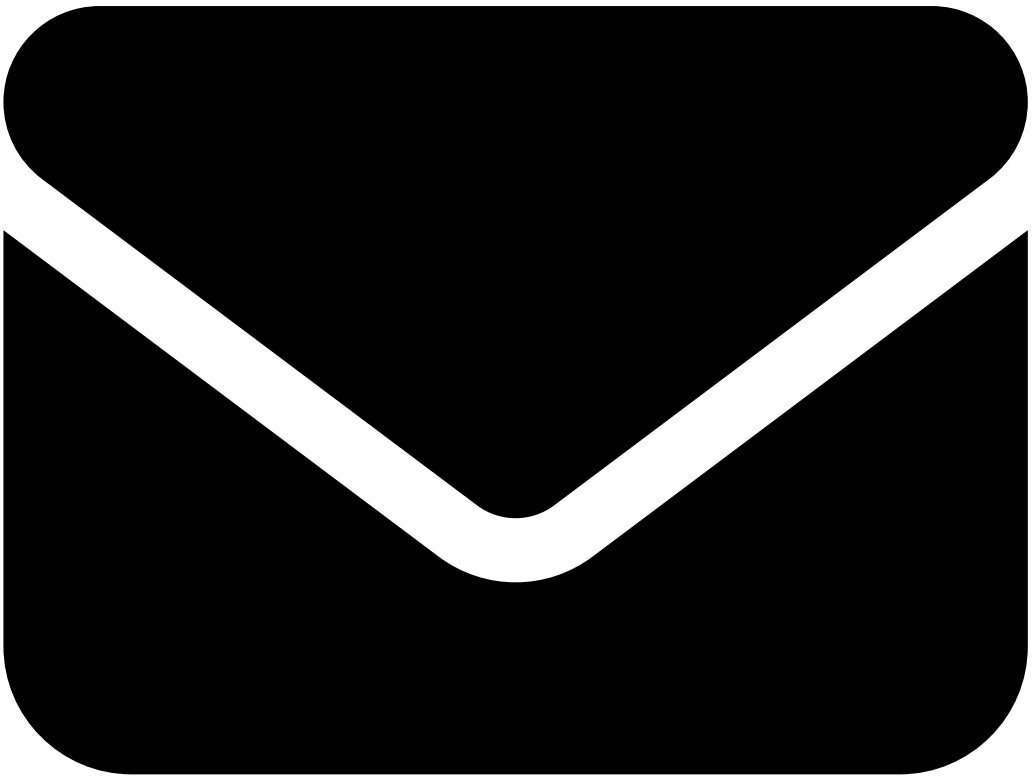
15 Italian Appetizers for Holiday Entertaining

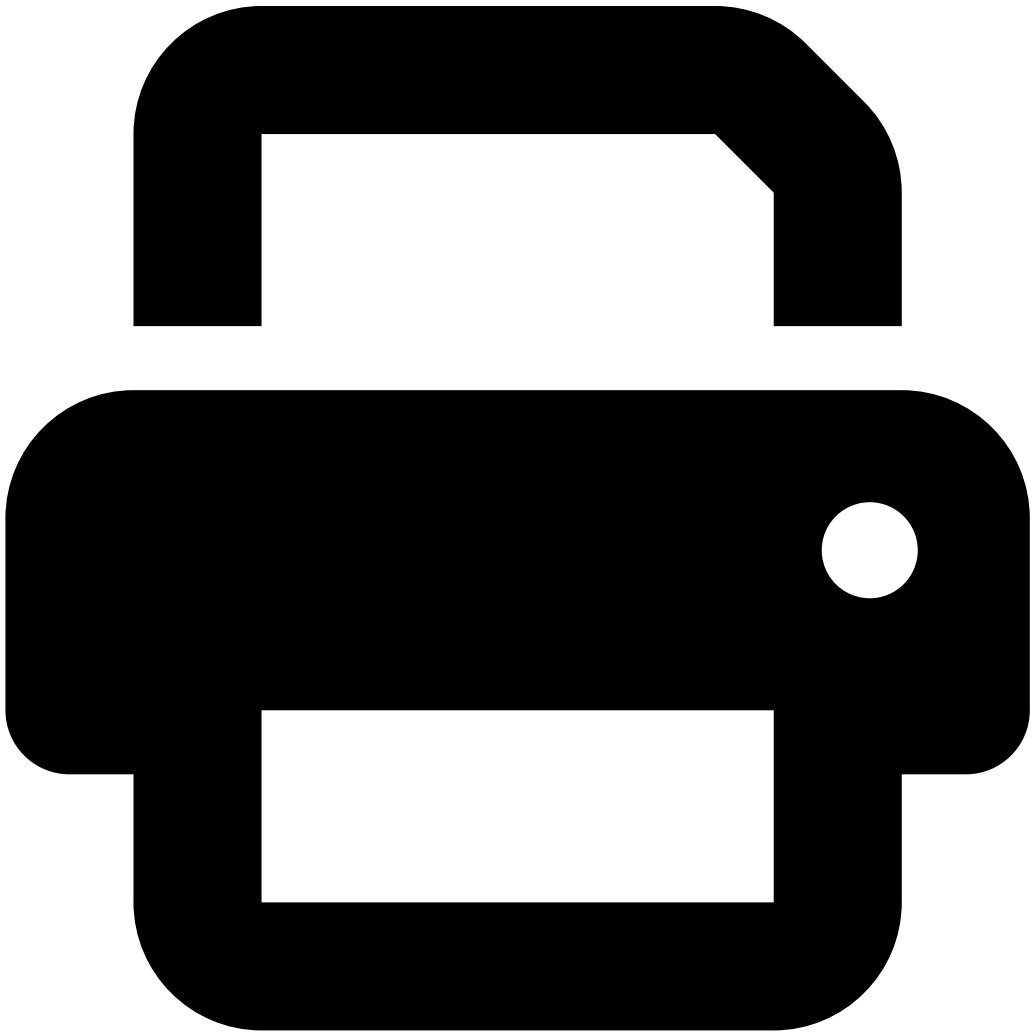
15 Italian Appetizers for Holiday Entertaining This post may contain affiliate links, that help support this blog. If you make a purchase through these links, I may earn a commission—at no cost to you. For more information read my disclosure policy.








SMS



Some of my favorite memories growing up in Italy are centered around the kitchen and the table. Whenever family and friends gathered, there was always something to nibble on before the meal began. A platter of antipasti, something freshly fried, a little bruschetta, or a simple dish made with whatever was in season. It was never about making things complicated; it was about good food and being together.

After spending so many years in the restaurant business, I've carried that same love of appetizers into my own kitchen. I believe the best Italian appetizers start with simple, quality ingredients and a little care in how they're prepared.

I've gathered 15 Italian appetizers that I love making and sharing. From crispy fried favorites and traditional antipasti to easy bites and elegant starters, these recipes are perfect for entertaining or whenever you want to make a meal feel a little more special.

So pour a glass of something, gather around the table, and enjoy. That’s what Italian food is all about!

Fried Calamari

A classic Italian restaurant favorite, fried calamari is always a crowd-pleaser. Lightly coated and fried until golden and crispy, it’s best served hot with fresh lemon wedges. The secret is not to overcook the calamari so it stays tender.

GO TO RECIPE

Classic Italian Bruschetta

Fresh tomatoes, fragrant basil, garlic, good olive oil, and toasted bread come together to make one of Italy’s most beloved appetizers. Simple ingredients make all the difference here.GO TO RECIPE

Whipped Baked Ricotta with Roasted Cherry Tomatoes

This is a beautiful appetizer to serve when you want something a little different. Creamy baked cheese paired with sweet roasted cherry tomatoes makes a delicious combination. Serve with toasted bread for scooping.GO TO RECIPE

Mushroom Puff Pastry Tart

This mushroom puff pastry tart is a delicious and elegant appetizer that’s surprisingly easy to prepare. Flaky, golden puff pastry is topped with savory mushrooms and flavorful ingredients, making it perfect for serving when entertaining. Slice it into small squares or strips for an easy appetizer everyone can enjoy.GO TO RECIPE

Italian Sausage Rolls

These savory sausage rolls are wrapped in flaky pastry and baked until golden and delicious. They’re easy to prepare, perfect for making ahead, and wonderful served warm. Cut them into smaller portions for an appetizer everyone can enjoy.GO TO RECIPE

Spinach and Potato Muffin Frittatas

These individual spinach and potato frittatas are a delicious addition to any appetizer spread. Baked in a muffin pan, they’re easy to serve, full of flavor, and can be enjoyed warm or at room temperature. They’re also perfect for preparing ahead.GO TO RECIPE

Italian Stuffed Onions with Pecorino Breadcrumbs

Sweet onions are filled with a savory mixture of breadcrumbs, Pecorino cheese, herbs, and seasonings, then baked until tender and golden. This rustic Italian appetizer is full of flavor and a lovely addition to any appetizer table.GO TO RECIPE

Grissini (Italian Breadsticks)

Crispy, slender, and wonderfully crunchy, grissini are traditional Italian breadsticks that are perfect for serving alongside cheeses, cured meats, and antipasti. They’re a simple homemade addition that makes any appetizer table feel a little more special.GO TO RECIPE

Italian Meatballs

Small, homemade Italian meatballs make a wonderful appetizer. Simmered in tomato sauce and served with toothpicks, they are always a favorite. Make them ahead and gently reheat before

serving.GO TO RECIPE

Shrimp Scampi Appetizer

Garlic, butter, olive oil, lemon, and shrimp make a delicious combination. Serve these shrimp in a small dish with plenty of sauce and crusty bread for dipping.

[Get the Shrimp Scampi Recipe]GO TO RECIPE

Italian Antipasto Platter

An antipasto platter is one of my favorite ways to entertain. Arrange Italian cheeses, cured meats, olives, marinated vegetables, roasted peppers, and other small bites on a large platter. There are no strict rules; use what you love and create a beautiful assortment for everyone to enjoy.GO TO RECIPE

Roasted Italian Peppers

Sweet roasted peppers dressed with olive oil, garlic, and fresh herbs are one of those simple dishes that belong on every Italian antipasto table. They can be prepared ahead of time, making entertaining easier.

GO TO RECIPE

Shrimp Oreganata

Shrimp Oreganata is a classic Italian-American seafood favorite. Juicy shrimp are topped with a flavorful mixture of breadcrumbs, garlic, oregano, and olive oil, then baked until golden. It’s simple to prepare and always makes an impressive appetizer.GO TO RECIPE

Potato Scarpaccia

Potato Scarpaccia is a delicious savory Italian specialty

featuring thinly sliced potatoes baked with a light, flavorful batter until golden and crisp around the edges. Cut into squares or small wedges, it’s a wonderful appetizer to share.GO TO RECIPE

Tips for Preparing Italian Appetizers Ahead of Time

When I’m entertaining, I like to have as much prepared ahead of time as possible. After years in the restaurant business, I’ve learned that a little planning makes all the difference. It allows you to enjoy your guests instead of spending the entire time in the kitchen.

Many Italian appetizers are perfect for preparing in advance, and some actually develop even more flavor as they sit.

- **Prepare marinated vegetables ahead:** Roasted peppers and marinated vegetables can be made a day or two in advance. Keep them refrigerated in an airtight container and bring them to room temperature before serving.
- **Prepare baked appetizers ahead:** Stuffed onions, potato scarpaccia, and mushroom puff pastry tart can be prepared ahead and reheated before serving. This makes entertaining so much easier.
- **Make your fillings in advance:** Prepare sausage roll fillings, breadcrumb mixtures, and other components ahead of time. Assemble and bake when you’re ready.
- **Plan your serving platter:** Arrange your cheeses, cured meats, olives, and other antipasti ingredients ahead of time. Add fresh breadsticks and delicate ingredients just before serving.
- **Save fried foods for last:** Fried calamari is best served immediately after cooking so it stays light and crispy.
- **Serve a combination of hot and cold appetizers:** I always like to offer a variety of textures and flavors. Include something crispy, something savory, fresh vegetables,

seafood, and a few simple antipasti.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are traditional Italian appetizers called?

Traditional Italian appetizers are called *antipasti*, the plural of *antipasto*. They are served before the main course and can include cured meats, cheeses, marinated vegetables, seafood, bruschetta, and small savory bites.

What should I serve at an Italian appetizer gathering?

I like to offer a little variety rather than serving too many dishes that are similar. Start with an antipasto platter, then add a few warm appetizers such as sausage rolls, shrimp oreganata, stuffed onions, or fried calamari. Homemade grissini and bruschetta are also wonderful additions.

How many appetizers should I serve per person?

For a gathering where appetizers are served before dinner, plan on approximately 3 to 5 pieces per person, depending on the size of the appetizers and how many other dishes you're serving. If appetizers are the main event, plan for more.

Can Italian appetizers be made ahead of time?

Absolutely! Many Italian appetizers can be prepared a day ahead. Marinated vegetables, roasted peppers, fillings, and some baked dishes are especially convenient. I recommend saving fried foods and final assembly for just before serving.

Kitchen Essentials for Making Italian Appetizers

Having a few good kitchen tools on hand makes preparing appetizers so much easier. These are some of the items I reach for when making Italian appetizers at home. **Shop My Kitchen Favorites:** I've linked some of my favorite kitchen essentials below to help you prepare these recipes at home.

- **Large Wooden Cutting Board:** Perfect for prepping vegetables, slicing bread, and assembling antipasto platters.
- **Rimmed Baking Sheets:** Essential for roasting vegetables, baking stuffed onions, sausage rolls, and savory tarts.
- **Parchment Paper:** Makes baking and cleanup easier, especially for puff pastry and baked appetizers.
- **Food Processor:** Helpful for preparing breadcrumb mixtures, chopping herbs, and making fillings.
- **Mixing Bowls:** A kitchen staple for preparing fillings, marinades, and sauces.
- **Kitchen Tongs:** Perfect for turning fried calamari and handling hot appetizers.
- **Large Serving Platters:** A beautiful way to present antipasti, bruschetta, and assorted appetizers.

Bringing Everyone Together Around the Table

For me, that's what Italian entertaining has always been about. It's not about having a perfect table or preparing an elaborate menu. It's about making food with care, sharing dishes everyone can enjoy, and making people feel welcome.

Some of my favorite gatherings have started with a few appetizers placed in the middle of the table, everyone reaching for a little something, and conversations that last

long after the food is gone.

I hope these Italian appetizer recipes give you plenty of inspiration for your next gathering. Choose a few favorites, prepare what you can ahead of time, and enjoy the time spent around the table.

Buon appetito!