour. In a large skillet, melt butter with oil over medium heat. Brown meat. Remove meat from pan and set aside.

Add onion, carrots, celery and garlic to drippings in pan. Cook and stir for about 5 minutes.

Stir in tomato sauce, water, wine, basil, thyme, parsley and bay leaf. Return meat to pan. Bring to a boil, and reduce heat to simmer. Cover and cook for 2-1/2 hours. Yields 6 servings.

ITALIAN SAUSAGE SOUP

1 pound Italian sausage

1 clove garlic, minced

2 (14-ounce) cans beef broth

1 (14-1/2 ounce) can Italian-style stewed tomatoes

1 cup sliced carrots

1 (14-1/2 ounce) can Great Northern beans, undrained

2 small zucchini, cubed

2 cups spinach, packed, rinsed and torn

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 teaspoon salt

In a stockpot or Dutch oven, brown sausage with garlic. Stir in broth, tomatoes and carrots, and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

Stir in beans with liquid and zucchini. Cover and simmer another 15 minutes, or until zucchini is tender.

Remove from heat and add spinach. Replace lid, allowing the heat from the soup to cook the spinach leaves. Soup is ready to serve after 5 minutes. Serves 6.

INSALATA CAPRESE

4 large ripe tomatoes, sliced 1/4-inch thick

1 pound fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced 1/4-inch thick

1/3 cup fresh basil leaves

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

On a large platter, alternate and overlap the tomato slices, mozzarella cheese slices and basil leaves. Drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 6.

CHICKEN CACCIATORE

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 (2-1/2 pound) chicken, cut into pieces

1 large onion, chopped into 1/4-inch pieces

3 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped fine

2 shallots, chopped fine

1/2 cup dry white wine

1-1/2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

Salt and pepper to taste

2 fresh basil leaves

Heat olive oil in large frying pan. Sauté chicken over medium heat, turning occasionally. When the chicken begins to brown, add onion, garlic and shallots to pan.

After 20 minutes or so, add wine, vinegar, salt, pepper and basil to mixture. Cover tightly and allow to simmer for another 30 minutes. Serves 4.

ZABAGLIONE

Juice of 1/4 lemon

1/2 cup sugar

5 eggs yolks

3/4 cup white wine (Chablis)

Combine all ingredients in top of double boiler. Place over barely simmering water (on medium-low heat) and immediately start whisking vigorously, creating a light, frothy sauce. Whisk 4 to 6 minutes until mixture has increased in volume and thickened. Don't overheat. Yields 4 8-ounce servings.