

Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce

Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce

Few dishes capture the heart of Italian comfort food quite like Lasagna Bolognese. With its rich layers of meat sauce, creamy béchamel, and perfectly melted cheese, this classic meal is a labor of love that never fails to impress. My version keeps the process simple – using store-bought noodles and homemade Bolognese sauce – while still delivering that authentic, slow-simmered flavor that makes every bite unforgettable. Whether for a cozy family dinner or a Sunday gathering, this lasagna is always a crowd-pleaser.

Things to know about this Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce recipe

- **Make ahead:** You can assemble the lasagna a day in advance and refrigerate it until ready to bake.
- **Freezer-friendly:** Lasagna freezes beautifully – just wrap it tightly and freeze for up to 3 months.
- **Noodles:** No-boil noodles work well here, but if you prefer, parboil traditional lasagna sheets for a softer texture.
- **Sauce matters:** A rich, slow-cooked Bolognese sauce makes all the difference. If you've made extra, freeze it for

your next batch.

- **Rest before slicing:** Let the lasagna sit for 15–20 minutes after baking to set the layers and make clean slices.
- **Craving more Italian comfort food?** Try my Meatball Sunday Sauce or cozy up with a bowl of Zuppa Toscana next. And if you love baked pasta, don't miss my hearty Easy cheesy Stuffed Shell – all perfect for your next family meal!

Lasagna Bolognese with Béchamel Sauce

Servings: 8

Prep Time: 45 minutes Cook Time: 45 minutes Rest Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- **For the Bolognese Sauce**

(<https://lorianasheacooks.com/tomato-bolognese-meat-sauce/>!)

You'll need about **4–5 cups** of prepared Bolognese sauce.

For the Béchamel Sauce

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 cups whole milk, warmed

- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Instructions

2. Prepare the Béchamel Sauce

- In a saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat.
- Whisk in the flour and cook for 1–2 minutes until slightly golden.
- Gradually whisk in the warm milk, stirring constantly until smooth and thickened, about 5–7 minutes.
- Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Set aside.

3. Cook the Lasagna Noodles

- If using regular noodles, cook in salted boiling water until just *al dente*.
- Drain and lay flat on a lightly oiled surface to prevent sticking.
- If using no-boil noodles, skip this step.

4. Assemble the Lasagna

- Preheat oven to **375°F (190°C)**.
- Lightly grease a **9×13-inch** baking dish.
- Spread a thin layer of Bolognese sauce on the bottom.
- Add a layer of noodles.
- Spread a layer of béchamel, then a layer of Bolognese, followed by a sprinkle of mozzarella and Parmesan.

- Repeat the process ending with a layer of béchamel. ENJOY!!!

Bake

- Cover with foil (tent it slightly so it doesn't touch the cheese).
- Bake for **30 minutes**.
- Uncover and bake another **15 minutes**, or until bubbly and golden on top.

Rest and Serve

- Let the lasagna rest **20–30 minutes** before cutting – this helps the layers set beautifully.
- Slice and serve warm with extra Parmesan if desired.

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5 Cozy Italian-Inspired Fall Soups

5 Cozy Italian-Inspired Fall

Soups

When the air turns crisp and the leaves start to fall, nothing warms the soul like a steaming bowl of soup. Over my years in Italian kitchens and running my restaurants, I've crafted many comforting soups that bring warmth and flavor to chilly days. These five cozy Italian-inspired fall soups are my absolute favorites – perfect for family dinners, casual weeknights, or when you just need a little comfort in a bowl.

Each one is packed with flavor and nostalgia, and I've linked each recipe so you can make them right at home. Plus, these soups aren't just for fall – they'll keep you cozy all through the cold weather season!



1. Classic Italian Wedding Soup

Comforting, hearty, and filled with mini meatballs, greens, and pasta. Italian Wedding Soup Perfect for chilly nights, this traditional Italian favorite brings nostalgia and warmth in every spoonful.



2. Creamy Italian Sausage Zuppa Toscana

Creamy and savory with sausage and greens – tastes like fall in a bowl. Zuppa Toscana with Italian Sausage This restaurant-style soup is rich, comforting, and made easily at home.



3. Potato Leek Soup with Pancetta

- A restaurant classic – simple, silky, and full of flavor. Potato Leek Soup with Pancetta One of the most popular soups from my restaurant days, it's rustic yet elegant, and perfect for cozying up on a fall evening.



4. Split Pea Soup with Ham

- A hearty and rustic soup that feels like home cooking at its best. Split Pea Soup with Ham A longtime favorite from my restaurant menu, this one delivers rich, smoky comfort with every bite.



5. Escarole and Bean Soup with Italian Sausage

- A true Italian classic that's nourishing and full of flavor. Escarole and Beans with Italian Sausage Simple, healthy, and satisfying – this soup has all the soul of Italian home cooking.

Things to know about these 5 Italian inspired Fall soups

- **Use quality ingredients.** A great soup starts with a good base – use a rich homemade or low-sodium broth, fresh herbs, and real Parmigiano-Reggiano for authentic Italian flavor.
- **Layer your flavors.** Sautéing onions, garlic, and vegetables first helps develop deep, rich flavor before adding liquids.
- **Don't rush the simmer.** Many soups taste even better the next day as the flavors meld – perfect for meal prepping or easy leftovers.
- **Add pasta last.** For soups like Italian Wedding or Zuppa

Toscana, cook the pasta separately or just until al dente in the soup to avoid overcooking.

- **Freeze-friendly favorites.** Split Pea Soup, Escarole and Bean, and even the Italian Wedding Soup freeze beautifully – perfect for cozy nights when you don't feel like cooking.
 - **Garnish matters.** A drizzle of good olive oil, fresh herbs, or a sprinkle of cheese can turn a simple bowl into something restaurant-worthy.
 - **Pair with crusty bread.** No Italian soup night is complete without a loaf of warm, crusty bread or homemade baguette for dipping.
 - Try one and tag me on Instagram @ Lorianasheacooks – I love seeing your cozy soup
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Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms

Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms

When you want a meal that's both elegant and comforting, this **Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms** is the perfect choice. Tender seared salmon fillets are nestled into a creamy garlic-Parmesan sauce with fresh spinach and earthy mushrooms, creating a dish that's rich, flavorful, and satisfying without being heavy.

This classic Italian-inspired recipe gets its name from “Florentine,” which refers to dishes prepared with spinach, a favorite ingredient in Florence. The addition of mushrooms gives the sauce extra depth, making it perfect for spooning over pasta, rice, or even with a side of crusty bread to soak up every drop.

Things to know about this Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms

- **What “Florentine” Means:** In Italian cooking, “Florentine” refers to dishes prepared with spinach, a nod to the city of Florence where spinach is a beloved ingredient.
- **Best Salmon to Use:** Choose skin-on fillets if you like a crisp sear, or skinless if you prefer easier serving. Thicker fillets work best for this recipe so they don’t overcook.
- **Mushroom Varieties:** Cremini or baby bella mushrooms add a deeper, earthier flavor, while white mushrooms give a lighter taste. You can even use a mix for more complexity.
- **Make-Ahead Tip:** The sauce can be prepared a few hours in advance and reheated gently. Add the spinach just before serving to keep it vibrant and fresh.
- **Pairings:** This creamy salmon dish pairs beautifully with a crisp Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, or a light Chardonnay. For a non-alcoholic option, try sparkling water with lemon.
- **Serving Ideas:** Spoon over pasta, creamy mashed potatoes, or rice—or serve with crusty bread to soak up the sauce.
- **Storage:** Leftovers keep well in an airtight container in

the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Reheat gently over low heat, adding a splash of broth or cream to loosen the sauce.

- This **Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms** is one of those recipes that feels special without requiring a lot of effort. The creamy garlic-Parmesan sauce, tender salmon, and earthy mushrooms come together in just 30 minutes, making it a dish you'll want to make again and again. If you enjoy this recipe, you'll also love my cod puttanesca recipe and Bone-In Pork Chop Piccata—both are simple, flavorful Italian-inspired meals perfect for any night of the week.

Salmon Florentine with Mushrooms

Servings: 4

• Prep Time: 10 minutes

• Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

• INGREDIENTS

- 4 salmon fillets (6 ounces each, skinless or skin-on)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- 2 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 small shallot (finely chopped)

- 8 ounces cremini or white mushrooms (sliced)
- 5 ounces fresh baby spinach (about 5 cups)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable broth
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and black pepper (to taste)

Instructions

1. Cook the salmon:

- Pat salmon dry with paper towels, season with salt and black pepper.
- Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
- Sear salmon 3–4 minutes per side, until golden and nearly cooked through. Remove to a plate and cover lightly.

2. Sauté mushrooms:

- In the same skillet, add remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and butter.
- Add mushrooms and cook 5–6 minutes until they release their juices and turn golden brown.

- Stir in shallot and cook 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds more.

3. Make the creamy sauce:

- Pour in chicken broth, scraping up browned bits. Simmer 2 minutes.
- Stir in cream, Parmesan, Dijon mustard, and red pepper flakes. Cook 3–4 minutes until slightly thickened.

4. Add spinach:

- Stir in spinach and let wilt, about 1–2 minutes.
- Add lemon juice and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

5. Finish with salmon:

- Return salmon fillets to the skillet, spooning sauce over them.
- Simmer gently 2–3 minutes until salmon is cooked through. ENJOY!!!

**Squash Varieties + Easy
Cooking Ideas**

Squash Varieties + Easy Cooking Ideas

Every fall, I look forward to squash season. Growing up, it was a staple at the market, and even now I can't resist filling my basket with all the different shapes and colors. Each variety has its own personality—some sweet and creamy, others nutty and hearty—and they all find their way into comforting dishes in my kitchen. From soups and pastas to stuffed squash dinners, these vegetables bring warmth to the table.

Why Squash is So Special

Squash is more than just pretty on the counter—it's wholesome, versatile, and naturally comforting. Packed with fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants, it's a vegetable that feels indulgent while being nourishing. And I love how it works in both savory dishes (like roasted squash with herbs or creamy risottos) and sweet recipes (cakes, muffins, even cookies).

Things to know about Squash Varieties + Easy Cooking Ideas

Common Types of Squash

- **Butternut Squash**

Sweet, creamy, and one of the most popular varieties. Perfect for soups, roasting, or blending into a pasta sauce.

- **Acorn Squash**

Mild and nutty with a tender texture. Its natural "bowl" shape makes it perfect for stuffing with sausage, rice,

or grains.

- **Delicata Squash**

Quick-cooking with edible skin, slightly sweet flavor, and beautiful striped skin. Great roasted in slices or tossed into salads.

- **Spaghetti Squash**

Once baked, its flesh turns into golden strands that mimic pasta. A fun and lighter way to serve saucy dishes.

▪ **Easy Ways to Cook Squash**

- Roast with olive oil, garlic, and fresh herbs.
- Stuff with sausage, rice, or seasonal vegetables.
- Puree into soups, sauces, or risottos.
- Toss into pasta or gnocchi.
- Bake into breads, muffins, or cakes.
- **How to pick:** Look for squash that feels heavy for its size, with firm skin and no soft spots.
- **Storage:** Whole squash keeps well on the counter for 1–2 months. Once cut, store in the fridge and use within a week. Cooked squash can be frozen for up to 3 months.
- **Peeling tip:** Microwave a whole squash for 2–3 minutes before peeling—it softens the skin and makes it easier to handle.

▪ **A Cozy Recipe to Try: Creamy**

Butternut Squash Pasta with Italian Sausage

Now that we've explored the different types of squash and how versatile they can be, I wanted to share one of my favorite ways to enjoy butternut squash in the fall. It turns into the creamiest pasta sauce, and when paired with Italian sausage, it becomes the kind of hearty, comforting meal everyone loves.

- If you're ready to start cooking with squash, I've got a few more cozy recipes to get you inspired. My Italian sausage & spinach butternut squash stuffed Roasted Butternut Squash Gnocch

Creamy Butternut Squash Pasta with Italian sausage

Ingredients

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 lbs), peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 lb Italian sausage (mild or spicy), casings removed
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 12 oz short pasta (rigatoni, penne, or orecchiette work well)
- Fresh sage or parsley, for garnish

Instructions

1. **Roast the Squash:** Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Toss cubed butternut squash with 2 tbsp olive oil, salt, pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes. Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 25–30 minutes, until tender and caramelized.
2. **Cook the Pasta:** While the squash roasts, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta according to package directions until al dente. Reserve 1 cup pasta water, then drain.
3. **Cook the Sausage:** In a large skillet, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add Italian sausage, breaking it apart with a spoon, and cook until browned and cooked through. Remove sausage from the pan and set aside.
4. **Make the Sauce:** In the same skillet, add onion and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute more. Add roasted squash and broth. Simmer for 3–4 minutes, then blend (with an immersion blender or carefully in a regular blender) until smooth and creamy. Stir in the heavy cream and Parmesan.
5. **Combine Everything:** Return the sausage to the skillet. Add cooked pasta and toss, adding reserved pasta water as needed for a silky sauce.

6. **Serve:** Garnish with fresh sage or parsley, extra Parmesan, and a drizzle of good olive oil. Serve warm.

Storage

Leftovers keep well in the fridge for 3 days. Reheat gently with a splash of broth or cream to loosen the sauce.

Italian Chicken and Rice Recipe

Italian Chicken and Rice Recipe

There's nothing more comforting than a pot of chicken and rice simmering away in the kitchen. This Italian Chicken and Rice (*Pollo e riso*) is one of those humble Italian meals that takes simple ingredients—chicken, rice, a little onion, and garlic—and turns them into something rich and satisfying. Best of all, it's made in just one pan and ready in about 30 minutes, which makes it the perfect weeknight dinner. In my house, this recipe has become a go-to when I'm craving Italian flavors without spending hours in the kitchen.

Things to know about this Italian

Chicken and Rice Recipe

- **One Pan Wonder** – Everything cooks together in a single skillet or Dutch oven, which means fewer dishes and maximum flavor. The rice soaks up all the savory juices from the chicken as it cooks, making every bite rich and comforting.
- **Ready in 30 Minutes** – This recipe proves that you don't need hours in the kitchen to create something wholesome and delicious. Perfect for busy weeknights when you still want a home-cooked meal.
- **Budget-Friendly Ingredients** – Just a few pantry staples like rice, onion, garlic, and chicken breasts come together to make a complete meal that feels special without breaking the bank.
- **Versatile and Adaptable** – You can easily swap spinach for another leafy green, use chicken thighs instead of breasts, or even make it a touch spicy with red pepper flakes.
- **Family-Friendly Comfort Food** – Mild flavors, creamy rice, and tender chicken make this dish a hit with both kids and adults. It's cozy, filling, and tastes even better the next day.
- Craving more Italian weeknight meals? Try our Creamy Italian Sausage Risotto or Italian Chicken with Lemon Wine Sauce next!

Italian Chicken and Rice Recipe

Servings

4 servings

Cook Time

- Prep: 10 minutes
- Cook: 20 minutes
- Total: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- small onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup arborio rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine
- 4 cups chicken broth (warm)
- 1 cup fresh spinach (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)

Instructions

1. **Sear the chicken** – Season chicken with, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet or Dutch oven, then sear chicken on both sides

until golden (about 3–4 minutes per side). Remove and set aside.

2. **Sauté aromatics** – Add the butter, onion, and garlic to the same pan. Cook until softened and fragrant, about 3 minutes.
3. **Toast the rice** – Stir in the arborio rice, coating it in the butter and aromatics. Toast for 1–2 minutes.
4. **Deglaze** – Add the white wine and stir, scraping up the browned bits.
5. **Simmer** – Pour in warm broth. simmer for 10- 12 minutes or until the rice is almost cooked Cut the chicken into medium dice or strips Return the chicken (and any juices) to the pan. Cover and cook on low for an additional 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is tender and chicken is cooked through.
6. **Finish** – Stir in spinach (if using). Remove from heat, mix in Parmigiano Reggiano and parsley, and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes.
7. **Serve** – Scoop into bowls and enjoy warm. ENJOY!!!!

Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola

Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola”

Fall is in the air, and nothing says cozy quite like roasted butternut squash gnocchi. This recipe combines the sweetness of roasted butternut squash with delicate soft gnocchi, perfect for pairing with creamy gorgonzola sauce.

It's no wonder most Italian restaurants have gnocchi on the menu. Most home cooks are intimidated by making gnocchi at home. I am here to tell you you don't have to be.

Making homemade gnocchi is a lot easier than you think. The most challenging part is getting the dough to the right consistency to produce the soft light gnocchi dumplings. This make take a few attempts, and that's okay. After a few tries you will be making gnocchi like a pro.

Whether you're new to making gnocchi or a seasoned pro , this easy to follow recipe is bound to become a favorite.

Things to know about this Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola”

1. Butternut squash is a seasonal fall vegetable, bringing a natural sweetness to the gnocchi that pairs well with many sauces.
2. These gnocchi are easy to make. This recipe simplifies the process. making it a beginner friendly gnocchi recipe
3. The recipe is versatile pair the gnocchi with a browned butter and sage, marinara or a creamy pancetta

gorgonzola sauce like I did. If you would like the recipe for the sauce I used let me know, if I should write a blog post.

4. This recipe is perfect for meal prep. These gnocchi are freezer friendly, so you can a batch in advance to enjoy anytime, or make a double batch one for now and one for later.
5. As always , please let met know if you make this easy roasted butternut squash gnocchi recipe. I love hearing from you. And it helps others. THANKS!!!
6. **Warm up this fall with these cozy Italian dishes:**

- **Creamy Mushroom and Italian Sausage Risotto** – rich, earthy, and perfect for chilly evenings.
- **Italian-Style Cabbage Rolls** – hearty, satisfying, and full of fall flavors.

Don't forget to save this Butternut Squash Gnocchi recipe—it's the ultimate cozy fall dinner!

Butternut Squash Gnocchi with Gorgonzola

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients: For the Gnocchi

- 2–3 cups roasted and mashed butternut squash (about 1 medium squash)
- 1 to 1½ cups all-purpose flour (start with 1 cup and add more as needed)
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

- A pinch of Nutmeg
- **For the Gorgonzola Cream Sauce:**
 - 1 cup heavy cream
 - 4 oz Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
 - 2 tbsp unsalted butter
 - 2–3 oz pancetta, diced
 - 1 small shallot, finely minced (optional)
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - Pinch of nutmeg
 - Chopped parsley

Instructions

1. Start by peeling and cleaning out the squash. Then cut into equal pieces. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper lay the butternut squash on top drizzle with olive oil salt and pepper to taste. Roast in a preheated 375-degree oven until fork tender about 20 minutes. Mash the squash into a smooth puree. Refrigerate until chilled
2. Put the flour on a broad. Make a well in the center add the rest of the ingredients , the squash, egg and parmesan cheese including salt and pepper.
3. Begin incorporating the flour into the wet ingredients kneading the dough until smooth, adding more flour a little at a time , until you have a smooth dough the dough will be slightly sticking. Let the dough rest covered for 30 minutes.

4. Then section the dough into 8 equal pieces. Roll into 12 inch long ropes flour lightly, cut the ropes into 1/2 inch pieces flour lightly. Using a fork and your thumb roll the gnocchi pieces into the classic shape. I have included a video showing the technic.

5. Roast the Squash:

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Cut the squash in half, remove seeds, and roast cut-side down until tender (about 30–35 minutes). Scoop out the flesh and mash it, letting excess moisture evaporate.

2. Make the Gnocchi Dough:

In a bowl, combine the mashed squash, egg, salt, and nutmeg. Gradually add 1 cup of flour, mixing gently until a soft dough forms. Add more flour as needed—dough should be slightly sticky but workable.

3. Shape the Gnocchi:

Divide dough into portions. Roll each into a rope about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, then cut into 1-inch pieces. Optional: roll each piece over a fork for the classic gnocchi ridges.

4. Cook the Gnocchi:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook gnocchi in batches until they float (about 2–3 minutes). Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside.

5. Make the Gorgonzola Cream Sauce:

In a skillet, melt the butter over medium heat cook diced pancetta until crisp. Remove and set aside. Sauté shallots until soft and translucent lower the heat, stir in cream until warm but not boiling. Add Gorgonzola in small pieces, stirring until smooth. Season with salt, pepper, and a

pinch of nutmeg. Stir the crispy pancetta back into the sauce.

6. Combine and Serve:

Toss the cooked gnocchi gently in the sauce until coated. Serve immediately, garnished with Freshly chopped Italian parsley

Storage Instructions

Uncooked Gnocchi:

- Place gnocchi on a floured baking sheet in a single layer. Freeze for 1–2 hours, then transfer to a freezer-safe bag or container.
- Cook from frozen in boiling salted water; they will float when done.

Cooked Gnocchi with Sauce:

- Store leftover gnocchi and sauce separately in airtight containers in the fridge for up to 3 days.
 - Reheat gently in a skillet over low heat, adding a splash of cream or milk if needed to loosen the sauce.
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Italian Sausage & Spinach Stuffed Butternut Squash

Italian Sausage & Spinach Stuffed Butternut Squash

Happy October !!! I love this time of year when butternut squash comes into season—there’s just something so cozy about roasting it until it’s golden and tender.” When you scoop it out and fill it with savory Italian sausage, garlicky spinach, and plenty of melty cheese, you’ve got a meal that’s as beautiful as it is satisfying. This stuffed butternut squash is hearty enough to be the star of your dinner table, yet elegant enough to serve for a special occasion.

The best part? Nothing goes to waste. The sweet roasted squash flesh is mixed right into the filling, giving it a creamy richness that balances perfectly with the savory sausage and Parmesan. Finished with bubbling mozzarella on top, every bite brings that rustic Italian warmth that makes you want to linger at the table just a little longer.

Things to know about this Italian Sausage & Spinach Stuffed Butternut Squash

Make Ahead:

You can roast the butternut squash and cook the sausage filling a day in advance. Store them separately in the fridge, then stuff and bake when ready to serve.

Variations:

- Swap spinach for kale or Swiss chard.
- Try sweet Italian sausage for a milder flavor or spicy for a kick.
- For a vegetarian version, leave out the sausage and bulk up the filling with sautéed mushrooms or cooked lentils.

Storage:

Leftovers keep well in the fridge for up to 3 days. Reheat in the oven at 350°F until warmed through, or in the microwave for a quick meal.

Serving Tip:

This dish is hearty on its own, but pairs beautifully with a crisp green salad or a loaf of warm, crusty bread

More Cozy Italian Recipes to Try

If you loved this Italian sausage and spinach stuffed butternut squash, here are a few more recipes you won't want to miss:

- Italian Sausage and Mushroom Risotto – creamy, comforting, and restaurant-worthy.
- Italian Escarole and Beans with Sausage – a rustic favorite perfect for chilly nights.
- Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup – rich, hearty, and ready in under 30 minutes.
- Italian Roasted Sausage, Potatoes, and Peppers – a classic tray-bake meal with bold flavors.
- **Italian Sausage & Spinach Stuffed Butternut Squash**
- **Serving Size:** 4–6 servings

- **Prep Time:** 15 minutes
- **Cook Time:** 55–65 minutes
- **Total Time:** About 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 medium butternut squash (halved lengthwise, seeds scooped out)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound Italian sausage (mild or spicy, casings removed)
- 1 small onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Flesh from the roasted butternut squash (scooped out and roughly chopped, leaving about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in the shells)
- 4 cups fresh spinach (roughly chopped)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped (optional but adds sweetness and depth)
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs (oregano, thyme, basil mix)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup breadcrumbs (Italian style)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

Instructions

1. Roast the squash

- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
- Brush squash halves with 2 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
- Place cut side down on a baking sheet lined with parchment. Roast for 35–45 minutes, until flesh is fork-tender.

2. Make the filling

- While the squash roasts, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet.
- Add sausage and cook, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, until browned (about 7 minutes).
- Add onion and garlic, cooking until softened.
- Scoop out some of the roasted squash flesh (leaving about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch along the sides for stability) and roughly chop it. Add it to the skillet and stir into the sausage mixture.
- Stir in spinach and cook until wilted.
- Add sun-dried tomatoes, Italian herbs, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, and half of the mozzarella. Mix well, then remove from heat.

3. Stuff the squash

- Fill each squash cavity with the

sausage–squash mixture, packing it in.

4. Bake

- Top with the remaining mozzarella.
- Return to oven and bake at 375°F for 15–20 minutes, until cheese is melted and golden.

5. Serve

- Garnish with fresh parsley and extra Parmesan. Serve hot as a main dish.



Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

Cod Puttanesca is a delicious twist on the classic Italian pasta sauce known as *sugo alla puttanesca*. This bold, savory sauce originated in Naples in the mid-20th century and is famous for its briny mix of olives, capers, garlic, and anchovies simmered in tomatoes. Some say it was invented by resourceful cooks who threw together whatever pantry staples they had on hand, while others believe its name comes from the lively neighborhoods where it first became popular. Traditionally served with pasta, this rustic sauce also pairs beautifully with fresh fish. In this recipe, delicate cod fillets are gently simmered in puttanesca sauce, creating a

light yet hearty meal that's full of authentic Italian flavor.

Things to know about Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

- **Cod cooks quickly:** Unlike salmon, cod is delicate and only needs a few minutes to finish in the sauce. Overcooking will make it dry.
- **Anchovies add depth:** Even if you're not an anchovy fan, they melt into the sauce and give it an authentic, savory flavor.
- **Best tomatoes to use:** Whole San Marzano or high-quality canned tomatoes give the richest flavor.
- **Make it ahead:** The puttanesca sauce can be made a day in advance; just add the cod when ready to serve.

More Recipes You'll Love

If you enjoyed this **Cod Puttanesca**, try some of my other Italian favorites:

- **Salmon Puttanesca** – another light and flavorful take on this classic sauce.
- **Shrimp Scampi Spaghetti** – garlicky, buttery, and perfect with pasta.
- **Tuscan Orzo with Pan-Seared Salmon** – a hearty one-pan Italian dinner.
- **Serving ideas:** Pair with crusty bread, spoon over pasta or orzo, or keep it light with a side of roasted vegetables.

Italian Cod Puttanesca Recipe

- **Serving Size:** 4 servings
- **Cook Time:** 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 cod fillets (about 6 oz each, skinless)
- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 can (28 oz) whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 1/2 cup pitted Kalamata olives, halved
- 2 tbsp capers, rinsed
- 4–5 anchovy fillets, chopped (optional but traditional)
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (optional, for deglazing)
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Prepare the cod

- Pat cod fillets dry and season lightly with salt and pepper.
- Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large skillet over

medium-high heat.

- Sear cod on each side for about **2–3 minutes**, until golden. Remove to a plate (it will finish cooking in the sauce).

2. Make the sauce

- In the same skillet, add remaining 1 tbsp olive oil.
- Sauté garlic and onion until fragrant and softened, about 3 minutes.
- Add anchovies (if using) and cook until they melt into the oil.
- Stir in red pepper flakes, capers, and olives. Cook 1–2 minutes.
- Deglaze with white wine (optional), scraping up any browned bits.
- Add crushed tomatoes, stir, and simmer uncovered for about 10 minutes until slightly thickened.
- **Finish with the cod**
 - Nestle the cod fillets into the sauce.
 - Spoon some sauce over the top, reduce heat to low, and cover.
 - Cook 5–7 minutes, until cod is opaque and flakes easily with a fork.
- **Serve**
 - Garnish with fresh parsley.
 - Serve with crusty bread, pasta, or over a bed of orzo to soak up the sauce.

Creamy Mushroom and Italian Sausage Risotto

Creamy Mushroom and Italian Sausage Risotto

It's no surprise most Italian restaurants have risotto on their menu, it seems too complicated for the home cook.

Well Am here to tell you this Homemade Restaurant creamy Mushroom and Italian sausage risotto isn't complicated at all.

Risotto is a northern Italian rice dish cooked with broth until it reaches a creamy consistency.

The broth can be derived from meat, fish or vegetables, I used chicken broth, if you are vegetarian you can use vegetable stock.

This is one of those recipes you make a enough of, for next day reheats or freeze for a quick ready made meal.

Plus, risotto is easy and versatile enough to have on your family weeknight meal plan. This restaurant quality recipe is also perfect for Holiday dinner with friends, to show off what a great home chef you are.

Things to know about this Creamy

Mushroom and Italian Sausage Risotto

- **Rice Matters:** Arborio rice is best for risotto because it releases starch as it cooks, giving you that creamy texture. Don't substitute with regular long-grain rice.
- **Broth Temperature:** Keep your chicken broth warm. Adding cold broth slows down the cooking and can make the risotto less creamy.
- **Stir Often:** Risotto needs attention! Stirring helps release the starch from the rice and prevents sticking.
- **Sausage Options:** You can use sweet or spicy Italian sausage depending on your taste. Either works beautifully with the mushrooms.
- **Finishing Touch:** Stir in butter and Parmesan off the heat for an extra creamy, rich finish. A sprinkle of fresh parsley brightens the dish just before serving.
- **Make-Ahead Tip:** Risotto is best served immediately, but if you need to make it ahead, undercook it slightly, then reheat with a splash of broth to bring it back to creamy perfection.
- Craving more comforting Italian dishes? Check out my **Classic Chicken Parmesan**, **Creamy Italian Sausage mushroom Pasta**, or **Zuppa Toscana Soup** for more hearty, restaurant-style recipes you can make at home. Don't forget to **save this risotto recipe** so you can enjoy it any night of the week!

Creamy Mushroom and Italian Sausage Risotto

Servings: 4

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound Italian sausage, casings removed
- 2 cups Arborio rice
- 8 ounces mushrooms, sliced (cremini, button, or mixed)
- 1 small shallot, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups chicken broth, kept warm
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet or saucepan. Add the sausage, breaking it up as it cooks, until browned.
2. In the same pan, add the remaining olive oil and 1 tablespoon butter. Sauté the onion until soft, then add garlic and mushrooms. Cook until mushrooms are golden.
3. Stir in the Arborio rice and toast for 1–2 minutes until

edges are translucent.

4. Pour in the wine, stirring until it is absorbed.
5. Begin adding warm chicken broth one ladleful at a time, stirring often. Allow each addition to be absorbed before adding more. Continue until the rice is creamy and tender, about 18–20 minutes.
6. Add the cream and simmer 5 minutes longer.
7. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately while creamy. ENJOY!!!!

Italian Sausage Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

Italian Sausage Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

When it comes to cozy Italian cooking, stuffed vegetables are always a favorite – from peppers to zucchini to eggplant. These **Italian Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms** bring that same rustic charm to the table, with hearty mushroom caps overflowing with savory sausage, herbs, spinach, and gooey melted cheese. They're comforting yet elegant, perfect as an appetizer for entertaining or a light main dish with a simple salad on the side. What I love most is how the mushrooms act like little "bowls," soaking up all the garlic, olive oil, and cheesy goodness. This same filling works wonderfully for stuffing smaller white or cremini mushrooms.

Things to know about these Italian sausage Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

- **Picking the right mushrooms:** Choose large, firm portobello caps with deep gills. They'll hold up better when stuffed and baked.
- **Drain excess moisture:** Mushrooms release water as they cook. To avoid sogginess, brush them with olive oil and pre-bake for 5–7 minutes before adding the filling if you like them firmer.
- **Cheese options:** Mozzarella gives you that melty stretch, but you can also use provolone for a sharper bite or fontina for a creamier texture.
- **Breadcrumbs matter:** Italian-style breadcrumbs add great flavor, but panko makes the topping extra crispy.
- **Make it vegetarian:** Skip the sausage and add extra spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, and ricotta or cannellini beans for a protein boost.
- **Meal ideas:** Serve two stuffed portobellos per person with a side of roasted potatoes or a crisp Italian salad for a full dinner. They also work beautifully as a starter for a fall dinner party.
- **Mini version:** This same filling works wonderfully for stuffing smaller white or cremini mushrooms. Perfect for party appetizers or holiday platters. Follow the same instructions, and lower the cooking time by 5 -7 minutes.
- If you enjoyed these **Italian Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms**, be sure to try some of my other cozy Italian favorites:

- **Classic Orecchiette with Italian Sausage and Broccoli Rabe**
- **Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup**
- **Italian Green Beans and Potato Salad**

They're all simple, full of flavor, and perfect for weeknight dinners or entertaining.

Italian sausage Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

Servings: 4

Cook Time: 30- 40 minutes

- 4 large portobello mushrooms, stems and gills removed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup Italian breadcrumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup finely chopped spinach
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tsp Italian herbs
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- My easy marinara sauce for serving

Instructions

1. **Prep the mushrooms:** Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Clean the portobellos by gently wiping them with a damp cloth. Remove stems and scrape out the gills with a spoon. Brush both sides with olive oil and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet or oven proof casserole dish.
2. **Make the filling:** In a bowl, combine breadcrumbs, parmesan, garlic, parsley, thyme, salt, and pepper. Drizzle in 1 tbsp olive oil and mix until crumbly.
3. **Stuff the mushrooms:** Divide filling evenly among the mushrooms, pressing lightly to pack. Top with shredded mozzarella or provolone if using.
4. **Bake:** Bake for 20–25 minutes, until the mushrooms are tender and the tops are golden brown.
5. Serve with my easy marinara sauce