

03. CAMPANIA

CAMPANIA AND ITALY'S SOUTH

By Sara Hauman & Jordan Mackay

If Rome is Italy's head, Campania is its heart. Here, you find so many of the tropes, the archetypes, the clichés that make Italy Italy. Immigration brought so much of this culture to America that, to travelers, Campania and Italy's south will feel simultaneously familiar and excitingly fresh. After all, this is the spiritual home of pizza, dried pasta, mozzarella (mozz!), eggplant parmigiana (parm!), limoncello, San Marzano tomatoes, and the list goes on. Campania's got Naples, the Amalfi Coast, Capri, and Pompei. At least for American Italophiles, Campania is Italy.

The upper ankle and lower shin of Italy's boot, Campania often stands for the whole of southern Italy (Puglia, Molise, Basilicata, Calabria - aka, the Mezzogiorno), as all the regions share much of the same food, spirit, and history, and Campania claims not only as much population as the other regions combined, but also the largest city and the most major tourist attractions (a whopping ten of Italy's fifty-eight UNESCO sites).

Campania's geography reflects much of Italy. Its rugged, mountainous interior is both colder and warmer compared to the rugged, spectacular coastline, which sports classic Mediterranean sunny summers and cool, rainy winters. Campania's name is derived from what the Romans called it, Campania felix ("happy" or "fertile countryside"), and today its economy remains based on fruits and vegetables — no autostrada to prosperity, yet the key to its iconic cuisine.

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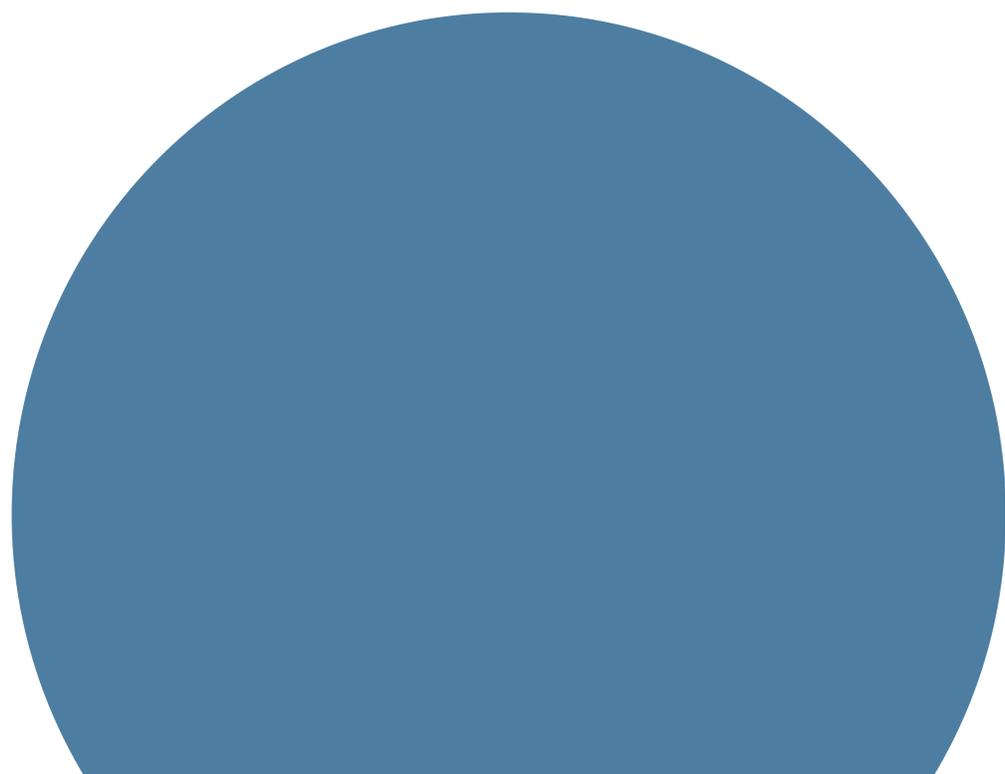
Campanian food embodies “la cucina povera,” peasant cooking, in which basic ingredients and scraps are transformed into marvels of flavorful simplicity. Let’s start with the ultimate mic drop, pizza, invented in Naples, which is still the pilgrimage for pie-loving tourists and professional pizzaiolos, alike. Italy’s greatest dried pasta comes from the hill town of Gragnano, where sea and mountain breezes combine to dry pasta perfectly, allowing so crunchy a degree of al dente as to shock tourists while turning the most basic of local pastas into textural thrillers. On that pasta you might find a bare ragu of crushed San Marzanos, the world’s most revered tomato. Or you might find it dressed simply with breadcrumbs and colatura di alici — fermented anchovy sauce from the Amalfi coast. Campania is also the only designated area for mozzarella di bufala, made from the fat-rich milk of water buffalos and best eaten solo with a knife and fork.

While the iconic foods of southern Italy tend to blur regions, the wines are regionally distinct, with Campania’s being the most celebrated. Red wine is revered, held by the sturdy Aglianico grape, when well-made, has been known as “the Barolo of the South.” But Campania’s cavalcade of white grapes capture the true spirit and diversity of the region. The august Fiano, an ancient grape, leads the charge, as it makes a profound wine in multiple styles. Alternatively stony and alive with acidity or viscous and waxy with weight and power, Fiano reaches its apex in the zone of Avellino. The region’s other premier grape, Greco, is herbal and mineral at its best. And don’t overlook salty sleeper whites like Falanghina, Biancolella, and Coda di Volpe.

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In our menu, eggplant parmigiana — a name that refers not to parmesan cheese, but to a word for window slats, which the layers of eggplant resemble — is best with excellent tomatoes and quality mozzarella. In the povera spirit, Bruschetta is a great use for day-old bread (or, here, simple focaccia), while sardella, a piquant condiment, marries nduja — the spicy, spreadable Calabrian sausage — with the mighty anchovy. While a red wine will work well with the eggplant, an energetic, concentrated white will provide brilliant contrast and zing. Campania whites are built in this style, as are the wines of Massican (which, after all, are named for Monte Massico, the Massican Hills, just an hour north of Naples). Finish with an amaro or, better, a limoncello, a specialty of the Amalfi coast and its distinctive lemon variety.

If you've never been to Campania, consider preparing for this dinner with some travel videos that take you through Naples' narrow streets, Amalfi's vertiginous seaside roads, and the mind-boggling humanity of Pompei's massive excavation. And, if you have been to Campania, allow this meal to stoke up all those delicious memories.



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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Chef Sara Hauman's career is sprinkled with culinary accolades: Eater Young Gun, Zagat 30 under 30, and Bravo Top Chef contestant. Having cooked in kitchens from Spain's famed Asador Etxebarri to San Francisco's Octavia, she now resides in Portland, OR.

Jordan Mackay is a James Beard award-winning writer covering wine, spirits, and food. He has written for the New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and Food & Wine magazine. Jordan has penned countless books including Secrets of the Sommeliers, The Atlas of Taste, Franklin Barbecue, Franklin Steak, and the pending Maison Premiere Almanac.

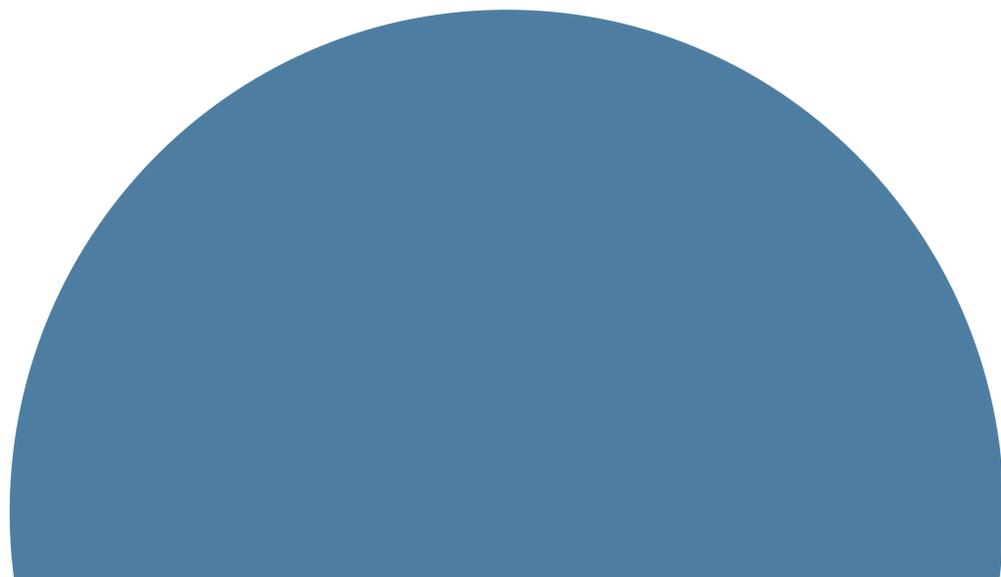


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OUR CAMPANIA DINNER PARTY MENU

Serves 6-8

1. Snacks: BRUSCHETTA LA SARDELLA
2. Salad: GREEN SALAD WITH ITALIAN DRESSING
3. Main Course: EGGPLANT PARMESAN
4. Dessert: CANNOLI



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NO-KNEAD WHOLE WHEAT FOCACCIA

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- 3 tsp. yeast
- 2 tsp. honey
- 2 ½ cups warm water
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
- 5 tsp. salt
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, divided
- Flaky sea salt
- 4 Tbsp melted butter, divided
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 bunch oregano, picked

03. CAMPANIA**NO-KNEAD WHOLE WHEAT FOCACCIA**

Serves 6-8

Preparation:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together yeast, honey, and water. Set aside for 5 minutes until foamy. If the mixture does not begin to foam, the yeast is dead and should be replaced. Start over.
2. Using a wooden spoon or spatula, mix in the all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil, and salt. Mix well until no streaks of flour remain.
3. In a separate large container or bowl, add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil and place the dough on top. Cover with a lid or plastic wrap. Let the dough rise for 1-2 hours or until doubled in size.
4. Preheat your oven to 450F.
5. Grease a 12"x9" baking sheet with 2 Tbsp melted butter.
6. Place the proofed dough onto the greased baking sheet and spread the dough to the edge gently using the tips of your fingers.
7. Set aside for another 15 minutes, then lightly oil your fingertips, and press down gently on the dough, creating small divots.
8. Sprinkle the top of the dough with flaky sea salt then bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown on top.
9. After the focaccia is baked, add the grated garlic and fresh oregano leaves to the remaining 2 Tbsp of melted butter. Brush the top of the focaccia with the butter mixture and serve.

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BRUSCHETTA LA SARDELLA

Serves 6-8 (12-16 pieces)

Ingredients:

- ½ slab No-Knead Whole Wheat Focaccia
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, de-stemmed
- ¼ cup + 2 Tbsp olive oil
- Salt
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced small
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced thin
- 1 can oil-packed anchovy filets, chopped
- 2 oz. tomato paste
- 1 cup white wine
- 6 oz. nduja
- 4 basil leaves, finely julienned.

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BRUSCHETTA LA SARDELLA

Serves 6-8 (12-16 pieces)

Preparation:

1. Slice the focaccia in half, through the middle, as if slicing a bagel. Then cut rectangular slices from each half that are approximately 2-3 bites each.
2. Place the focaccia pieces on a greased (olive oil or butter) baking sheet and toast at 450F for 5 minutes or until brown. Remove the baking sheet from the oven, flip the pieces of focaccia over, and continue toasting for another 5-7 minutes or until golden brown and crispy.
3. In an oven proof dish, toss the cherry tomatoes with 2 Tbsp olive oil and a pinch of salt.
4. Broil the tomatoes on high for about 3-4 minutes or until blistered and juicy. Remove and set aside.
5. Sauté the diced onions and garlic in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil for 3-5 minutes or until translucent.
6. Add the chopped anchovy and tomato paste and cook for a couple minutes, while stirring continuously.
7. Add in the white wine and nduja.
8. Continue to cook the mixture, while smashing the nduja. Once the mixture becomes homogeneous, remove from the heat, and stir in the roasted cherry tomatoes.
9. Season with salt as needed.
10. Spoon the nduja, anchovy, and tomato mixture over the toasted focaccia and garnish with finely cut basil.

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GREEN SALAD WITH ITALIAN DRESSING

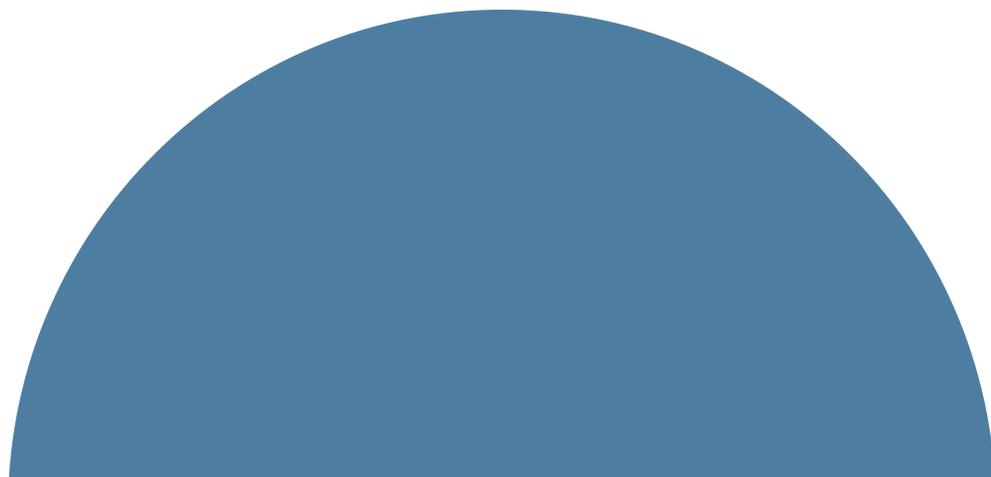
Serves 6-8

Ingredients for the dressing:

- 5 Tbsp red-wine vinegar
- 4 garlic cloves, grated or minced
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup parsley, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp fresh oregano, finely chopped
- 15-20 grinds of fresh black pepper

Preparation:

1. Whisk together the vinegar, garlic, and salt.
2. Slowly whisk in the olive oil.
3. Stir in the chopped parsley, oregano, and freshly cracked black pepper.



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GREEN SALAD WITH ITALIAN DRESSING

Serves 6-8

Ingredients for the salad:

- 1 cup cooked farro
- 1 small head red butter lettuce, washed
- 1 bunch lacinato kale, washed and cut into 1" pieces
- 1 bunch frisée, washed
- 1 cup cucumber, peeled and cut into bite sized pieces
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- Salt

Preparation:

1. Cook farro in boiling water with a hefty pinch of salt until tender and chewy, approximately 20-25 minutes. Strain the farro into a bowl and fluff the farro with a fork.
2. Toss the remaining salad ingredients in a bowl or onto the serving vessel.
3. Add the farro and toss again.
4. Drizzle the dressing over the top and serve.

Cooking tips:

- To add crunch, please feel free to add seasonal vegetables to your salad — corn, fennel, green or wax beans, and broccoli all work well.

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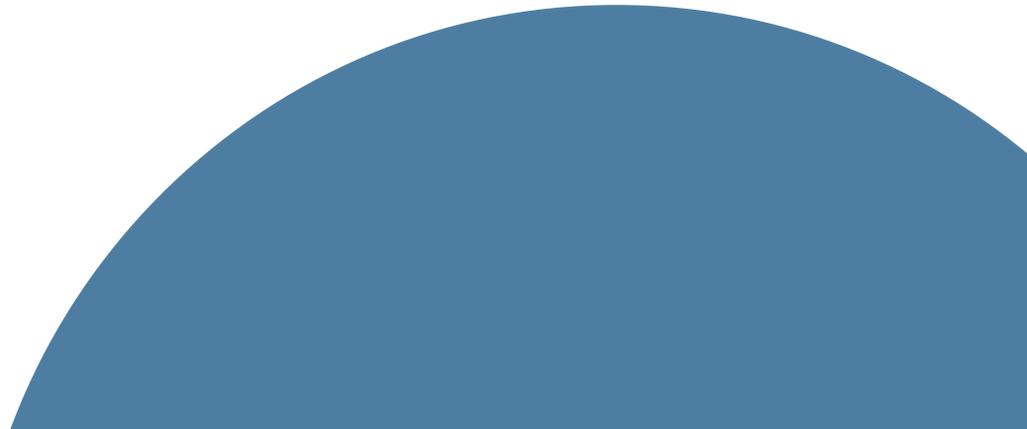
EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Serves 6-8

Ingredients for the sauce:

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 medium yellow onions, halved and sliced thin
- 6 garlic cloves, grated or minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and grated
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 2 28-ounce cans of peeled tomatoes
- Salt

Prepare the sauce:

1. Add olive oil to a medium pot and heat.
 2. Add in the onions and garlic and sauté on medium heat until translucent.
 3. Add in the grated carrots, and continue to cook for another couple minutes.
 4. Add red pepper flakes and canned tomatoes and simmer for 15-20 minutes.
 5. Season as needed with salt.
 6. Remove the sauce from the heat and let cool at room temperature.
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EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Serves 6-8

Ingredients for the eggplant:

- 2 large eggplants
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 eggs, plus 1 yolk
- 1-2 cups panko breadcrumbs
- ¾ -1 cup vegetable oil
- Salt
- Black pepper

Preparation:

1. Slice the eggplant into ½” thick round slices.
2. Place the eggplant slices onto a baking sheet and lightly salt each side.
3. Let the eggplant sit for about an hour to draw out some of the moisture and then pat dry with a paper towel.
4. Season the flour with salt and pepper and place in a medium bowl.
5. Whisk the eggs and yolk together with a splash of water and place in another bowl.
6. Place your breadcrumbs in a third bowl, and season with salt and pepper.
7. Dredge each eggplant slice thoroughly in the flour, then egg, then breadcrumbs.
8. Heat the vegetable oil in a large sauté pan until it just begins to smoke, then reduce the heat to medium.
9. Fry the breaded eggplant slices in a single layer, cooking on each side until golden brown, about 3-4 minutes per side.
10. Fit a drying rack onto a baking sheet and place the fried eggplant slices on top to remove excess oil.

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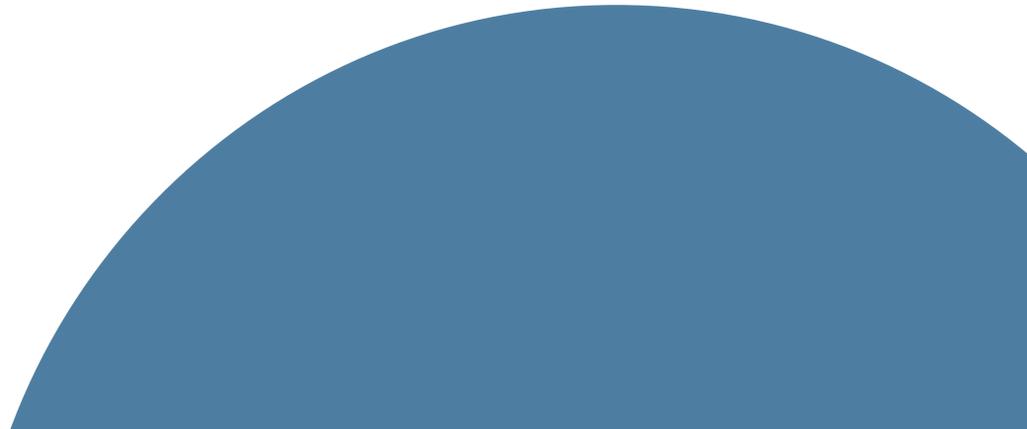
EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Serves 6-8

Ingredients needed to assemble the dish:

- 1 lb. whole milk mozzarella, sliced to the same number of eggplant slices you have
- 1 lb. provolone cheese, shredded
- ½ cup parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 bunch fresh basil, torn from stems
- 1 bunch oregano, picked

Preparation:

1. Begin by placing 1 cup of the tomato sauce in the bottom of a 2-to-3-quart casserole dish and distribute evenly.
 2. Add a layer of eggplant.
 3. Top the eggplant with mozzarella slices, 1/3 of the shredded provolone and 1/3 of the parmesan cheese.
 4. Add half the basil leaves and oregano.
 5. Begin another layer with tomato sauce and continue layering the eggplant, cheese, and herbs.
 6. The goal is to have a third and final layer of eggplant slices.
 7. Finish this top layer with tomato sauce and remaining mozzarella, provolone, and parmesan.
 8. Place in a 400F oven for 35-40 minutes or until it is bubbling, and the mozzarella has turned a deep golden-brown.
 9. Remove from the oven and let cool for 15-20 minutes before serving.
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CANNOLI

Makes 12-16 cannoli

Kitchenware needed for this recipe:

- Five-inch stainless steel Cannoli tubes, available on [Amazon](#)
- Three-inch stainless steel circular cookie cutter
- Reusable (or disposable) 12-inch pastry piping bag with fluted tip

Ingredients for the shell:

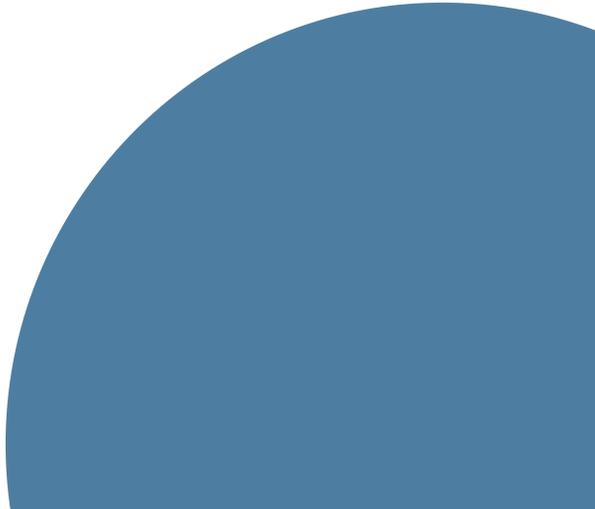
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, plus about ¼ cup for dusting
- 1 ½ Tbsp granulated sugar
- ½ tsp. espresso powder
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¾ cup white wine
- 1 egg white
- 1 ½ Tbsp vegetable oil

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CANNOLI

Makes 12-16 cannoli

Preparation:

1. Place the flour, sugar, espresso powder, cinnamon, and salt into a bowl and whisk to combine.
 2. Add in the wine and vegetable oil.
 3. Combine with a wooden spoon or spatula.
 4. Once the dough begins to come together, turn out onto a floured surface, and knead the dough until it becomes very smooth, about 5-7 minutes.
 5. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
 6. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and place onto a floured surface.
 7. Roll the dough out to a thickness of about $\frac{1}{8}$ ".
 8. Using a circle cutter with a diameter of about 3", cut out as many circles as you can.
 9. Re-roll the dough scraps and repeat this step until you have the desired amount of cannoli shells cut out.
 10. Place a cannoli roller on top of 1 dough circle and roll out gently, as the dough is very elastic and will retract.
 11. Shape the dough around the roller, using the egg white to fasten the dough in the middle. Smooth out the dough evenly around the roller.
 12. In a high-walled, medium sized pot, bring the vegetable oil to 375F and then fry the dough wrapped around the roller for 3-4 minutes or until golden brown.
 13. Remove the shell from the hot oil and cool on a paper towel.
 14. After it has cooled for a few minutes, remove the roller from the shell using a towel or tongs.
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CANNOLI

Makes 12-16 cannoli

Ingredients for the filling:

- 16 oz. whole milk ricotta
- 8 oz. cream cheese or marscapone
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 orange
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt

Preparation:

1. Add all the ingredients into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment.
2. Whip the ingredients together for 2-3 minutes on medium speed until thick and creamy, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed.
3. Transfer to a piping bag fitted with a fluted piping tip.

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CANNOLI

Makes 12-16 cannoli

Ingredients to assemble:

- 4 oz. dark chocolate, melted
- ½ cup shelled pistachios, toasted and chopped finely
- 2 Tbsp powdered sugar
- 2 Tbsp espresso powder

To assemble:

1. When all the shells have been fried and are cool, dip each side of the cannoli shell in melted chocolate and then straight into the crushed pistachios.
2. Set aside and wait for the chocolate to harden.
3. Fill the cannoli with the ricotta cream and place onto a serving platter.
4. When ready to serve, mix the powdered sugar and espresso powder together and dust over the top of the cannoli.

