Newcomers' Cooking the Italian Experience

First Course ............................................................................................................................... 2
  Bruschetta con Salsicca e Stracchino .................................................................................. 2
  Chestnut Soup .................................................................................................................. 2
Second Course .......................................................................................................................... 2
  Pasta Fettuccine ............................................................................................................... 2
  Red Wine Roast ................................................................................................................. 3
  Caramelized Onion Foccacia ............................................................................................... 3
Desserts ....................................................................................................................................... 4
  Hazelnut Biscotti .............................................................................................................. 4
  Vanilla Gelato with Balsamic Vinegar Glaze ...................................................................... 5
  Balsamic Glaze ................................................................................................................. 5
Tasty Beverages ........................................................................................................................ 5
  Limoncello Cream ............................................................................................................. 5
**First Course**

*Bruschetta con Salsicca e Stracchino*

Slices of Italian bread  
mild sausage, no fennel  
farmers cheese, Neufchatel or cream cheese

You will have to judge the quantities.  
Preheat the oven to 400°. Remove the sausage from its casings and place in a bowl with the cheese. Blend together until smooth. Spread the mixture on the bread and place in the oven. Watch the bruschetta carefully until golden brown. Serve warm.

**Chestnut Soup**

Sauté garlic in olive oil; do not brown it  
Add chickpeas and chestnuts. Sauté.  
Add chicken stock and a pinch of peperoncino or chili flakes

Cook 20 minutes. if canned beans, longer if you use the dry beans  
Take out 2 ladles of soup and puree  
Add small shaped pasta into soup, adding chicken broth if necessary  
Add back pureed soup and cook until the pasta is done

**Second Course**

*Pasta Fettuccine*

1 egg and 4 Tbs flour per person  
4 eggs  
1 ⅔ cup flour, all purpose or semolina flour

Place the flour on a working surface, creating a small mound with a crater in the middle. Beat eggs and work them in with the flour, first use a fork and then start working with your hands, until the dough is smooth. Then cover the dough with a towel and let it rest for at least half an hour. If you prefer to use a rolling can divide the dough into smaller pieces and sprinkle some flour on your working surface. If you prefer to use a pasta machine, start with some balls of dough, flatten them with your hands and then start at the highest setting. Roll the dough into the machine and repeat the process by lowering the setting every time. Reach the lowest setting. At this point you can cut the dough in the shape that you desire.
Red Wine Roast

4 peppercorns 2 tablespoons of butter
3 cloves 3 slices of pancetta or bacon
2 bay leaves
Rosemary 2 celery sticks roughly cut
1 garlic 1 onion roughly cut
1 stick cinnamon 2 carrots

2 pound roast beef 1/4 cup brandy
salt
1 bottle of Barolo wine
flour

cheesecloth

Rub the meat with salt. Place all the herbs and spices in the cheesecloth. Tie it and place it in a container with the meat. Pour in the whole bottle of wine. Cover. Place in refrigerator and let sit for at least 12 hours. After that time rub the roast with flour after letting the extra wine drip off. Sauté the pancetta in the butter and then brown the roast on both sides. Once the meat is browned, pour in the wine with all the spices and let it cook for about 15 minutes. Add the vegetables. Remove the sachet with the herbs and spices and let it simmer for two more hours. Turn the meat once in a while. After the two hours, remove the meat and keep it warm. Blend the wine and vegetables, either in a blender or with an immersion blender. Let it simmer in order to thicken. Taste and add salt if needed. Slice the meat. Pour the brandy in the gravy pour over the meat.

Caramelized Onion Foccacia

Ingredients:
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups chopped yellow onions
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper

For the Dough:
1 envelope (1/4-ounce) active dry yeast
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/4 cup plus 3 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup warm water (about 110 degrees F.)
1 teaspoon salt
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons Kosher salt
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. In a large sauté pan, over medium heat, add the oil. When the oil is hot, add the onions. Season with salt and pepper. Sauté until caramelized, about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and cool completely.

Using an electric mixer with a dough hook, whisk the yeast, sugar, garlic, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, warm water, and caramelized onions together for 2 minutes to dissolve the yeast. Add the salt and flour.

With the mixer on low, mix until the dough starts to come together. Increase the speed to medium-high and mix until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl and crawls up the dough hook. Grease a mixing bowl with 1 teaspoon of the oil. Place the dough in the greased bowl and turn once. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place in a warm, draft free place until the dough doubles in size about 1 1/2 hours.

Grease a half baking sheet pan (17 by 12) with 2 teaspoons of the oil. Turn the dough out onto a baking sheet. Punch the dough down and press the dough out to the form of the pan. Brush the dough with remaining 1/4 cup of the olive oil. Sprinkle the dough with kosher salt and coarse black pepper. Lightly cover the pan with plastic wrap and let the dough rest for 1 hour.

Bake the dough for 30 to 35 minutes or until the dough is golden brown. Slice the bread into individual pieces or into sandwich slices.

Desserts

Hazelnut Biscotti

1 egg
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup hazelnuts, peeled and toasted
3 tablespoons lard, melted
grated lemon peel
pinch of cinnamon
tea spoon of Brandy
1 teaspoon of yeast
flour

Shell and crush the hazelnuts
Place the flour on a working surface. Add the egg, sugar, lard, lemon peel, Brandy, yeast and the hazelnuts. Mix everything with a fork at first and then with your hands. Work until the dough is soft and smooth. Shaped like a big roll. Place on a cookie sheet either greased with lard or use parchment paper. Preheat oven to 300° and bake until golden. Cut log slices on the diagonal. Place the biscotti, cut side down, on the baking sheet. Bake for
about 10 minutes, turn slices over, and bake for another 10 minutes or until golden brown.

*Vanilla Gelato with Balsamic Vinegar Glaze*

7 ounces of milk  
5 ounces sugar  
7 ounces heavy cream  
1 vanilla bean or 2 teaspoons high quality vanilla extract  
4 egg yolks  
a few grains of salt  
strawberries... optional  
Balsamic vinegar glaze  

Put the milk and vanilla bean into a small saucepan and bring almost to a boil. Remove from the heat. Cover and let stand for 15 minutes. If you used the bean, take it out and allow the milk to cool. Mix the yolks with the sugar and salt, beating until well blended. Add the milk and cream. Pour into pre-cooled gelato maker and follow the instructions on your machine. If it is too soft when done place in the freezer for half an hour.

Wash and cut strawberries. Garnish gelato with strawberries and drizzle balsamic vinegar glaze on top to taste.

*Balsamic Glaze*

One bottle of Balsamic Vinegar  
3 - 6 Tbs sugar  
2 tbs butter  

Cook on low heat until reduced, stirring every now and then. If it doesn't reduce to the consistency of chocolate syrup, mix a bit of flour with water and add to the glaze to thicken.

*Tasty Beverages*

*Limoncello Cream*

½ quart of pure alcohol (Everclear)  
6 organic lemons  
2 pounds a sugar  
1 1/4 quart of milk 2%  
4-5 drops of vanilla extract
Wash and peel the lemons. Careful to use only the yellow part, not the white inner skin. A potato peeler works well. Place the lemon peels with the alcohol in a covered bowl for at least seven days.

Bring the milk to a boil and add the sugar. Let cook for about 10 minutes. Strain the lemon peels from the alcohol... do not throw away the alcohol! Add the peels to the milk. Boil for another 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool. Remove the lemon peels. Add the alcohol and vanilla extract to the milk mixture. Bottle and keep in the freezer.