

Healthy Italian Recipes to Start the New Year Right

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The New Year always brings a renewed focus on feeling good—without giving up the foods we love. In Italian cooking, that balance has always existed. It's about fresh ingredients, simple preparations, and letting real food shine.

This year, instead of extremes, I'm leaning into **healthy Italian recipes** that feel nourishing, comforting, and realistic. Dishes built on vegetables, legumes, seafood, olive oil, and simple proteins—the way Italians have cooked for generations.

If you're looking to reset after the holidays while still enjoying flavorful, satisfying meals, these recipes are the perfect place to start.

What “Healthy Italian” Really Means

In my kitchen, healthy doesn't mean bland or boring. It means:

- Fresh, seasonal ingredients
- Olive oil instead of heavy sauces
- Beans, vegetables, seafood, and lean proteins
- Recipes that leave you satisfied—not deprived

These dishes are proof that Italian food can be both

comforting and nourishing.

Fresh & Light Starters

Perfect for lighter meals, lunch, or beginning a balanced dinner.

Rustic Italian Roasted pepper salad



Bright, refreshing, and naturally light, this classic salad is packed with citrus, crunch, and flavor.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Rustic Italian roasted pepper salad](#)

Winter Persimmon Walnut Salad ...



· · · A beautiful balance of sweetness, crunch, and freshness—perfect during the colder months.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Winter Persimmon Walnut Salad](#)

Italian Escarole and Beans



Simple, rustic, and protein-rich, this is a classic Italian dish that proves healthy food can still be deeply comforting.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Italian Escarole and Beans](#)

Nourishing Soups

Soups are one of the easiest ways to eat well without sacrificing flavor.

Italian Wedding Soup



Light broth, greens, and tender meatballs come together for a soup that's filling yet balanced.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Italian Wedding Soup](#)

Vegetarian Italian Mushroom Soup



Earthy, satisfying, and naturally wholesome—perfect for a light lunch or dinner.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Vegetarian Italian Mushroom Soup](#)

Tortellini in chicken Brodo



A timeless Italian classic that relies on good broth and simple ingredients rather than heavy additions.

□ [Get the full recipe here](#) Tortellini in chicken Brodo

Balanced Pasta & Mains

Italian food has always been about moderation—these dishes are flavorful without being heavy.

Shrimp Oreganata



· Baked shrimp with breadcrumbs, garlic, and lemon—light, protein-rich, and full of flavor.

□ [Get the full recipe here](#) Shrimp Oreganata

Tomato piccata Alaskan cod



A fresh, tomato piccata- dish that feels indulgent while staying light and elegant.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Tomato piccata Alaskan cod](#)

Italian Stuffed Eggplant Bolognese



A perfect example of balance—vegetables, protein, and just enough richness to satisfy.

□ *Get the full recipe here* Italian baked stuffed Eggplant Bolognese

Pasta with Lentils and Italian Sausage



A balanced pasta dish rooted in tradition, combining lentils, a modest amount of sausage, and pantry staples for a hearty but nourishing meal.

□ *Get the full recipe here* Pasta with Lentils and Italian Sausage

Italian-Style Roast Chicken and Potatoes



A complete meal made with simple ingredients—olive oil, herbs, and perfectly roasted chicken and potatoes. This is everyday Italian cooking at its best.

□ *Get the full recipe here* Italian-Style Roast lemon Chicken and Potatoes

Naturally Sweet Endings

Dessert doesn't have to disappear—just shift toward simpler, more traditional treats.

Italian olive oil Almond Cake



Light, not overly sweet, and perfect with coffee or espresso.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Italian olive oil Almond Cake](#)

Italian Apple Cake



Made with fresh apples and simple ingredients, this cake is naturally moist and comforting without being heavy.

□ *Get the full recipe here* [Pureed apple walnut bundt Cake](#)

Italian Amaretti Cookies

A timeless cookie made without flour or butter—delicate, lightly sweet, and perfect for a small treat.

□ [Get the full recipe here](#) **Italian Amaretti Cookies**

Baked Gorgonzola Stuffed Pears



Sweet fruit paired with savory cheese makes a satisfying, portion-friendly dessert.

□ [Get the full recipe here](#) Baked Gorgonzola Stuffed Pears

Starting the New Year the Italian Way

Italian cooking has never been about cutting things out—it's about balance, quality ingredients, and enjoying food with intention. These healthy Italian recipes are the ones I turn to when I want meals that feel good, taste great, and still honor tradition.

As you move into the New Year, I hope these dishes inspire you to cook simply, eat well, and gather often. Because the healthiest meals are the ones that bring comfort, nourishment, and a little joy to the table.

□ Let me know in the comments—which recipe will you start with?

Mushroom & Fontina Puff Pastry Tart

Mushroom & Fontina Puff Pastry Tart

This mushroom and fontina puff pastry tart is proof that simple ingredients can create something truly special. Earthy mushrooms, melty grated fontina, and flaky puff pastry come together in an elegant Italian-inspired appetizer that looks impressive but couldn't be easier to prepare. It's the kind of dish that belongs on a holiday table, yet is just as perfect for casual entertaining or a cozy night in.

Things to know about this Mushroom & Fontina Mushroom Puff Pastry Tart

- **Egg wash tip:** Brushing the border with beaten egg gives a glossy, golden finish without weighing down the tart.
- **Cheese balance:** Fontina melts beautifully, but feel free to mix with a small amount of Parmesan for extra flavor and a sharper bite.
- **Mushroom moisture:** Cook mushrooms thoroughly to avoid soggy pastry; draining excess liquid helps keep the tart

crisp.

- **Serving temperature:** This tart is delicious warm or at room temperature, making it perfect for parties.
- **Prep ahead:** You can assemble the tart and refrigerate for up to an hour before baking. Brush with egg wash right before it goes in the oven.

• Variations

1. **Cheese swap:** Use Gruyère, Fontina + Mozzarella, or a mix of Fontina and Parmesan for a richer flavor.
2. **Add herbs:** Fresh thyme, rosemary, or oregano folded into the mushrooms adds an aromatic punch.
3. **Vegetable twist:** Mix in caramelized onions, roasted red peppers, or spinach for extra layers of flavor.
4. **Mini tart version:** Cut puff pastry into squares or rounds for bite-sized appetizers.
5. **Nutty crunch:** Sprinkle toasted pine nuts or walnuts over the mushrooms before baking for added texture.
6. Love simple, elegant Italian appetizers? Explore more **crowd-pleasing recipes** on the blog, including **Italian Sausage Rolls**, Italian sausage **Stuffed Mushrooms**, and **Prosciutto wrapped chicken fingers**. Each recipe is easy to make, full of flavor, and perfect for entertaining any time of year.





Mushroom & Fontina Puff Pastry Tart (Recipe Card)

Servings

6–8 appetizer portions

Prep Time

15 minutes

Cook Time

20 minutes

Total Time

35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 sheet puff pastry, thawed
- 8 oz mushrooms, cleaned and thinly sliced
- 1 cup grated fontina cheese
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)

Instructions

1. Cook the mushrooms

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms and cook until softened and lightly golden, about 6–8 minutes. Stir in garlic, salt, and pepper; cook 30 seconds more. Remove from heat.

2. Prepare the pastry

Preheat oven to **400°F (200°C)**. Place puff pastry on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Lightly score a 1-inch border around the edges, being careful not to cut all the way through.

3. Egg wash

Brush the scored border of the puff pastry with the beaten egg. This helps create a beautifully golden, glossy edge. **Optional sprinkle with sesame or everything**

bagel seeds. Use a fork to gently prick the center of the pastry—this helps prevent it from puffing up too much while baking.

4. **Assemble the tart**

Sprinkle grated fontina evenly inside the border. Spoon the mushroom mixture over the cheese.

5. **Bake**

Bake for **18–22 minutes**, until the pastry is puffed and deep golden and the cheese is melted and bubbly.

6. **Finish & serve**

Sprinkle with fresh parsley. Let cool slightly, then slice and serve warm or at room temperature

Prosciutto-Wrapped Chicken Fingers with Hot Honey

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When it comes to Italian-style appetizers, simple ingredients done right always steal the show. These **prosciutto-wrapped chicken fingers with hot honey** are the perfect balance of savory, salty, and just a little sweet. Lightly seasoned chicken is wrapped in prosciutto, pan-seared until crisp, then finished in the oven and drizzled with hot honey for an irresistible bite. Elegant enough for New Year's Eve, yet easy enough to make any time you're entertaining.

Things to know about this Prosciutto-Wrapped Chicken Fingers with Hot Honey recipe

- **Prosciutto does the work:** Its saltiness adds flavor and helps keep the chicken juicy.
- **Pan-sear first:** This step crisps the prosciutto and adds depth before finishing in the oven.
- **Drain excess fat:** If needed, blot lightly before baking so the prosciutto stays crisp.
- **Hot honey at the end:** Drizzle just before serving to keep the coating glossy and fresh.
- **Perfect for parties:** Skewers or toothpicks make these easy, mess-free appetizers.
- If you love easy Italian-inspired appetizers, be sure to explore more crowd-pleasing recipes on the blog. From savory **Italian sausage rolls** to **vegetarian stuffed mushrooms** and elegant **puff pastry twists**, you'll find simple, flavorful ideas perfect for entertaining, holidays, or casual gatherings any time of year.





Prosciutto-Wrapped Chicken Fingers with Hot Honey

Prep Time

10 minutes

Cook Time

15–18 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into finger-size strips

- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- salt and pepper to taste
- 8–10 thin slices prosciutto, cut in half lengthwise if needed
- 1–2 tbsp olive oil or cooking spray
- 2–3 tbsp hot honey, for drizzling

▪ Instructions

▪ Season the chicken

Place the chicken strips in a bowl. Season with salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and Italian seasoning.

▪ Wrap with prosciutto

Wrap each chicken strip tightly with prosciutto. Thread onto skewers if desired.

▪ Pan-fry

Heat olive oil or in a large oven proof skillet over medium heat. Cook the chicken, turning, until the prosciutto is lightly crisped, about **5–6 minutes**.

▪ Finish in the oven

Transfer to a pre heated **375°F** until cooked through, **8–10 minutes**.

▪ Drizzle & serve

Drizzle with hot honey just before serving and serve warm.

Italian Sausage Rolls with Puff Pastry (Easy Savory Appetizer)

Italian Sausage Rolls with Puff Pastry (Easy Savory Appetizer)

Golden, flaky, and packed with classic Italian flavor, **Italian Sausage Rolls** are the kind of appetizer that disappears the moment they hit the table. Think buttery puff pastry wrapped around seasoned Italian sausage, kissed with garlic, herbs, and cheese—simple to make, impressive to serve, and endlessly versatile.

Whether you're hosting a holiday gathering, planning a New Year's Eve spread, or just want an easy savory bite with big flavor, these sausage rolls deliver every time.

Things to know about these Italian Sausage Rolls with Puff Pastry (Easy Savory Appetizer)

- **Easy but elegant** – store-bought puff pastry does the heavy lifting
- **Classic Italian flavors** – fennel, garlic, herbs, and Parmigiano Reggiano

- **Make-ahead friendly** – assemble and refrigerate or freeze
- **Perfect for parties** – slice small for appetizers or larger for lunch

• **Serving Ideas**

- Serve warm with **marinara sauce** for dipping
- Pair with **spicy Calabrian chili oil** for heat lovers
- Add to an Italian antipasto platter with olives, cheeses, and roasted peppers

Make-Ahead & Freezing Tips

- **Make ahead:** Assemble rolls, cover, and refrigerate up to 24 hours before baking.
 - **Freeze unbaked:** Slice, freeze solid, then transfer to freezer bags. Bake straight from frozen, adding 5–7 minutes to baking time.
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Italian Variations

- **Sausage & Peppers:** Add finely chopped sautéed red peppers to the filling
- **Cheesy Mozzarella:** Add small cubes of low-moisture mozzarella
- **Spinach & Sausage:** Fold in sautéed, well-drained spinach

• **A Little Italian Inspiration**

Sausage wrapped in dough has long been part of Italian home cooking—from rustic breads stuffed with salsiccia to bakery-style savory pastries. These sausage rolls are a modern, party-friendly nod to those traditions, using puff pastry for ease without sacrificing flavor.

- If you loved these **Italian Sausage Rolls**, be sure to try my other favorite Italian appetizers like **Easy Savory Puff Pastry Twists**, **Italian Stuffed Mushrooms**, and **Shrimp Oreganata**—all simple, classic recipes that are perfect for entertaining. Don't forget to bookmark this recipe and follow along for more Italian comfort food made easy.





- **Italian Sausage Rolls with Puff Pastry (Easy Savory Appetizer)**
- **Servings:** 24 bite-size sausage rolls
- **Prep Time:** 20 minutes
- **Chill Time:** 20–30 minutes
- **Cook Time:** 22–25 minutes
- **Total Time:** About 1 hour

Ingredients

- 1 pound Italian sausage (sweet or hot), casings removed
- 2 sheets puff pastry, thawed
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 tablespoon Dijon or spicy brown mustard
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds, lightly crushed (optional)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)
- Sesame seeds or flaky salt (optional, for topping)

Instructions

1. Prepare the Filling

In a bowl, combine the Italian sausage, Parmigiano Reggiano, mustard, garlic, parsley, fennel seeds, and black pepper. Mix gently until just combined—don't overwork the sausage.

2. Roll Out the Pastry

On a lightly floured surface, roll each sheet of puff pastry slightly to smooth seams and create an even rectangle. Cut each sheet lengthwise into two long strips.

3. Fill and Roll

Spoon a line of sausage filling down the center of each strip. Brush one long edge with egg wash, then roll the pastry over the filling, seam-side down.

4. Chill for Clean Cuts

Place the rolls on a parchment-lined baking sheet and refrigerate for 20–30 minutes. This helps the pastry firm up and makes slicing easier.

5. Slice and Bake

Cut each roll into 1½–2-inch pieces. Brush tops with egg wash and sprinkle with sesame seeds or flaky salt if desired. Bake at **400°F (200°C)** for 22–25 minutes, or until puffed and deeply golden.

Crispy Italian Fried Baccalà

Crispy Italian Fried Baccalà

Fried baccalà has always meant tradition in our home. It's one of those dishes that instantly brings me back to the kitchen during the holidays, where the smell of hot oil and salt-cured cod filled the air and everyone hovered nearby, waiting for the first crisp piece to come out of the pan. This wasn't fancy food—it was humble, honest cooking, passed down through generations and made with care and patience.

Baccalà itself has a long history in Italian cooking. Long before refrigeration, salt-curing cod made it possible to preserve fish for months, making it accessible even in inland regions of Italy. Over time, it became a staple for special occasions and meatless days, especially Christmas Eve. Each region has its own way of preparing it, but fried baccalà—lightly battered and golden—remains one of the simplest and most beloved preparations. With just flour and cold water, the batter stays delicate, allowing the fish to shine, exactly the way it was always meant to be enjoyed.

Things to know about this crispy Italian fried baccalà

- **Soaking time matters:** Properly desalted baccalà should taste mild, not salty. Start tasting after 24 hours and continue soaking if needed.
- **Keep the batter cold:** Using ice-cold water creates a

lighter, crisper coating when it hits the hot oil.

- **Don't overcrowd the pan:** Fry in batches so the oil temperature stays steady and the baccalà fries evenly.
- **Serve immediately:** Fried baccalà is best enjoyed hot and crisp, straight from the pan.
- If you love traditional Italian seafood dishes, don't miss my **Baccala with Potatoes** recipe or the best Italian-style fried calamari another classic that's always on our table for Christmas Eve. Serve them together for a truly authentic Italian meal, and be sure to explore the blog for more time-honored Italian recipes passed down through generations.





Crispy Italian Fried Baccała

Servings

4–6 servings

Prep Time

15 minutes (after soaking)

Cook Time

15–20 minutes

Total Time

30–35 minutes (plus soaking time)

Ingredients

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds salt-cured baccala (cod), soaked and desalted
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups **ice-cold water**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper (optional)
- Vegetable oil or light olive oil, for frying
- Lemon wedges, for serving

Optional Garnish

- Chopped fresh parsley

Instructions

1. Soak the Baccalà

Rinse the salt-cured baccala under cold running water. Place it in a large bowl, cover completely with cold water, and refrigerate for **24–48 hours**, changing the water **2–3 times daily**.

Taste a small piece to ensure it's properly desalted.

2. Prepare the Fish

Drain the baccala well and pat it **very dry** with paper towels. Cut into **2–3 inch pieces** of similar thickness for even

cooking.

3. Make the Batter

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and pepper if using. Gradually add the **ice-cold water**, whisking just until a smooth, pourable batter forms.

The consistency should be similar to a light pancake batter—thin enough to drip, but thick enough to coat the fish.

4. Heat the Oil

Heat about **1 inch of oil** in a wide, heavy skillet over **medium-high heat** until it reaches **350°F**.

(If you don't have a thermometer, a drop of batter should sizzle and float immediately.)

5. Batter the Baccalà

Dip each piece of fish into the batter, letting excess drip off, then carefully place into the hot oil. Fry in batches—do not overcrowd the pan.

6. Fry Until Golden

Fry for **3–4 minutes per side**, turning once, until the baccalà is crisp, golden, and puffed. The interior should be tender and flaky.

Second

And so on

The Best Italian-Style Fried Calamari

The best Italian style fried calamari

Growing up, fried calamari was a true family affair. My mama always bought whole squid and cleaned every single one by hand – separating the tentacles, pulling out the quill, and rinsing everything until it was spotless. I can still see her at the sink, humming while she worked, making sure each ring would fry up perfectly tender.

These days, we're lucky. Most grocery stores and fish markets sell **calamari already cleaned** – tubes and tentacles prepped and ready to slice. And while nothing beats the love and tradition of doing it the old-school way, I'll be the first to admit that buying it cleaned makes this recipe come together in minutes instead of an hour.

Fried calamari has also always been a cherished part of our **Feast of the Seven Fishes** celebration – that beloved Italian Christmas Eve tradition where the table overflows with seafood. Whether you make this dish once a year for the feast or all year long for your family, this recipe brings that same crisp, golden bite we all grew up loving.

Whether you're using ready-to-cook calamari or honoring the way our mamas did it, this classic Italian fried calamari delivers that same crisp, golden bite we all grew up loving.

Things to know about this Best Italian-Style Fried Calamari

- **Dry calamari = crisp calamari.**

Pat the rings and tentacles *really* well with paper towels. Any moisture will make the coating soggy and cause the oil to splatter.

- **The flour mix matters.**

A 50/50 blend of all-purpose flour and semolina gives that classic Italian trattoria crunch. Semolina helps the coating stay light instead of heavy or bready.

- **Keep the oil hot.**

The magic temperature is **350–365°F**. If the oil drops too low, the calamari absorbs oil and turns greasy. Fry in small batches to keep the heat consistent.

- **Fast frying keeps it tender.**

Calamari only needs **1½–2 minutes** in the oil. Any longer and it becomes chewy. Pull it out the moment it turns light golden.

- **Season immediately.**

Sprinkle with a little salt right after frying – it sticks better while the calamari is still hot.

- **Serve right away.**

Fried calamari is best eaten fresh from the fryer. It doesn't stay crisp long, so have your lemon wedges and marinara ready before you start cooking.

- **If you love this crispy Italian fried calamari, don't miss my other seafood favorites!**

Try my **Shrimp Oreganata**, , and **Shrimp Stuffed Calamari Steaks** for more Italian coastal flavors. And if you make this recipe, tag me on Instagram—I love seeing your

kitchen creations!





The best Italian style Fried Calamari

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 1½ pounds calamari, cleaned, rings + tentacles
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup semolina flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for finishing
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon paprika (optional, for color)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Oil for frying (peanut or light olive oil)
- Lemon wedges, for serving
- Marinara, for dipping

Instructions

1. Prep the calamari

Slice tubes into ½-inch rings. Pat rings **and tentacles** completely dry with paper towels.
(Drying is key for crispness!)

2. Make the coating

In a shallow bowl, whisk together: 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1 cup semolina flour, Salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder

3. Heat the oil

Pour oil into a heavy pot or deep skillet about 2 inches

deep.

Heat to **350–365°F**.

4. Coat the calamari

Toss the rings and tentacles in the flour–semolina mixture until lightly coated.

Shake off excess.

5. Fry in batches

Add calamari in small batches so the oil temperature stays stable.

Fry **1½–2 minutes**—just until pale golden.

(Over-frying = chewy.)

6. Drain & season

Transfer to a paper towel–lined tray and sprinkle immediately with a pinch of salt.

Serve

Enjoy hot with lemon wedges and marinara.

Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

Persimmon Carpaccio Salad

(Italian Style)

This elegant **Persimmon Carpaccio Salad** is a simple yet stunning Italian-inspired winter dish. If you love seasonal produce and beautiful plating, this recipe is going to be a favorite. Thinly shaved Fuyu persimmons create a vibrant, sweet base that pairs perfectly with peppery arugula, crisp shaved fennel, toasted walnuts, and salty Parmigiano. It's light, fresh, and absolutely perfect for holiday gatherings, dinner parties, or as a bright starter to any Italian meal.

In Italy, carpaccio-style dishes are all about showcasing the beauty of the ingredients with minimal dressing—and persimmons shine beautifully prepared this way.

Things to know about this Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

- **Use Fuyu persimmons**, not Hachiya—Fuyus are firm and perfect for shaving paper-thin.
 - A **mandoline** gives the most even slices, but a very sharp knife works too.
 - This dish is best served **immediately after dressing** so the persimmons stay crisp.
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Variations

- **Honey drizzle:** Add a touch of honey if you prefer a sweeter profile.
- **With prosciutto:** Lay thin prosciutto slices over the persimmons for a sweet-salty bite.

- **Citrus version:** Add orange zest or a few citrus segments.
 - **Add burrata:** For a creamier dish, serve with small pieces of burrata.
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Storage

This salad is best enjoyed fresh.

If prepping ahead:

- Shave the persimmons up to **2 hours in advance** and store covered in the refrigerator.
- Shave fennel and store in ice water for crispness. Dress only when ready to serve.

• Looking for More Seasonal Recipes?

Browse some of my winter favorites:

- Orecchiette with **Italian Sausage and broccoli rabe**
- Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto**
- Braised cabbage wedges with pancetta

Cozy, comforting, and full of Italian flavor.





Persimmon Carpaccio Salad (Italian Style)

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- **3 ripe Fuyu persimmons**, peeled and thinly shaved into rounds
- **1 cup arugula**
- **½ small fennel bulb**, shaved very thin
- **2 tablespoons toasted walnuts**, roughly chopped
- **¼ cup shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- **1–2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**
- **1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice** *or* a splash of white balsamic vinegar
- **Sea salt**, to taste
- **Fresh cracked black pepper**, to taste
- **Fennel fronds**, for garnish
- *Optional*: a sprinkle of pomegranate arils for color

Instructions

- 1. Lay out the carpaccio:** Arrange the thinly shaved persimmon slices in a beautiful overlapping layer on a large round platter.
- 2. Add the vegetables:** Scatter shaved fennel on top. Add a

small handful of arugula for freshness and contrast.

3. **Dress the salad:** Drizzle evenly with extra virgin olive oil and fresh lemon juice or white balsamic.
 4. **Season:** Sprinkle lightly with sea salt and freshly cracked pepper.
 5. **Finish:** Add toasted walnuts, shaved Parmigiano, and fennel fronds. Serve immediately.
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Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

I think cabbage is underrated. It's one of those ingredients we often overlook, yet it brings so much crunch, sweetness, and freshness to a holiday spread. While everyone gravitates toward the heavier, richer dishes this time of year, I always find myself craving something bright that cuts through all that indulgence. That's where this Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw comes in.

It's crisp, colorful, and so refreshing—shredded cabbage and carrots tossed with thin slices of sweet apple, toasted pecans for warmth, and just enough shaved Parmesan to give it that savory Italian touch. Then everything gets coated in a creamy apple-cider vinaigrette that ties it all together. It's the kind of side dish that not only balances your table but also surprises people with how simple and delicious it is. I make it every year, and there are never leftovers.

Things to know about this Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

This slaw is incredibly make-ahead friendly, which makes it perfect for busy holiday cooking. You can shred the cabbage and carrots, slice the apples, and even mix the dressing a day in advance—just keep everything separate until you're ready to serve. The salad stays crisp for hours after dressing thanks to the sturdiness of the cabbage. You can also swap pecans for walnuts, add dried cranberries for a sweeter touch, or use Asiago instead of Parmesan for a sharper flavor. It's a flexible, crowd-pleasing side dish that fits into any Christmas or holiday menu.

Variations

- **Cranberry Twist:** Add dried cranberries or pomegranate seeds for color and sweetness.
- **Walnut & Blue Cheese:** Use toasted walnuts and crumbled gorgonzola for a bold flavor.
- **Maple Dijon:** Swap honey for maple syrup and add extra Dijon mustard.
- **Creamy Italian:** Add Greek yogurt or sour cream to the dressing and include shaved fennel.
- **Apple & Pear:** Use a mix of thinly sliced apples and pears.
- **Nut-Free:** Replace nuts with pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds.
- **Savory Version:** Skip the honey and apple. Add red onion, extra vinegar, and red pepper flakes.

If you love fresh and festive holiday sides, pair this slaw with:

- **Italian Holiday Chicken Soup**
- **Savory Sausage & Mushroom**
- **The Ultimate Thanksgiving dinner Guide**





Cabbage & Apple Holiday Slaw

- **Servings:** 6
- **Prep Time:** 15 minutes
- **Chill Time:** 20 minutes (optional but recommended)

Ingredients

For the slaw:

4 cups shredded green cabbage

1 cup shredded carrots

2 large crisp apple, thinly sliced (Honeycrisp or Pink Lady)

1 cup toasted pecans

1 Tbsp. fresh or dried thyme

1/2 cup shaved Parmesan (or Asiago)

Creamy Apple-Cider Vinaigrette:

1 cup plain Greek yogurt or mayonnaise

1/3 cup olive oil

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar

1 Tbsp. honey

1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

1 small garlic clove, grated

Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the shredded cabbage, shredded carrots, apple slices, toasted pecans, shaved Parmesan, and thyme.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the mayo, olive oil, apple cider vinegar, honey, Dijon, grated garlic,

salt, and pepper until smooth.

3. Pour the dressing over the slaw and toss gently to evenly coat.
 4. Chill for at least 20 minutes before serving to let the flavors meld.
 5. Garnish with extra pecans and thyme before serving.
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Milanese-Style Chicken Breasts

Stuffed

Milanese-Style Chicken Breasts

Stuffed

In Italy, “Milanese-style” simply means breaded and pan-fried – a classic technique from Milan that gives chicken the most beautiful golden crust. Today I’m giving that tradition my own twist by stuffing the chicken with delicate prosciutto and melty provolone before searing it in the pan and finishing it in the oven. It’s elegant enough for company but easy enough for a weeknight, and the garlic Parmesan sauce pulls everything together in the most delicious way.

Things to know about these

Milanese-Style Stuffed Chicken Breasts

Make Ahead:

You can assemble the stuffed, breaded chicken breasts up to **24 hours in advance**. Keep them covered in the refrigerator, then simply sear and bake when you're ready to cook. Perfect for entertaining or prepping dinner earlier in the day.

Freezing:

Uncooked stuffed chicken freezes beautifully. Place the assembled, breaded breasts on a baking sheet, freeze until solid, then transfer to a freezer-safe bag for up to **2 months**. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator before searing and baking.

Leftovers & Storage:

Store cooked chicken in an airtight container in the refrigerator for **up to 3 days**. Reheat in a 350°F oven for 10–12 minutes to keep the breading crisp. Avoid microwaving – it softens the coating and can overcook the chicken.

Variations:

- **Cheese:** Swap provolone for fontina, or mozzarella, for different meltiness.
- **Meat:** Use speck instead of prosciutto for a smokier flavor.
- **Herbs:** Add fresh basil or parsley inside the chicken for brightness.
- **Breadcrumbs:** Try panko for extra crunch or mix in more Parmigiano for a richer crust.
- **Sauces:** Serve with marinara, lemon butter, or a simple white wine pan sauce if you want something lighter than the garlic Parmesan sauce.

- If you enjoy this Milanese-Style Stuffed Chicken, you'll love some of my other Italian chicken favorites already on the blog. Try my **Italian-Style lemon Roast Chicken (a Complete Meal)** my **Stuffed Chicken Breast with mushroom sauce**, or my **Italian stuffed meatloaf roll** for another elegant, restaurant-quality dinner at home. And if you're in the mood for cozy comfort, don't miss my **Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup** or **Tortellini al Brodo** – both reader favorites!





Milanese-Style Stuffed Chicken Breasts

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25–30 minutes

Total Time: 40–45 minutes

Ingredients

For the Chicken:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 slices prosciutto di Parma
- 4 slices provolone or fontina cheese
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup Italian-style breadcrumbs (or panko mixed with 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano)
- 1 tsp dried Italian herbs (oregano, basil, thyme)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup olive oil for frying

For the Garlic Parmesan Sauce:

- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- Zest of 1 lemon + 1–2 tbsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Prep the Chicken:

- Butterfly each chicken breast by slicing horizontally, almost through, and open like a book.
- Pound lightly to even thickness. Season with salt, pepper, and Italian herbs.

2. Assemble:

- Place a slice of prosciutto and a slice of cheese inside each chicken breast.
- Fold the chicken over to enclose the filling. Secure with toothpicks if needed.

3. Bread the Chicken:

- Add the Italian parsley to the egg whisk lightly Dredge each breast in the egg mixture, then coat with breadcrumbs mixed with Parmigiano . Press lightly to adhere.(no flour is necessary)

4. Sear:

- Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Sear chicken 3–4 minutes per side until golden brown.

Bake:

- Transfer seared chicken to an oven proof dish bake in a reheated 375°F (190°C) oven.
- Bake for 10 minutes, until chicken is cooked through (internal temperature 165°F / 74°C) and cheese is melted.

6. Make the Garlic Parmesan Sauce:

- In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat.
- Add garlic and sauté until fragrant (about 30 seconds).
- Stir in heavy cream, simmer 2–3 minutes.
- Whisk in Parmigiano, lemon zest, and lemon juice.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.

7. Serve:

- Plate the baked chicken and drizzle with garlic parmesan sauce.
 - Optional: serve with roasted vegetables, salad, or potatoes.
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Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

There's nothing quite like a perfectly seared piece of salmon with a rich, creamy sauce – it's the kind of dish that used to fly out of the kitchen at our Sonoma County restaurants . With a busy place, I always loved keeping things simple but flavorful. This pan-seared salmon with a warm dill cream sauce

is just that: restaurant-quality flavor made easy at home, ready in under 30 minutes.

Things to know about this Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

- **Quick & Easy:** From start to finish, this meal comes together in under 30 minutes – perfect for weeknights or a special weekend dinner.
- **Make-Ahead Options:** You can prep the dill cream sauce ahead of time and gently reheat it before serving.
- **Pan Choice:** A nonstick or stainless steel skillet works best for a crisp, golden sear.
- **Serving Ideas:** Pair with steamed asparagus, roasted potatoes, or a light rice pilaf for a complete meal.
- **Storage:** Leftover salmon and sauce can be stored separately in the fridge for up to 2 days. Reheat gently on low heat to avoid overcooking.

Variations

- **Herb Twist:** Swap dill for tarragon, parsley, or chives for a different fresh flavor.
- **Cream Swap:** Use half-and-half for a lighter sauce.
- **Citrus Kick:** Add orange or lime juice instead of lemon for a subtle twist.
- **Garlic-Free:** Omit the garlic for a milder sauce; caramelized onion alone adds plenty of flavor.
- Love easy, restaurant-quality dinners at home? Try this creamy dill salmon and check out more salmon favorites

on the blog: **Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms** or **Salmon alla Puttanesca** for a bold spicy kick. And my personal favorite quick and easy salmon piccate for a light bright flavor Don't forget to save this recipe and share it with friends!





Pan-Seared Salmon with Dill Sauce

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 12–15 minutes

Total Time: Under 30 minutes

Servings: 2

Ingredients

• *For the Salmon*

- 2 salmon fillets (about 6 oz each)
- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt & black pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 lemon wedge (for finishing)

For the Dill Sauce

- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 grated garlic clove
- 2 tbsp. grated onion
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Sear the Salmon

Pat the salmon fillets dry and season both sides with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.

Place the salmon skin-side down (if using skin-on) and cook for 4–5 minutes without moving, until the edges turn opaque and the skin is crisp.

Flip and cook another 2–3 minutes, or until cooked to your liking.

Transfer the salmon to a plate and set aside.

2. Make the Creamy Dill Sauce

In the same skillet, lower the heat to medium and add the butter .

Add the grated onion and grated garlic, sautéing until soft and fragrant, about 1–2 minutes.

Add a small splash of lemon juice (optional). Deglaze the pan with the wine waiting until absorbed before continuing with the recipe.

Pour in the heavy cream and bring to a gentle simmer.

Let it cook for 2–3 minutes until slightly thickened.

Stir in Dijon mustard, then season with salt and pepper.

Remove from heat and stir in the fresh dill and 2 Tbsp. of sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

3. Serve

Return the salmon to the pan or plate the fillets and spoon the warm dill cream sauce over top and more fresh dill. Serve with lemon slices