

Light & Fresh Italian Recipes for Summer

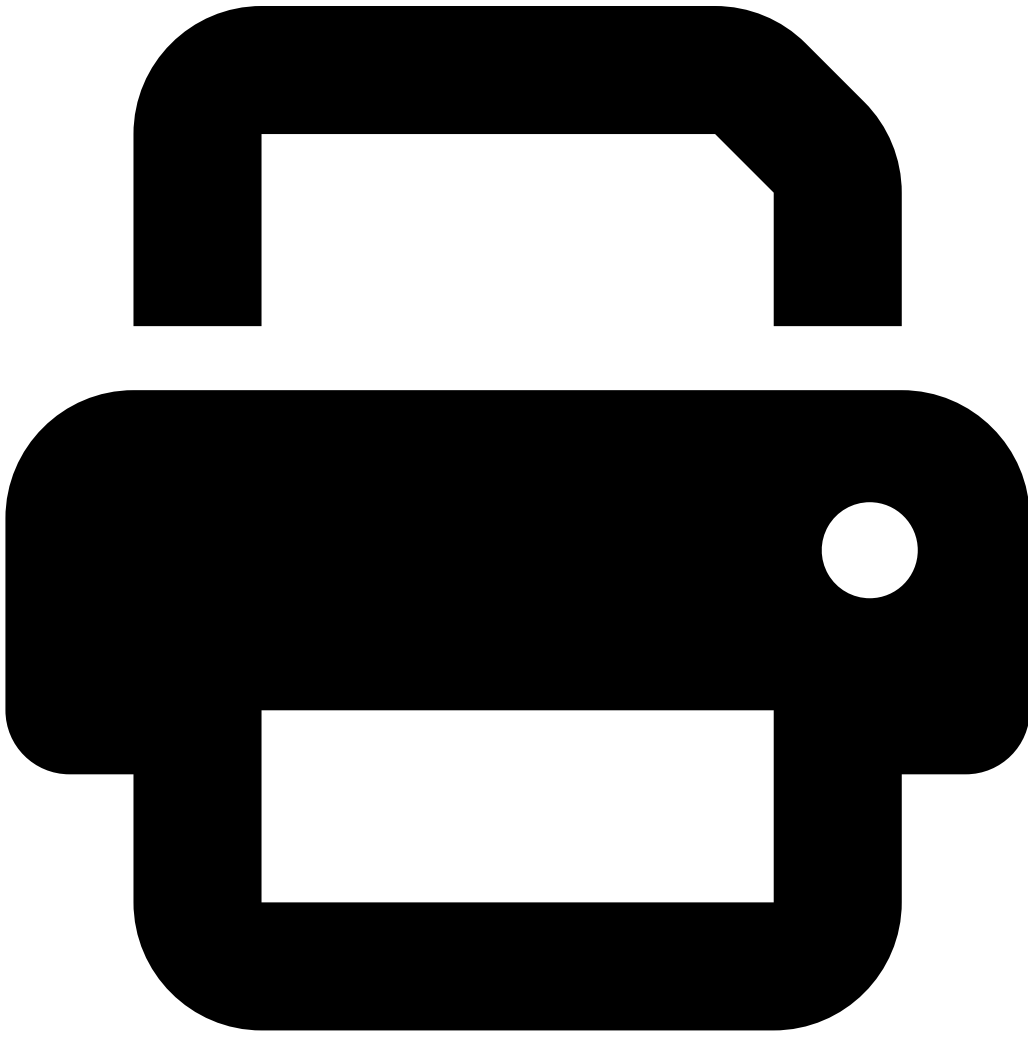
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When the weather warms up, the way I cook shifts right along with it. I'm not looking for anything heavy or overcomplicated—I want food that feels fresh, simple, and full of flavor without spending all day in the kitchen.

That's what Italian cooking does best this time of year. A few good ingredients—olive oil, garlic, lemon, fresh herbs—come together to make something that feels complete without doing too much.

These are the **light Italian recipes for warm weather** that I come back to again and again.

Orzo with Summer vegetables

Some meals just feel easy—especially when they come together

in one pan. This one-pan orzo with summer vegetables is one of those simple, feel-good recipes that checks all the boxes: quick to make, minimal cleanup, and full of fresh summer flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce

This Shrimp Spaghetti with Tomato Basil Sauce is a simple, fresh pasta dish made with sautéed shrimp, juicy summer tomatoes, garlic, and plenty of fragrant basil. The sauce is created right in the pan by combining the tomato juices with starchy pasta water and a generous handful of grated parmesan, giving you a light flavorful coating that clings to the pasta.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Authentic Pasta al Limone (Italian Lemon Pasta)

Authentic Pasta al Limone made the Italian way—no cream, just lemon, butter, cheese, and pasta water for a silky, bright, and easy lemon pasta recipe.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Authentic Pasta Portofino

Inspired by the coastal village of Portofino, this dish brings together the bold freshness of basil, the sweetness of ripe tomatoes, and the richness of good olive oil. It's often described as a cross between a tomato sauce and Pesto alla Genovese—but simpler, looser, and meant to taste like summer.

No cream. No mozzarella. Just real ingredients, handled the right way.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Tubettini Pasta Salad (Italian pasta fredda)

This authentic Italian tubettini pasta salad is loaded with fresh mozzarella, tomatoes, and savory Italian meats, all tossed in a simple olive oil dressing. The perfect light and flavorful summer pasta fredda for gatherings, picnics, or easy weeknight meals.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Authentic Italian Stuffed Tomatoes with Rice and Potatoes (Roman Recipe)

Authentic Italian stuffed tomatoes filled with rice, garlic, and basil, roasted with potatoes until tender and flavorful—just like in Rome.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Best Cod Francese Recipe – in 30 Minutes

A lightly battered, pan-fried cod fillet in an elegant lemon, butter and white wine sauce. It's similar to chicken piccata—but without the capers and with a velvety, lemon-butter sauce. Ready in less than 30 minutes.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Air fryer salmon Skewer Italian Spiedini

This air fryer salmon skewer Italian spiedini recipe uses simple ingredients you probably already have at home. Salmon is so versatile, it can be cooked in so many different ways. No air fryer? No problem, these salmon spiedini can be baked, grilled or pan-fried. And the best part is they can be on your table in minutes.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Lemon Cod Piccata (Light Italian Seafood Dinner)

Light and flavorful **Cod Lemon Piccata** made with pan-seared

cod, lemon, butter, capers, and white wine. A quick Italian seafood dinner ready in 30 minutes.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Easy chicken piccata

This Easy Chicken Piccata Recipe is so easy and quick, its perfect for family weeknight meals, but fancy enough for weekend dinner with friends.

Melt in your mouth chicken breast in a light creamy, lemony sauce made this recipe a restaurant favorite, I simplified the recipe for the home cook, no worries none of the flavor is lost.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Caprese stuffed chicken breast

this caprese stuffed chicken breast with asparagus is a must-try. Juicy chicken breast are packed with the classic flavors of caprese- fresh mozzarella, ripe tomatoes and fragrant basil – along with tender asparagus for a wholesome . satisfying dish that's easy to make and delicious.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian roasted lemon chicken and potato

This Italian roasted lemon chicken dinner is incredibly easy to make because it requires minimal prep, simple ingredients and a hands – free cooking method. The seasoning is as straightforward as mixing olive oil. lemon juice. garlic and herbs, then rubbing it into the chicken. There's no complicated marinating or advanced techniques- just a few minutes of prep and the oven does the rest.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Air fryer Chicken spiedini

Air fryer parmesan chicken spiedini are Italy's version of skewers or kabobs. In this spiedini recipe boneless, skinless chicken thighs are marinated in a blend of Italian spices, cooked in the air fryer, and basted with a delicious garlic, parmesan butter sauce.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Easy Italian Vinaigrette Recipe (Better Than Store-Bought)

Homemade Italian vinaigrette made with simple pantry ingredients. Fresh, budget-friendly, and better than store-bought—ready in minutes.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Watermelon Cucumber Feta Salad

When the weather warms up and watermelon starts showing up in every market bin, I can't help but crave this bright and refreshing salad. This **Watermelon Cucumber, feta salad with and Lemon-Honey Dressing** is one of my go-to dishes during the warmer months. It's light, vibrant, and incredibly refreshing—with just the right balance of sweet, salty, and tangy.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

If you're looking for easy summer meals that don't feel heavy, this is a great place to start. Mix a light pasta with a fresh salad or something grilled, and you have a complete meal without overthinking it.

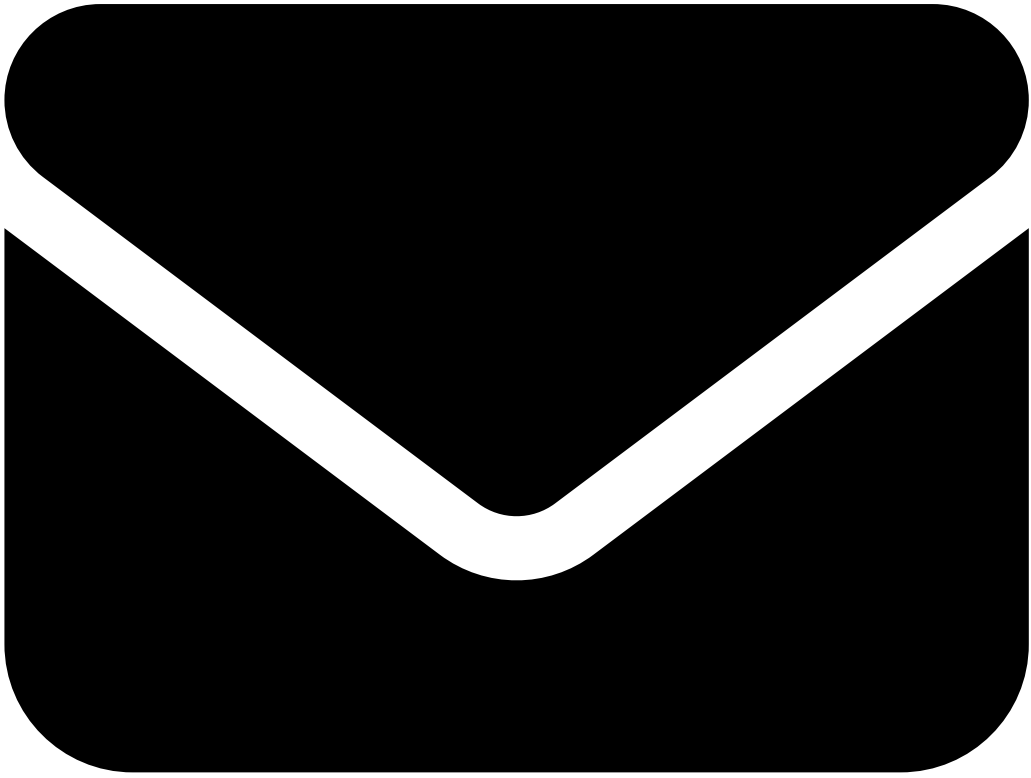
You can find all the full recipes linked above, along with more Italian-inspired dishes on the blog to keep your summer cooking simple and full of flavor.

Italian White Beef Stew with Potatoes & Peas

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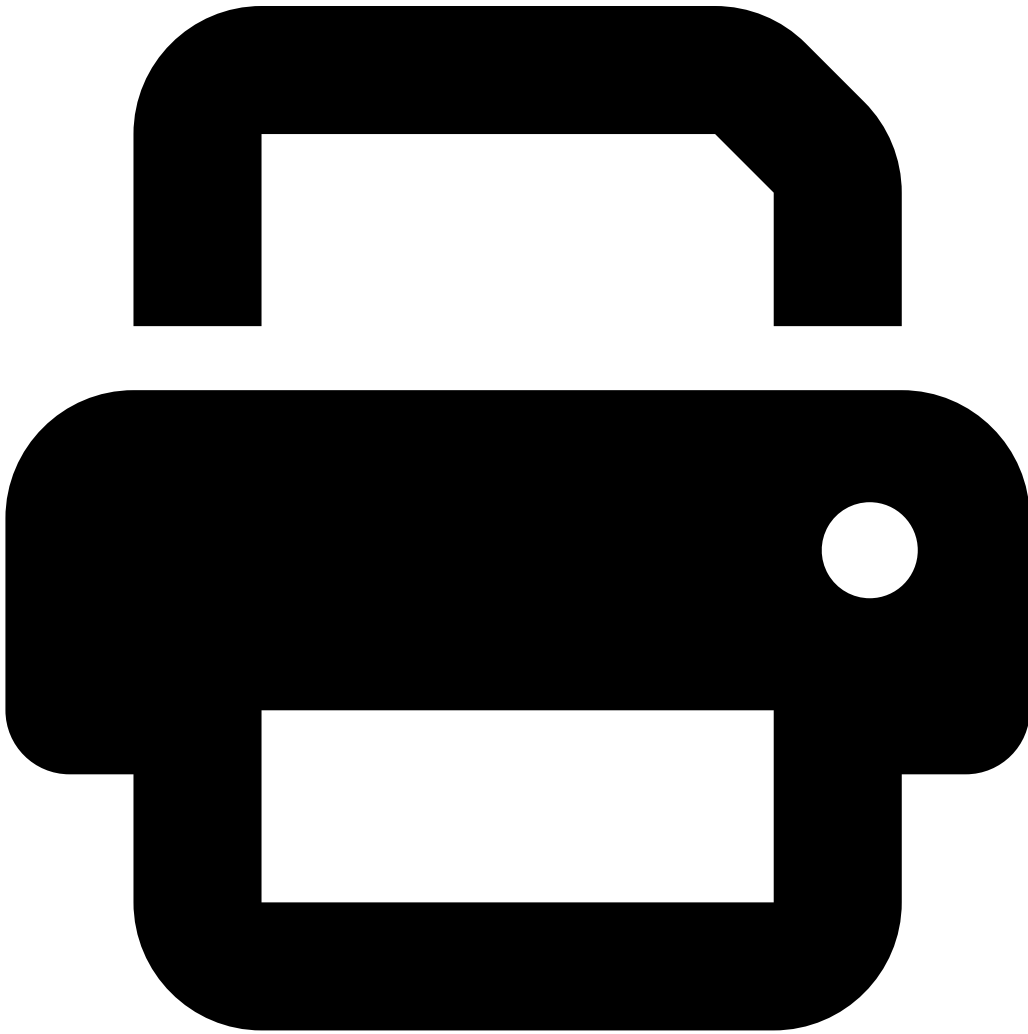
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There's something deeply comforting about a pot of beef stew slowly simmering on the stove. This Italian White Beef Stew—known as *Spezzatino di Manzo in Bianco*—is rustic, simple, and full of old-world flavor.

Unlike tomato-based stews, this version is made without tomatoes, creating a light, savory sauce that lets the beef, potatoes, and sweet peas shine. It's the kind of dish you'd find in a nonna's kitchen on a Sunday afternoon—served with crusty bread and good conversation.

Tender chunks of beef, silky potatoes, and bright green peas come together in a rich broth built from olive oil, aromatics, and slow cooking. It's humble, hearty, and exactly the kind of meal that warms you from the inside out.

Things to know about this Italian White Beef Stew with Potatoes & Peas

- **Cut of beef matters:** Chuck or stewing beef gives the most tender results.
- **Flouring the meat:** Lightly coating the beef in flour thickens the sauce naturally.
- **Vegetable timing:** Add peas at the very end to keep them bright and tender.
- **Flavor boost:** Letting the stew rest 10–15 minutes off heat allows flavors to meld beautifully.

Storage & Reheating

- **Fridge:** Store in an airtight container for up to **3–4 days**.
- **Freezer:** Freeze in a freezer-safe container for up to **3 months**.
- **Reheating:** Gently reheat on the stovetop over low heat, adding a splash of broth if needed. The potatoes may absorb some liquid, so stir occasionally to keep it saucy.

If you loved this **Spezzatino di Manzo in Bianco**, check out more cozy Italian recipes on the blog:

- Classic Italian Polenta – perfect to serve alongside this stew.

- Rustic Italian Meatballs – another comforting favorite.
- Easy Italian Minestrone Soup – for a light starter or side.

Don't forget to **save this recipe** for your next Sunday dinner and share it with friends who love **Italian comfort food**.

Italian White Beef Stew with Potatoes & Peas



- 2 lbs beef chuck, cut into 1½-inch cubes
- 3 tbsps olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced carrots
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup dry wine **or** additional broth
- 3 cups beef broth ((more if needed))
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp chopped fresh rosemary ((or ½ tsp dried))
- 1 ½ lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 cup frozen peas
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, for garnish

1. **Lightly Flour & Brown the Beef**

Pat the beef dry and season generously with salt and pepper. Lightly coat each piece with flour, shaking off any excess. Heat olive oil in a heavy Dutch oven over medium heat. Brown the beef gently on all sides, letting it caramelize slightly for deeper flavor.

2. **Cook the Vegetables**

Add the diced onion, celery, and carrots to the same pot. Cook until softened, about 5–7 minutes. Add garlic and cook another 30 seconds.

3. **Deglaze & Simmer**

Deglaze the pan with wine or a splash of broth, scraping up all the browned bits from the bottom. Add the rest of the broth, bay leaf, and rosemary. Make sure the liquid just covers the meat and vegetables.

Bring to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook on low for about 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

4. **Add the Potatoes**

Add the potatoes to the pot. Cover and continue simmering another 25–30 minutes, or until both the beef and potatoes are fork-tender.

5. **Finish with Peas**

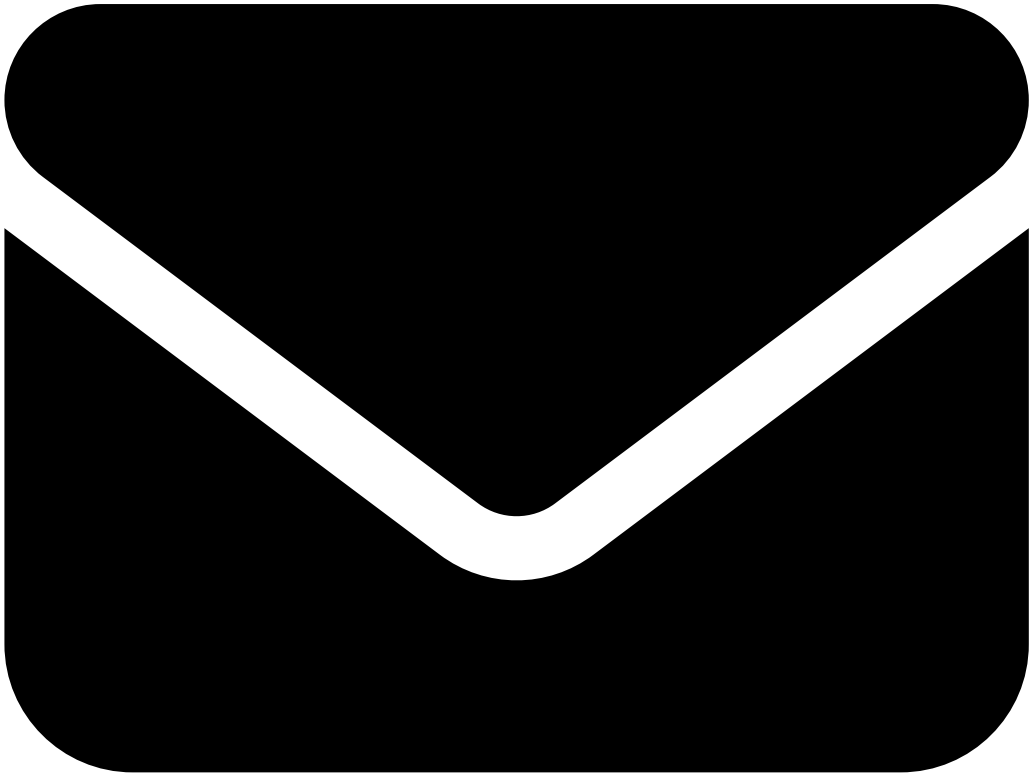
Stir in the peas during the last 5–7 minutes of cooking. Adjust salt and pepper as needed. Remove the bay leaf and sprinkle with fresh parsley before serving

How to make Homemade Beef Bone Broth

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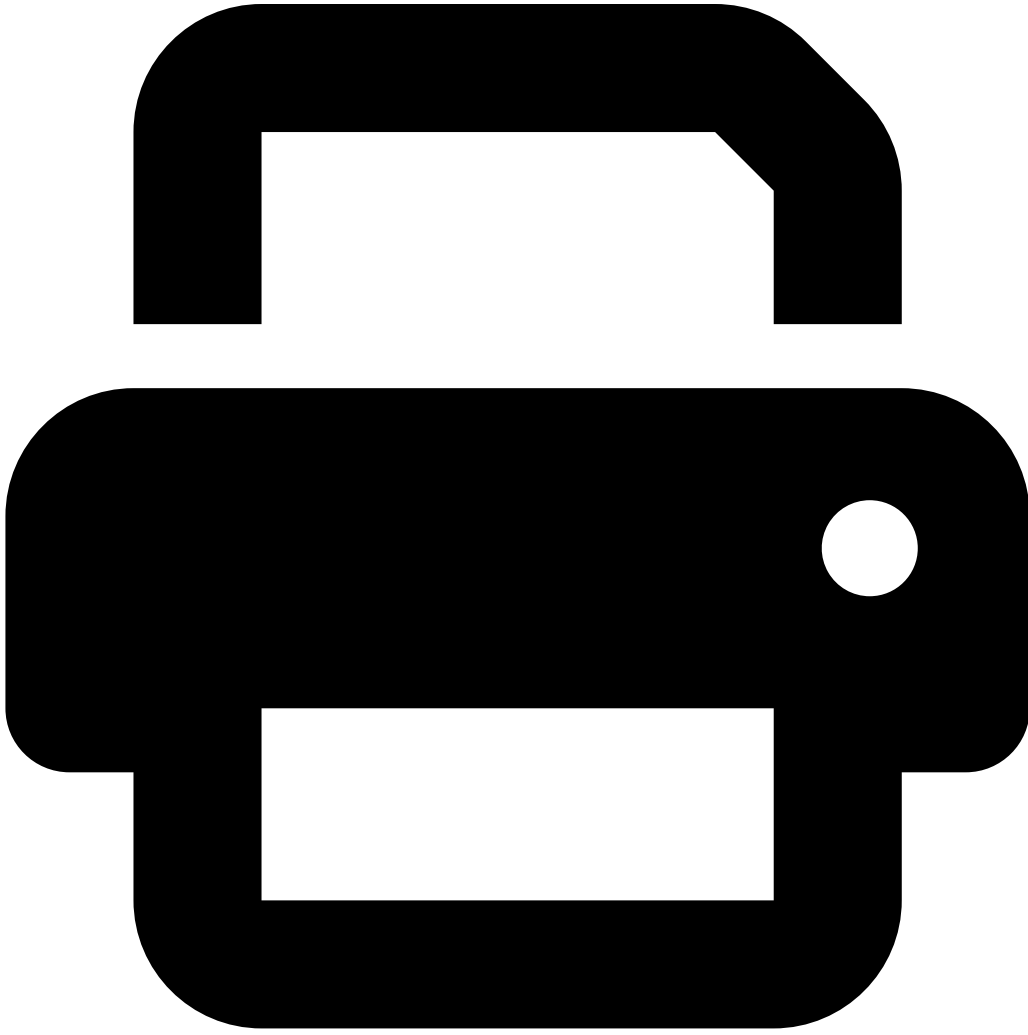
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If there's one thing every home cook should have in their kitchen, it's a pot of homemade beef bone broth quietly simmering away. This is the kind of old-school cooking that builds flavor from the ground up—deep, savory, and packed with goodness. Whether you sip it straight from a mug or use it as the base for soups, risotto, or sauces, homemade bone broth is a total game-changer.

Why Make Beef Bone Broth at Home?

Sure, you can buy broth at the store—but homemade beef bone broth has:

- **Far better flavor** (rich, meaty, and deeply savory)
- **Natural gelatin** from slow-simmered bones
- **No additives or preservatives**
- **Better value**—you get multiple quarts for the price of bones

This is the same kind of broth our grandmothers made: simple ingredients, slow cooking, and patience.

Things to know about this Beef Bone Broth recipe

- A properly made bone broth will **gel when cold**—that's a good thing.
 - Don't let the broth boil aggressively; a gentle simmer keeps it clear and clean-tasting.
 - You can reuse the bones once more for a lighter second batch.
-

How to Use Beef Bone Broth

- Soup bases (vegetable, beef, or noodle soups)
- Risotto or polenta instead of water
- Braising meats
- Sipping warm with a pinch of salt
- Sauces and gravies

Storage

- **Refrigerator:** up to 5 days in an airtight container
- **Freezer:** up to 6 months (freeze in quart containers or silicone molds)
- If you loved this homemade beef bone broth, here are a few ways to put it to work:
 - Use it as the base for my **Italian Meatball Sauce**
 - Swap it in for water in **Polenta** for extra depth
 - Build cozy bowls of **Vegetable or Beef Soup**
 - Freeze it and keep it on hand for weeknight cooking

Final Thoughts

Making beef bone broth this way is simple, intentional cooking—searing everything together, keeping the vegetables whole, and letting time do the work. The result is a clean, deeply flavored broth you can use across your kitchen all week.

How to make Homemade Beef Bone Broth



- 4 – 5 pounds **beef bones** (a mix of marrow bones, knuckle bones, and meaty bones is ideal)
- 1 **beef shank**
- 2 tbsp **olive oil**
- 1 **whole onions**, peeled
- 2 **whole carrots**, peeled
- 2 **whole celery stalks**
- 4 cloves **garlic**
- 2 **bay leaves**
- 1 tsp **black peppercorns**
- Water, enough to cover
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup apple cider vinegar
- Salt to taste

1. Sear the Meat

Heat olive oil in a large stock pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season the beef shank and any meaty bones lightly with salt. Add **all the meat to the pot together** and sear until deeply browned on all sides. Work in batches only if needed to avoid crowding.

This step builds the foundation of flavor directly in the pot—no roasting required.

2. Add the Aromatics

Add onions, carrots, celery, garlic, bay leaves, and peppercorns.

3. Add Water & Vinegar

Cover everything with cold water (about 12–14 cups). Stir in the apple cider vinegar—this helps extract collagen and minerals from the bones.

4. Simmer Low and Slow

Bring the pot just to a gentle boil, then immediately reduce to a **low simmer**. Skim off any foam that rises to the top during the first 30 minutes.

Simmer **covered** for 2 1/2 -3 hours

Add more water if needed to keep the bones submerged.

5. Strain the Broth

Remove the bones and vegetables. Strain the broth through a fine-mesh sieve into a large bowl or container.

6. Cool & Store

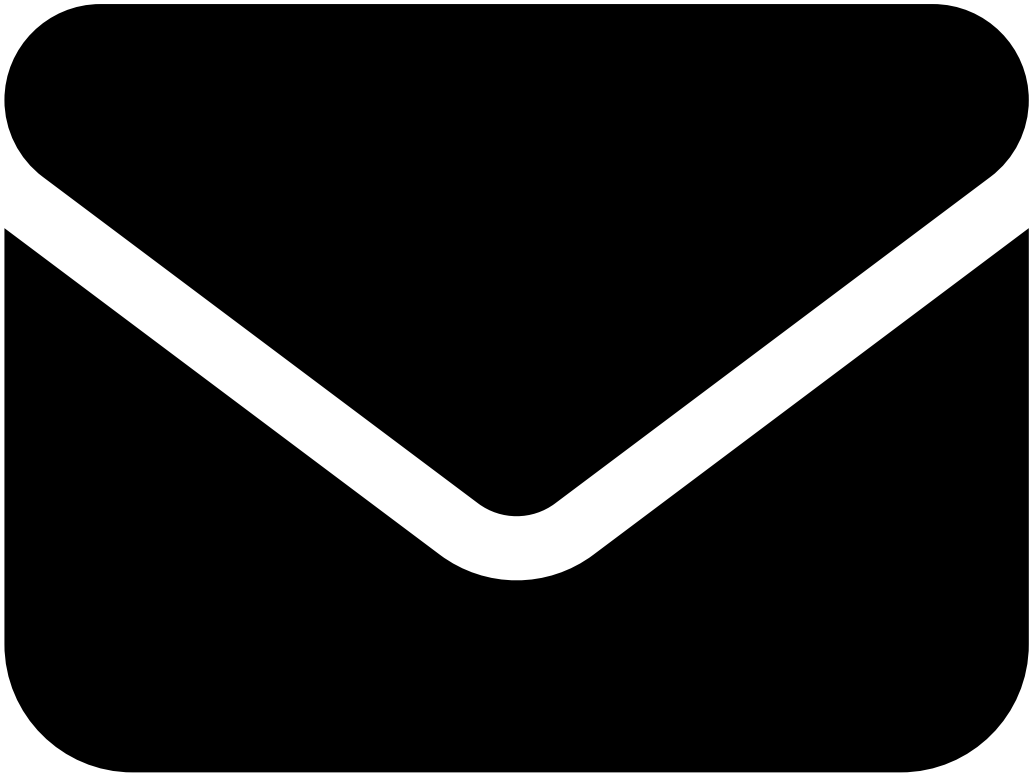
Let the broth cool completely. Refrigerate overnight, then skim off any hardened fat from the top (save it for cooking—it's gold).

**French Onion Soup with an
Italian Twist**

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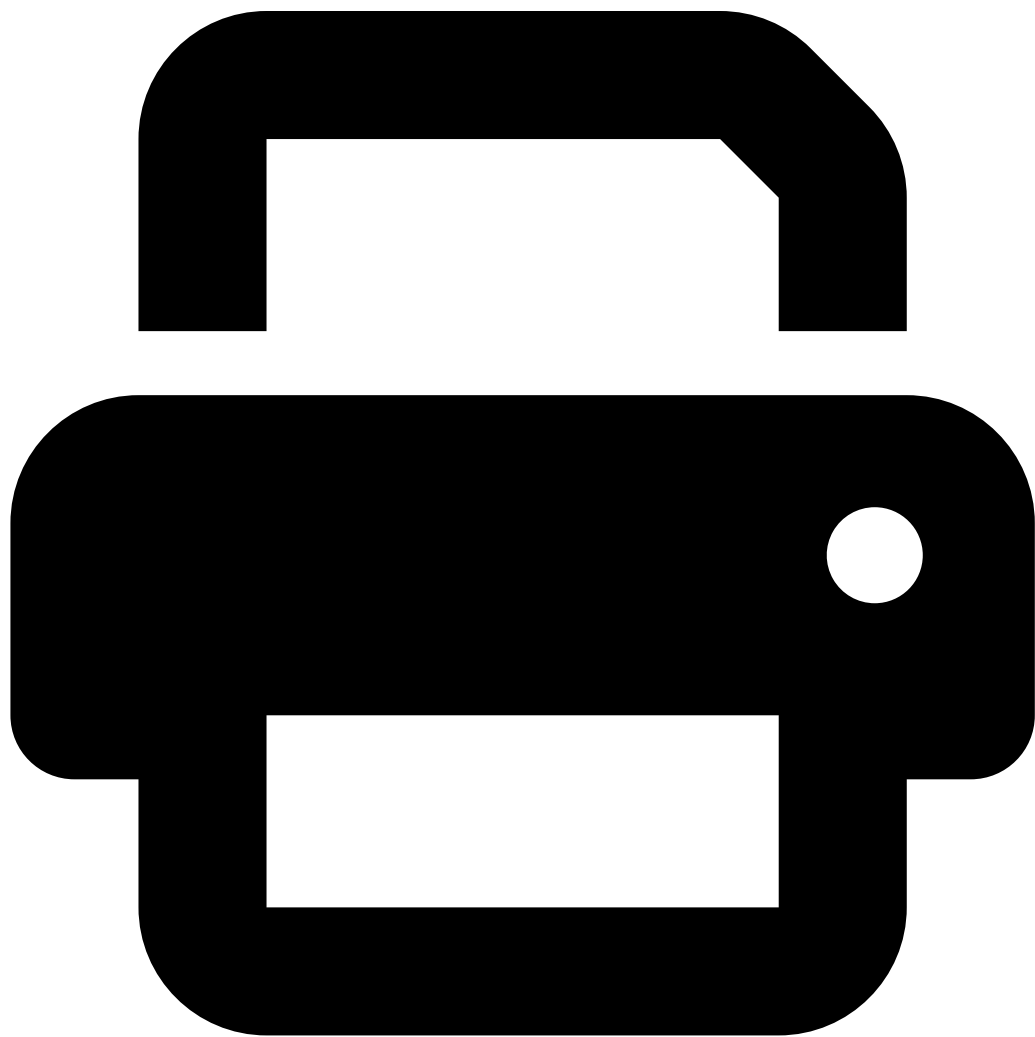
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French onion soup has always felt like the ultimate comfort food to me, but I can't help adding an Italian touch to the dishes I love most. In my kitchen, onions are never rushed—they're slowly caramelized the way I learned growing up, filling the house with that unmistakable, cozy aroma that signals something special is coming. For this version, I use a mix of red onions, yellow onions, and leeks, then finish the soup the Italian way—with herb focaccia and freshly grated Fontina instead of the classic baguette and Gruyère. It's familiar yet different, rustic but comforting, and exactly the kind of soup I make when I want something simple, soulful, and meant to be shared.

Things to know about this French Onion Soup with an Italian Twist

- A mix of yellow onions, red onions, and leeks adds natural sweetness and depth without needing sugar.
- Fontina melts smoothly and stays creamy, making it a perfect Italian alternative to Gruyère.
- Herb focaccia absorbs the broth while still holding its shape, giving you that perfect bite every time.
- The soup base can be made a day ahead; add the focaccia and cheese just before serving for best texture.
- **Storage:** Store leftover soup (without focaccia or cheese) in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.
- **Freezing:** This soup freezes well without the bread and cheese. Freeze in freezer-safe containers for up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and reheat on the stovetop before adding toppings.
- Always add the focaccia and Fontina fresh just before broiling for the best texture and flavor.
- If you love classic comfort food with an Italian twist, this **French Onion Soup with an Italian Twist** is a must-try. The combination of caramelized onions, leeks, herb focaccia, and melty Fontina makes it a cozy, flavorful soup perfect for any season.

For more hearty Italian soups, explore my **Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup** or **Potato Leek Soup with Pancetta**—both are easy to make and full of rich, comforting flavors.

Want to try more Italian-inspired weeknight recipes? Don't miss my **Italian sausage Escarole and Beans** or **Spinach Ricotta Balls** for quick, flavorful meals the whole family will love.

Remember to **save this French Onion Soup recipe** for later and **follow my blog** for more Italian cooking inspiration delivered right to your inbox!

French Onion Soup with an Italian Twist



Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 large yellow onions (thinly sliced)
- 2 medium red onions (thinly sliced)
- 2 large leeks (white and light green parts only, thinly sliced and well rinsed)
- 1 teaspoon salt (plus more to taste)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dry white wine
- 6 cups beef broth (or chicken broth for a lighter version)
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried)
- 1 bay leaf

Topping

- 4 –6 slices herb focaccia

- 1½ cups freshly grated Fontina cheese

1. Caramelize the onions

In a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil and butter over medium heat. Add the yellow onions, red onions, and leeks. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 35–40 minutes, until deeply golden, soft, and caramelized. Reduce heat if needed to prevent burning.

2. Build the flavor

Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant. Pour in the white wine, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Simmer for 2–3 minutes until slightly reduced.

3. Simmer the soup

Add the broth, thyme, and bay leaf. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover partially, and cook for 25–30 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning. Remove the bay leaf.

4. Prepare for broiling

Preheat the broiler. Ladle the soup into oven-safe bowls and place them on a baking sheet.

5. Add the Italian topping

Top each bowl with a slice of herb focaccia, then generously sprinkle with Fontina cheese.

6. Broil

Broil for 2–4 minutes, until the cheese is fully melted, bubbling, and lightly golden. Watch closely.

7. Serve

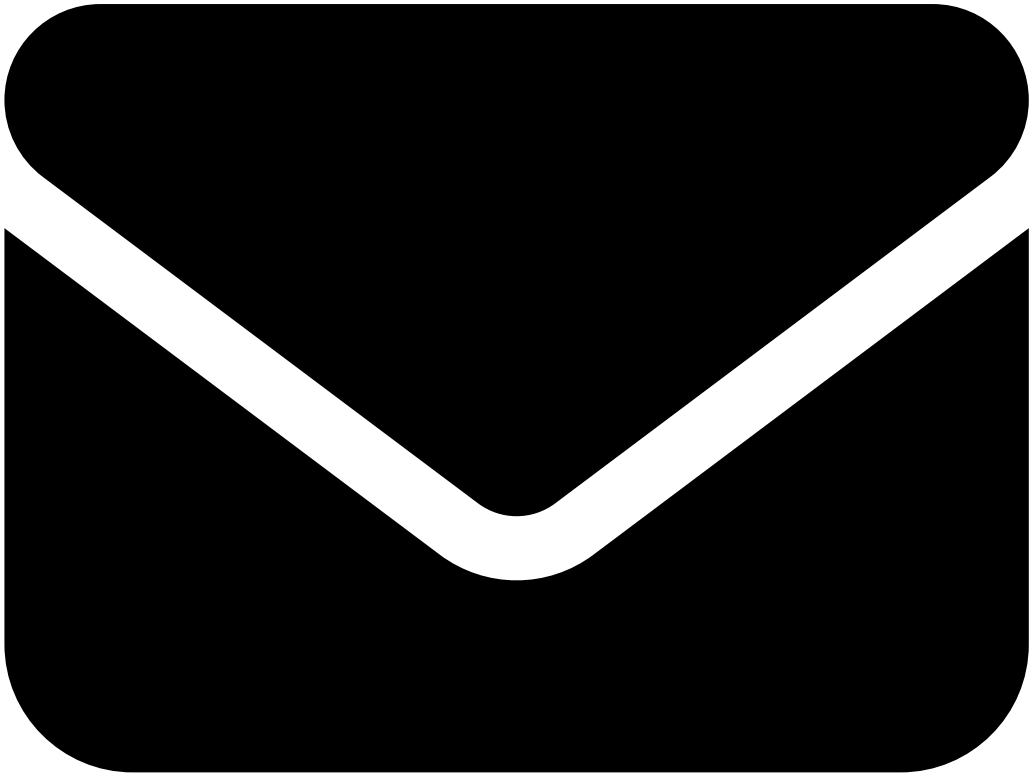
Serve immediately, hot and bubbling, with extra focaccia on the side if desired.

The Ultimate Guide to Italian & Italian-Inspired Soups

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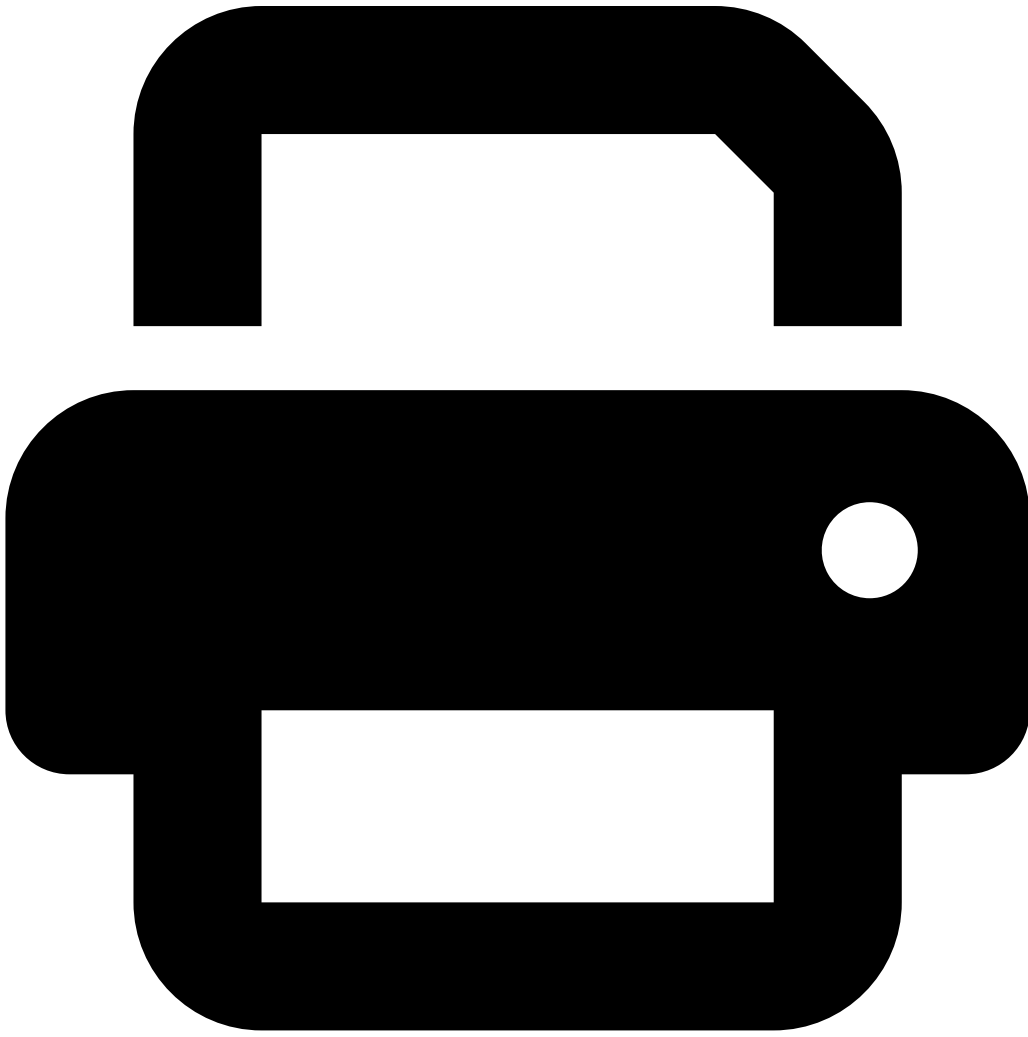
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10 Cozy, Classic Soup Recipes for Every Season

Soup has always been at the heart of Italian home cooking – simple ingredients, slow simmering, and deep, comforting flavor. Whether you're craving a light brothy soup or something rich and hearty, this **Italian soup collection** brings together my most-loved recipes, many inspired by dishes I cooked in my restaurants and made at home for my family.

This guide features **10 Italian and Italian-inspired soup recipes**, perfect for weeknight dinners, holidays, and cozy weekends. Bookmark this post – it's your go-to soup resource all year long.

Brothy & Light Italian Soups

Simple, nourishing, and perfect when you want something lighter.

1. Italian Wedding Soup

Tender meatballs, leafy greens, and delicate pasta simmered in rich chicken broth – a true Italian classic.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

2. Tortellini in Brodo

A Northern Italian favorite featuring cheese-filled tortellini served in hot, savory broth.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Hearty & Rustic Soups

These soups eat like a full meal – filling, cozy, and deeply satisfying.

3. Pasta e Fagioli

A rustic, comforting soup made with beans, pasta, and a flavorful tomato base – just like Nonna used to make.

[GO TO RECIPE](#)

4. Sausage & Lentil Soup

Traditionally served on New Year's Eve for good luck, this hearty soup is rich, savory, and deeply comforting.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

5. Escarole & Beans with Italian Sausage

A classic Italian-American soup that's simple, nourishing, and packed with bold flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Creamy & Comforting Soups

Rich, velvety soups that feel like a warm hug.

6. Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup

A fan favorite – cheesy tortellini, Italian sausage, and a creamy broth that comes together quickly.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

7. Potato Leek Soup with Pancetta

A restaurant-style classic – silky smooth with crispy pancetta for added depth and flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

8. Vegetarian Mushroom Soup (Italian Style)

Earthy mushrooms, herbs, and a rich broth make this vegetarian soup incredibly satisfying.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Holiday & Special Occasion Soups

Perfect for celebrations, traditions, and family gatherings.

9. Italian Holiday Chicken Soup

A comforting soup often served during holidays – light, flavorful, and deeply nostalgic.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

10. Creamy Italian Bean and Parmesan soup

A hearty, old-fashioned soup that was always a staple in my restaurants – filling, budget-friendly, and perfect for leftovers.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Good to Know

- Most of these soups **freeze beautifully**
- Brothy soups are perfect for **make-ahead meals**
- Many recipes can be adapted for **vegetarian or gluten-**

free diets

- Homemade broth adds the best flavor, but quality store-bought works well too
 - A heavy-bottomed 8–12 quart stainless steel stockpot is ideal for making soup because it heats evenly, prevents scorching, and gives you plenty of room for simmering brothy and hearty soups alike.
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What to Serve with Italian Soup

- Crusty Italian bread
 - Garlic bread or focaccia
 - Simple green salad
 - Grated Parmigiano Reggiano
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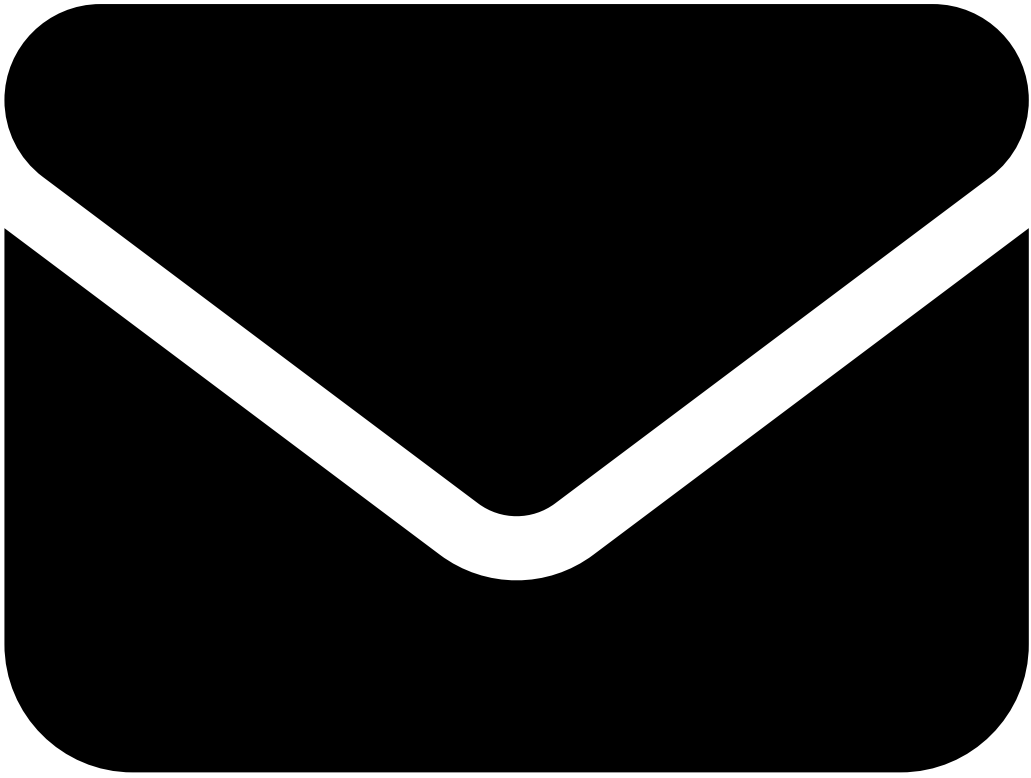
Healthy Italian Recipes to Start the New Year Right

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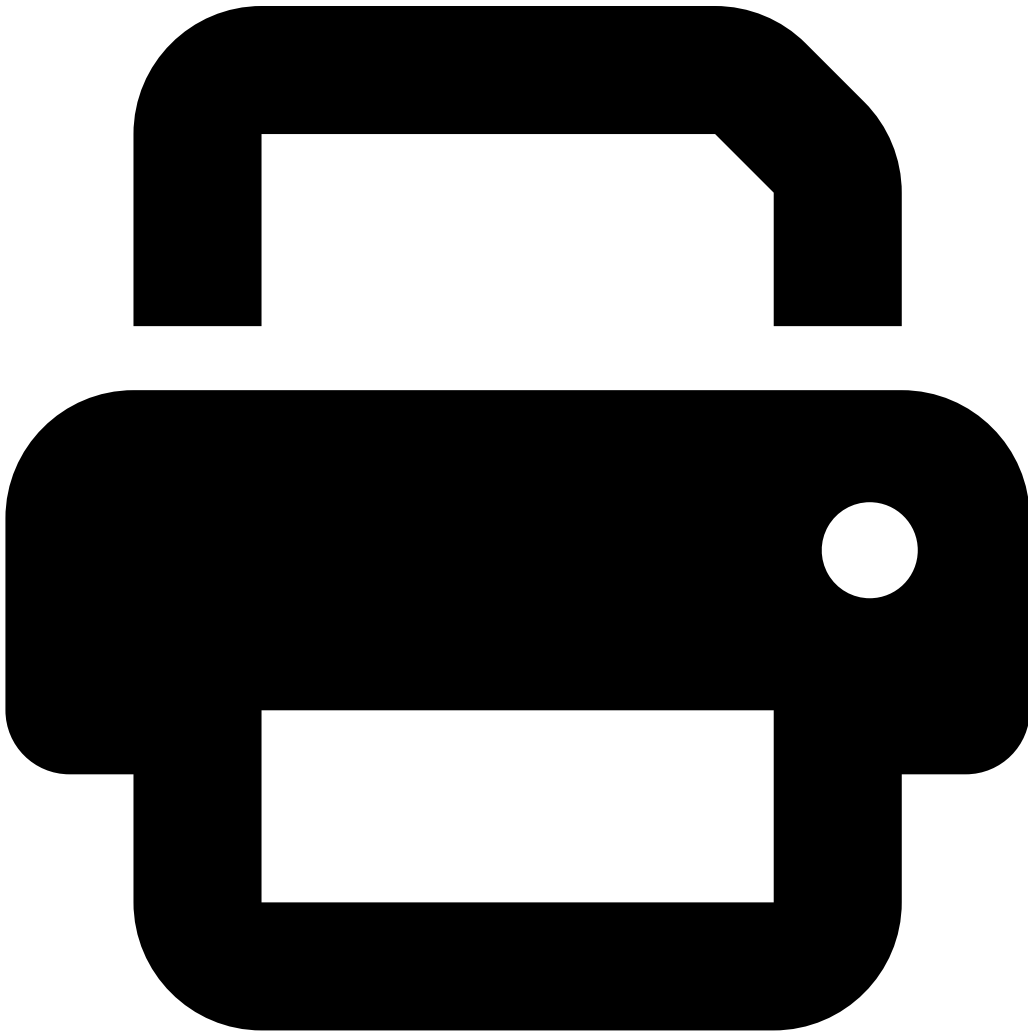
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The New Year always brings a renewed focus on feeling good—without giving up the foods we love. In Italian cooking, that balance has always existed. It's about fresh ingredients, simple preparations, and letting real food shine.

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.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Winter Persimmon Walnut Salad

   A beautiful balance of sweetness, crunch, and freshness—perfect during the colder months.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian Escarole and Beans

Simple, rustic, and protein-rich, this is a classic Italian dish that proves healthy food can still be deeply comforting.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

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.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Vegetarian Italian Mushroom Soup

Earthy, satisfying, and naturally wholesome—perfect for a light lunch or dinner.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Tortellini in chicken Brodo

A timeless Italian classic that relies on good broth and simple ingredients rather than heavy additions.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

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.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Tomato piccata Alaskan cod

A fresh, tomato piccata- dish that feels indulgent while staying light and elegant.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian Stuffed Eggplant Bolognese

A perfect example of balance—vegetables, protein, and just enough richness to satisfy.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

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.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

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.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

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.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Italian Apple Cake

Made with fresh apples and simple ingredients, this cake is naturally moist and comforting without being heavy.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Baked Gorgonzola Stuffed Pears

Sweet fruit paired with savory cheese makes a satisfying, portion-friendly dessert.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

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.

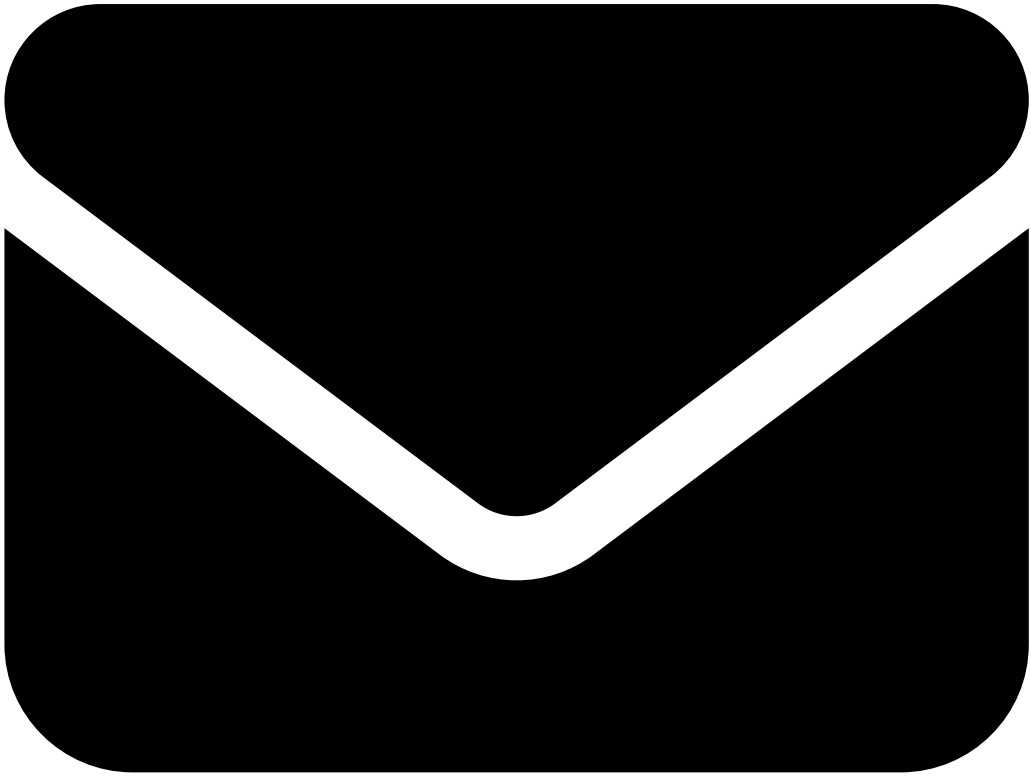
☐ **Let me know in the comments—which recipe will you start with?**

Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

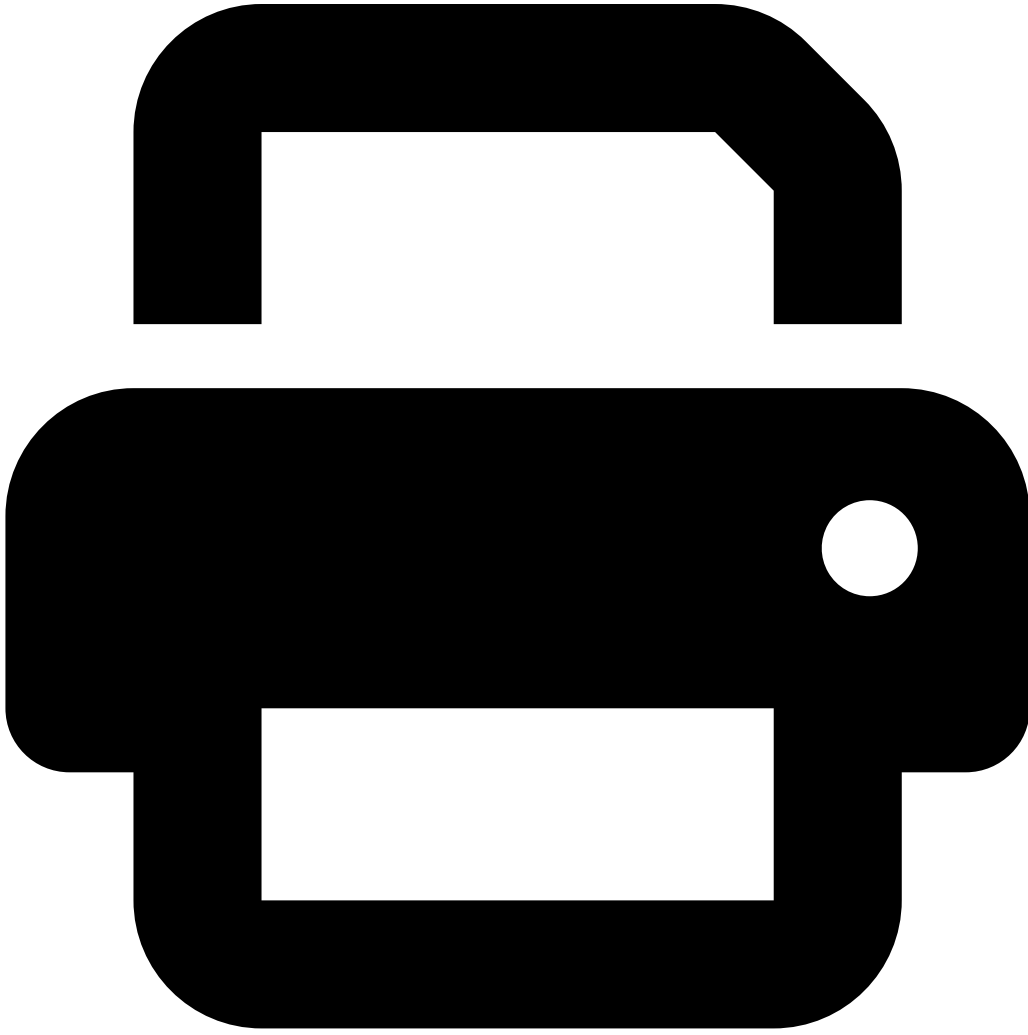
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In our diners – we had two of them over the years – soup was always a big part of the menu. No matter the season, our customers loved starting their meal with something warm and homemade. We made fresh soup every morning, and this **creamy broccoli cheddar soup** was one of the favorites. The smell of onions, garlic, and melted cheddar filled the kitchen, and before lunchtime, we'd already have regulars asking, *“Is the broccoli soup ready yet?”* It's the kind of cozy, comforting bowl that takes me right back to those busy diner days.

Things to know about Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup

This creamy broccoli cheddar soup is not only comforting but also incredibly easy to make – it's ready in just **30 minutes!** You can make it ahead of time and simply reheat it for a quick lunch or dinner. It's also **freezer-friendly**, so you can store leftovers for later without losing any of that cheesy, creamy

goodness.

For some tasty variations:

- **Add protein:** Stir in cooked chicken or crispy bacon for a heartier meal.
- **Make it spicy:** Sprinkle in extra red pepper flakes or a dash of cayenne for a little kick.
- **Veggie twist:** Swap some of the broccoli with cauliflower or carrots for a slightly different flavor and color.
- **Cheese upgrade:** Try mixing in Gruyère or smoked cheddar for a richer, deeper flavor.

This soup is versatile, quick, and perfect for busy weeknights or cozy weekends.

If you love this **creamy broccoli cheddar soup**, be sure to check out some of our other cozy favorites on the blog: try our **creamy potato leek soup** or **Italian sausage gnocchi soup** for more quick and comforting meals. Don't forget to **browse all our soup recipes** for even more easy weeknight ideas! Just type in SOUP in the search bar. ENJOY!!!

Creamy Broccoli Cheddar Soup



- 3 tbsp butter (or olive oil)

- 1 cup grated onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 4 cups chopped broccoli florets
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for a little heat)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Sauté aromatics

In a large pot, or Dutch oven melt the butter over medium heat. Add the grated onion and garlic, and cook for 2–3 minutes until fragrant and soft.

2. Add vegetables

Stir in the shredded carrots and chopped broccoli. Sauté for 3–4 minutes, just until the broccoli begins to soften.

3. Make a light roux

Sprinkle in the flour and stir to coat the vegetables evenly. Cook for about 1 minute to remove the raw flour taste.

4. Add stock

Gradually whisk in the chicken or vegetable stock, stirring constantly until smooth. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 10–12 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender.

5. Add cream and cheese

Lower the heat and stir in the heavy cream, followed by

the shredded sharp cheddar. Stir until melted and creamy. Season with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes.

6. Serve

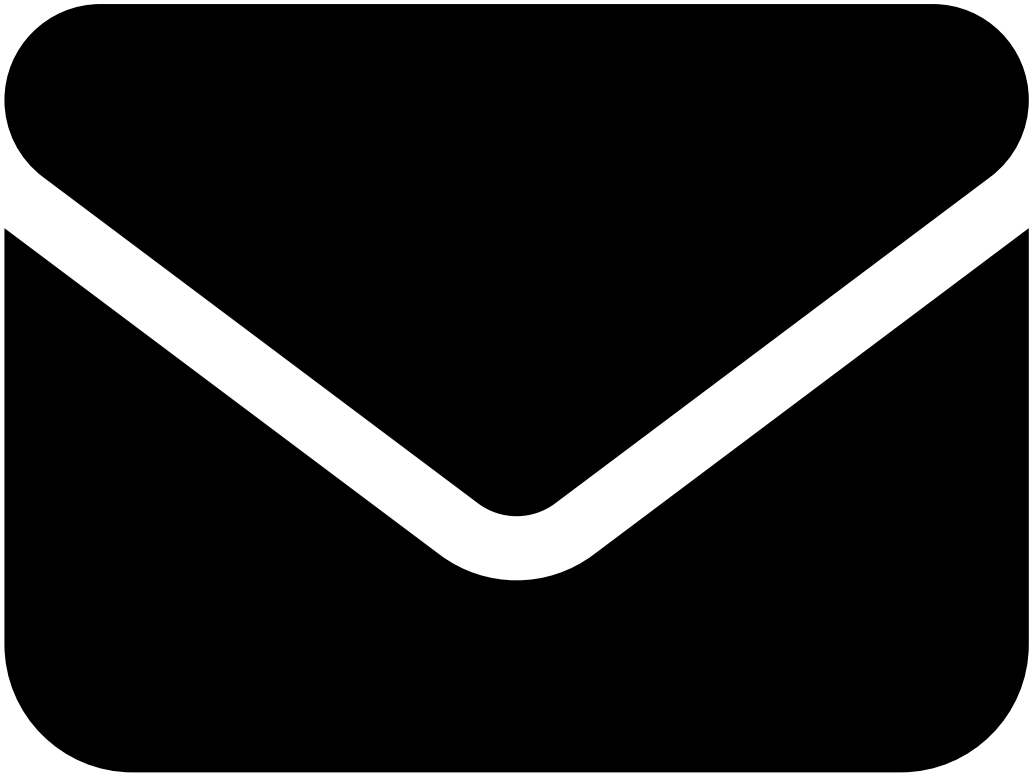
Ladle into bowls and serve hot with extra cheddar on top and crusty bread on the side.

The Ultimate Thanksgiving Dinner Guide

The Ultimate Thanksgiving Dinner Guide

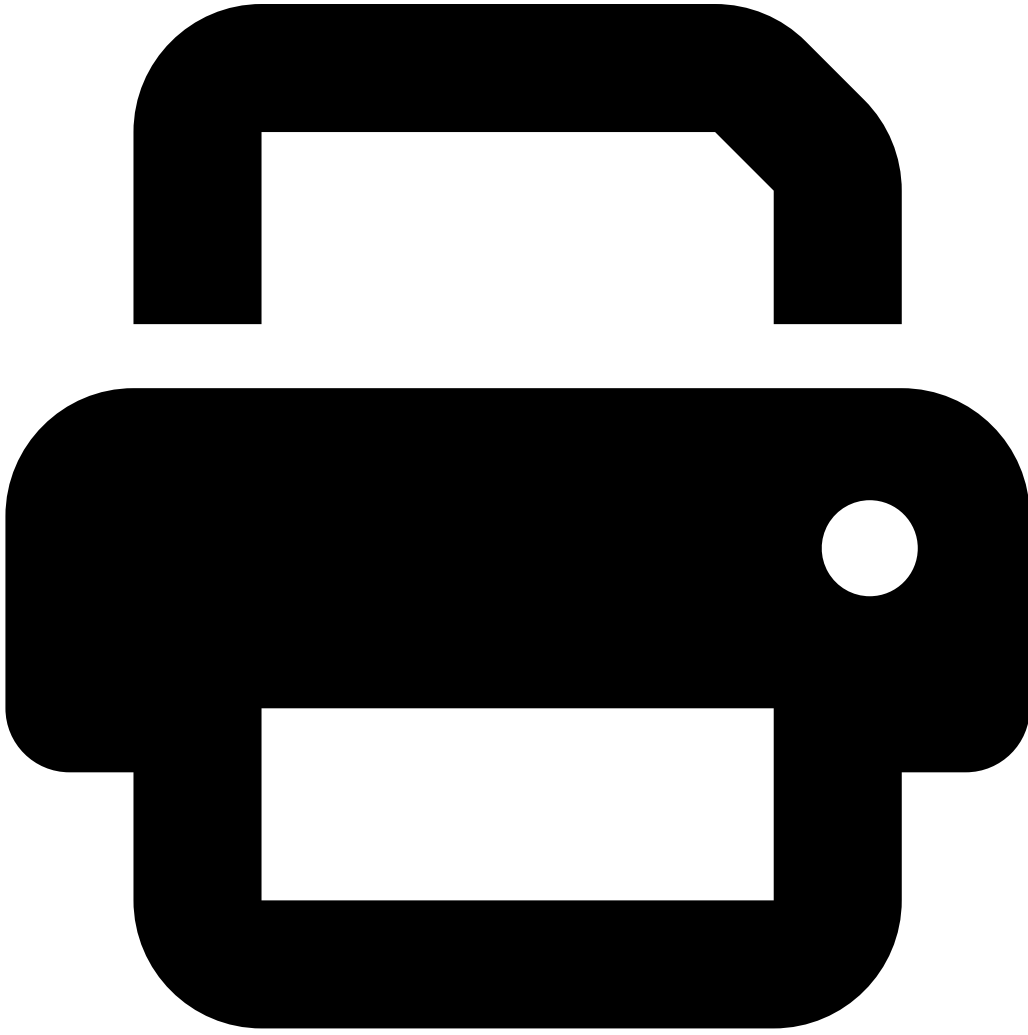
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We don't celebrate Thanksgiving in Italy – at least, not in the traditional American sense. But we *do* celebrate the same spirit behind it: gathering with family, sharing food made from the heart, and being grateful for the simple joys of life. In Italy, that feeling comes alive during big Sunday lunches or holiday feasts – long meals that stretch into the afternoon, filled with laughter, stories, and too many delicious dishes to count.

When I moved to America, I instantly fell in love with Thanksgiving. It reminded me so much of those Italian family gatherings – the warmth, the noise, the joy of being together around a table overflowing with food. Over the years, I've blended a little bit of both worlds into my celebration: classic Thanksgiving dishes with touches of Italian flavor and comfort.

Whether you're hosting for the first time or a seasoned cook

looking to freshen up your holiday menu, this guide brings together my favorite recipes from the blog – from a perfectly roasted **holiday turkey** and cozy **Italian-style soup**, to flavorful **side dishes** that make the meal unforgettable. My goal is to help you create a Thanksgiving dinner that feels joyful, comforting, and wonderfully stress-free – the kind that leaves you with time to savor every bite and every moment.

Thanksgiving Planning 101

A stress-free Thanksgiving starts with a little planning. The secret? Do as much as you can ahead of time. I like to make my shopping list a week before and start prepping small things early – chopping herbs, mixing pie dough, or even setting the table the night before.

Here's a simple plan to follow:

- **1 Week Before:** Finalize your menu and grocery list.
- **3 Days Before:** If using a frozen turkey, set in the fridge to thaw. Prep vegetables, bake desserts, and make cranberry sauce.
- **1 Day Before:** Brine or season the turkey, assemble casseroles, and set the table.
- **Thanksgiving Day:** Roast the turkey, warm the sides, and savor every moment.
 - *Tip:* Use large sheet pans or trays to organize ingredients for each dish – it keeps your prep area tidy and makes cooking so much smoother.

Defrosting Turkey

How to Defrost a Turkey

If you're using a frozen turkey, be sure to give yourself plenty of time to thaw it safely in the refrigerator. The rule of thumb is **24 hours of thawing for every 4–5 pounds of turkey**. Place the wrapped turkey on a rimmed baking sheet to catch any drips, and let it slowly defrost in the coldest part of your fridge. A large bird can take several days, so plan ahead – starting the thaw early is one of the biggest stress-savers of Thanksgiving week.

The Star of the Show – The Turkey

Every Thanksgiving table begins with the turkey, and my **Best Holiday Turkey** recipe is one I look forward to making each year. Roasted with garlic, herbs, and plenty of butter, it's juicy, tender, and full of flavor.

Even though turkey isn't something we often cooked in Italy, I've come to appreciate how it brings everyone together in the same way a big Italian roast might. The aroma fills the kitchen, the golden skin crackles as it roasts, and everyone hovers around waiting for that first slice.

Turkey Roasting Time and Temperature Guide

Oven Temperature:

- Roast at **325°F (165°C)** – the perfect balance for even cooking and a juicy bird.

Cook Time per Pound (Unstuffed Turkey):

- **15–17 minutes per pound** at 325°F

Cook Time per Pound (Stuffed Turkey):

- **16–18 minutes per pound** at 325°F

Example:

- 12-lb unstuffed turkey → about **3 to 3.5 hours**
- 16-lb unstuffed turkey → about **4 to 4.5 hours**

Pro Tips:

- Let the turkey rest for at least 30 minutes before carving.
- Always use a meat thermometer (165°F for the breast, 175°F for the thigh).
- Save the carcass – it makes the most comforting broth for soup the next day.

Hosting Tips & Timeline

A smooth Thanksgiving is all about timing and ambiance. I like to set my table the night before – candles, linens, serving pieces all ready – so I can focus on cooking and enjoying the day.

Hosting checklist:

- Create a serving plan (decide which dish goes in which pan or bowl). serving bowls
- Warm your plates before serving set in the oven after removing the turkey and turning the oven off. – it keeps the food hotter longer.
- Set out appetizers and drinks early so guests can mingle while you finish cooking.

- Keep a small pot of simmering citrus and herbs on the stove – it fills the house with the most wonderful scent.

Holiday Soup to Start the Meal . . .

Italian Holiday chicken Soup

Before the main feast begins, I love starting with something warm and cozy. My Italian Holiday Chicken Soup is light but flavorful ,

It reminds me of the simple soups my mother used to make in Italy before a big meal – meant to prepare your appetite and warm your heart. The best part? It can be made a day in advance and reheated just before serving, so it's one less thing to worry about on Thanksgiving Day.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Favorite Thanksgiving Side Dishes

No Thanksgiving table is complete without an array of sides – and in my kitchen, they often take center stage. I like mixing **traditional favorites** with **Italian-inspired twists** that bring a little Mediterranean flair to the holiday table.

Try some of these delicious sides from the blog:

Savory sausage mushroom stuffing

hearty, rich, and full of flavor.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Chicken Apple Stuffing

sweet, savory and full of fall flavors.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Easy Savory Mushroom Gravy

the perfect topping for turkey or mashed potatoes.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Balsamic Glazed Brussels Sprouts with Bacon

quick, easy, and irresistible stovetop side dish that comes together in just minutes.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Easy Cranberry Sauce in Minutes

You won't believe how quick this Easy Cranberry Sauce comes together. It takes just minutes to make, and taste better than store bought.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Parmesan scallop mashed potatoes

There is something about mashed potatoes that just says Thanksgiving. And when you take that classic and add parmesan cheese it's Italian!![GO TO RECIPE](#)

Sweet Endings – Desserts

After the feast, dessert is where the celebration continues. Whether you're a pumpkin pie traditionalist or love something a little different, these desserts bring warmth and a touch of sweetness to end the meal.

Favorite desserts from my kitchen:

Italian Crostata Jam Tart

a beautiful twist on the classic pie with a rich, moist crumb delicious and ideal for sharing.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Crescent Amaretti Cookies

crisp on the outside, chewy in the center – a holiday favorite. Serve with espresso or a small glass of dessert wine for the perfect Italian-style finish.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Caffè Affogato with Chocolate Sauce

a delicious dessert coffee drink.[GO TO RECIPE](#)

Leftovers Reinvented

If you ask me, the day after Thanksgiving might be even better than the holiday itself. Leftovers turn into comforting meals that carry the celebration into the weekend.

Try these ideas:

Easy Italian Chicken Croquettes

the linked recipe is using chicken use mashed potatoes and bits of leftover turkey instead. [GO TO RECIPE](#)

Turkey Cranberry Sandwiches

add leftover cranberry sauce and brie to your favorite artisan bread and grill [GO TO RECIPE](#)

□ *Tip:* Store leftovers in clear containers so you can easily see what you have. It helps reduce waste and makes meal planning simple.

Thanksgiving might not be an Italian tradition, but its heart – gathering together in gratitude – feels beautifully familiar. It reminds me of home, of family tables overflowing with love, laughter, and food made with care.

Whether your meal is big or small, traditional or a little Italian-inspired, I hope this guide helps you create a holiday that's full of warmth, flavor, and joyful memories.

Italian Sausage, Potatoes, and Green Beans

Italian Sausage, Potatoes, and Green Beans

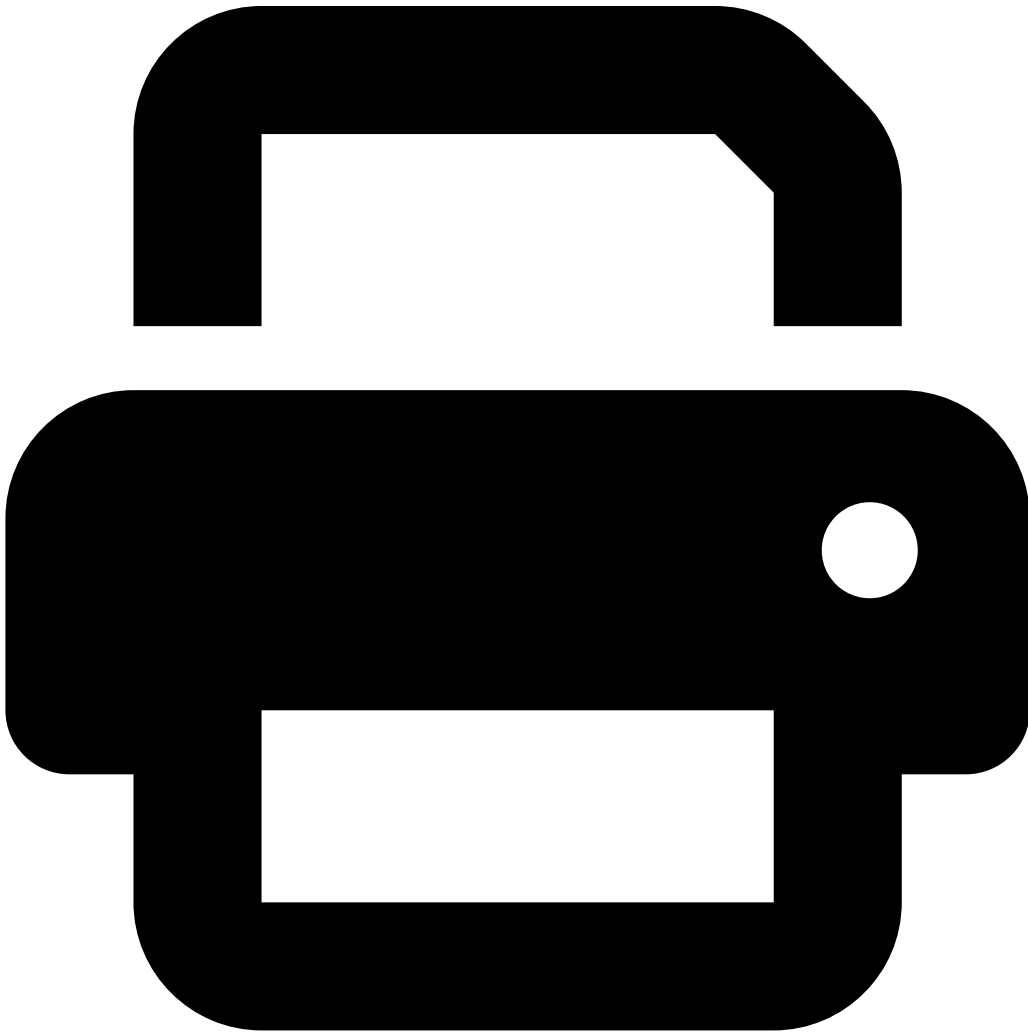
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When it comes to simple Italian comfort food, this one-skillet meal checks all the boxes – hearty, rustic, and full of flavor. ☑☑

Golden potatoes, tender green beans, and savory Italian sausage come together in one pan, simmered with white wine and chicken stock for a delicious, homey dish that tastes like Sunday dinner any night of the week. Best of all, it's ready in just 30 minutes – perfect for those nights when you want something comforting and satisfying without spending hours in the kitchen.

Things to know about this Italian sausage potatoes and green beans

- **Choose the right sausage:**

Mild or hot Italian sausage both work beautifully – use whichever matches your taste. For extra flavor, try a mix of sweet and spicy.

- **Deglazing adds flavor:**

That splash of white wine lifts all the browned bits from the bottom of the pan, adding rich depth to the sauce. If you prefer, you can skip the wine and just use extra chicken stock instead.

- **Texture tip:**

Cut the potatoes into even bite-sized pieces so they cook evenly. To keep the green beans tender-crisp, add them toward the end of cooking.

- **Make it ahead:**

This dish reheats well – store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days. It's even better the next day as the flavors meld together.

- **Variations**

- **Add color:**

Toss in sliced bell peppers or cherry tomatoes for a pop of color and sweetness.

- **Herb twist:**

Swap oregano for rosemary or thyme for a different Italian flavor profile.

- **Spicy version:**

Use hot Italian sausage and add extra crushed red pepper flakes for a little kick.

- **Cheesy finish:**

Stir in a handful of shredded mozzarella or sprinkle grated parmesan over the top right before serving.

- **Vegetable swap:**

Try this recipe with broccoli, zucchini, or even Brussels sprouts instead of green beans – they all cook beautifully in the same skillet.

You May Also Like ☐☐

If you loved this **Italian Sausage, Potatoes, and Green Beans** skillet dinner, try a few more of my hearty Italian favorites:

- ☐ **Italian Roasted Sausage, Potatoes, and Peppers** – another rustic one-pan meal bursting with flavor.
- ☐ **Creamy Italian Sausage and mushroom Risotto** – a cozy, creamy dinner ready in under 30 minutes.
- ☐ **Italian Escarole and Beans with Sausage** – a comforting bowl of classic Italian goodness.

Italian Sausage, Potatoes, and Green Beans



- 1 lb. Italian sausage (mild or hot, sliced into rounds)
- 1½ lbs. yellow potatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- ½ lb. fresh green beans, trimmed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup dry white wine (for deglazing)
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

1. Sauté the aromatics:

Heat olive oil in a large pan or Dutch oven over medium heat.

Add the chopped onion and sauté for 2–3 minutes until it begins to soften.

Stir in the garlic and cook for another minute or two until fragrant.

2. Add the potatoes:

Stir in the diced potatoes and cook for about 8–10 minutes, letting them get golden on the edges while stirring occasionally.

3. Add the sausage:

Add the sliced Italian sausage directly into the skillet with the potatoes.

Continue cooking for 8–10 minutes, allowing the sausage to brown and release its flavor into the potatoes.

4. Deglaze the pan:

Pour in a splash of white wine, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan.

Let it simmer for a minute or two until slightly reduced.

5. Simmer with stock and green beans:

Add the chicken stock, green beans, oregano, crushed red pepper flakes, salt, and black pepper.

Cover and cook for 6–8 minutes, or until the green beans are tender and the potatoes are fully cooked.

6. Finish and serve:

Uncover, toss everything together, and cook for another minute or two to let the flavors blend.

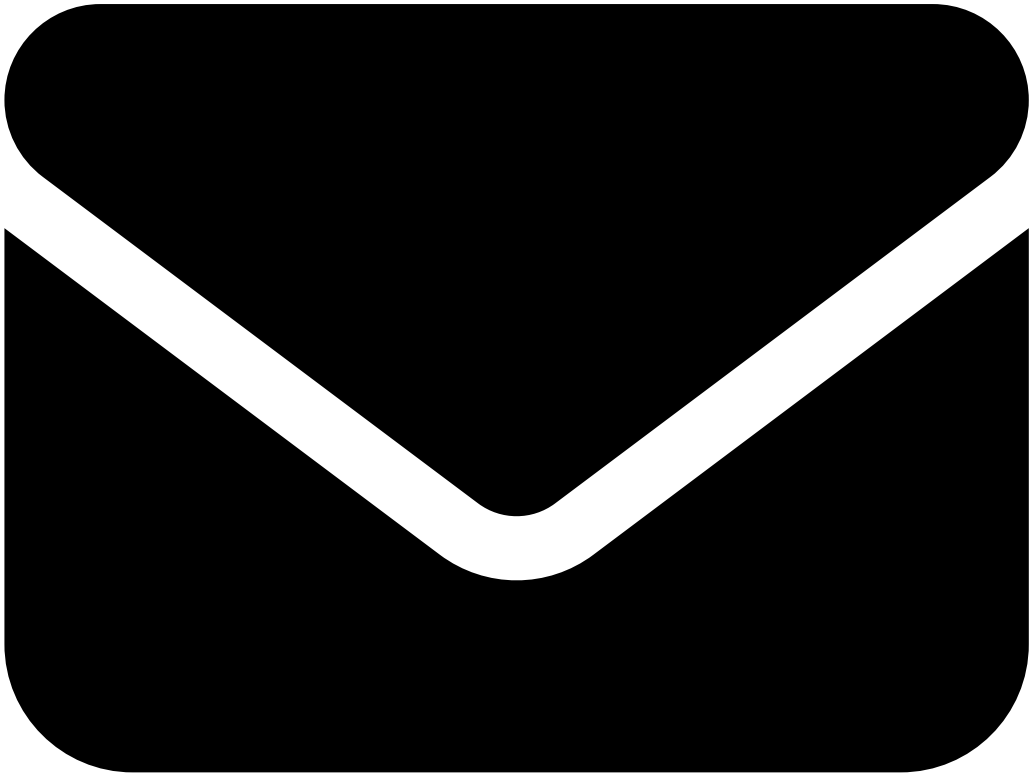
Garnish with fresh parsley and a sprinkle of grated parmesan if desired. Serve warm and enjoy!

Creamy Italian Sausage Ditalini Soup Recipe

Creamy Italian Sausage Ditalini Soup Recipe

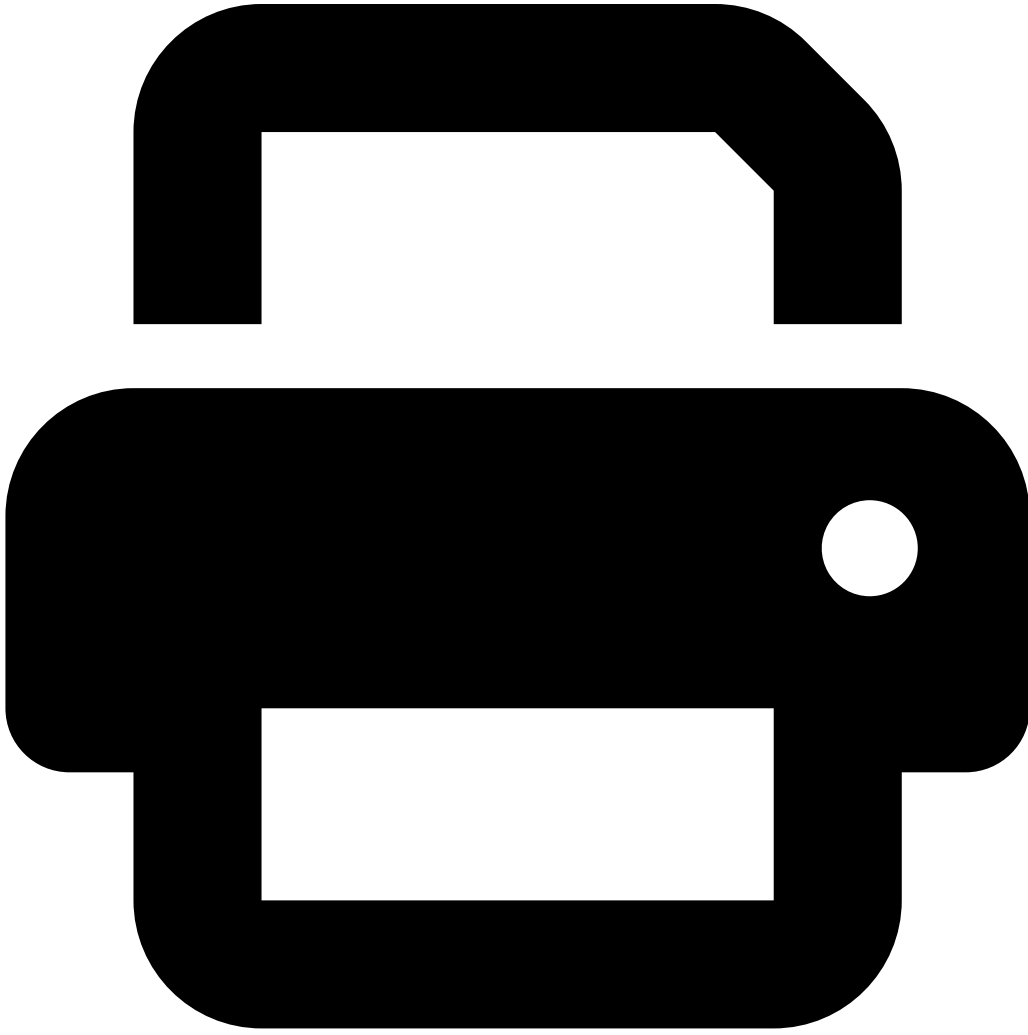
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This **Creamy Italian Sausage Ditalini Soup with Cannellini Beans** is Italian comfort in a bowl – hearty, rich, and full of flavor. It combines tender ditalini pasta, creamy white beans, savory sausage, and a touch of cream for the perfect weeknight meal.

When times were lean, my mom would make a simpler version of this soup without any meat – just beans, pasta, and vegetables simmered in broth. It was humble, nourishing, and filled with love. Over time, I’ve added Italian sausage and cream for a heartier twist, but the essence of that comforting bowl she made remains the same.

Think of it as a cross between classic *pasta e fagioli* and a creamy Tuscan-style soup – rustic, cozy, ready in just 30 minutes and made in one pan.

Things to know about this Creamy Italian Sausage Ditalini Soup Recipe

- **Cannellini beans:** These creamy white beans are a classic Italian pantry staple. They add protein, fiber, and a naturally velvety texture that makes the soup satisfying – even without meat. If you're keeping it traditional, mash a few beans with the back of your spoon while simmering to naturally thicken the broth.
- **When times were lean:** Just like my mom did, you can easily skip the sausage and make this as a simple, meatless bean and pasta soup. It's humble, nourishing, and deeply comforting – proof that Italian cooking is about love and resourcefulness, not fancy ingredients.
- **Cooking the pasta:** Ditalini works beautifully because it's small and sturdy, but it can continue to absorb liquid as it sits. If you're planning to store leftovers, cook the pasta separately and add it just before serving to keep the texture perfect.
- **Broth and consistency:** For a thicker soup, reduce the amount of broth slightly or simmer uncovered for a few extra minutes. For a lighter consistency, add more broth or water before serving.
- **Cheese options:** Parmesan gives a savory richness, but you can also stir in a spoonful of ricotta or a sprinkle of pecorino Romano for a sharper bite.

Variations

- **Vegetarian version:** Omit the sausage and use vegetable broth. Add extra beans or chopped mushrooms for a hearty

texture.

- **Tuscan twist:** Add chopped sun-dried tomatoes, a splash of white wine, and a few fresh basil leaves at the end for brightness.
- **Spicy version:** Use spicy Italian sausage and increase the red pepper flakes for a little kick.
- **Greens galore:** Swap spinach for kale, escarole, or even Swiss chard – whichever you have on hand.
- **Dairy-free:** Skip the cream and add an extra cup of broth; the beans will still make the soup naturally creamy.
- **Rustic style:** Blend half the soup with an immersion blender, then stir it back in – a trick that creates a naturally thick, velvety consistency without losing texture.

Try my Classic Pasta e Fagioli Soup for another hearty bean and pasta dish.

Check out the Creamy Tortellini Soup – a rich and cheesy twist on Italian comfort food.

For a simple weeknight dinner, see my Gnocchi lasagna soup

If you loved this **Creamy Italian Sausage Ditalini Soup**, you'll also enjoy exploring more of my cozy Italian recipes:

Don't forget to **save this recipe** and **share your creation** with me on Instagram – tag **@lorianasheacooks** so I can see your delicious bowls of comfort!

Creamy Italian Sausage Ditalini

Soup Recipe



- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound Italian sausage (mild or spicy), casings removed
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup water (or more for desired consistency)
- 1 cup ditalini pasta
- 1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup heavy cream (or half-and-half for a lighter option)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cups baby spinach (or chopped kale)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

1. Sauté the vegetables:

Heat olive oil in a large soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.

Add onion, carrots, and celery; cook until softened, about 5–7 minutes.

Add garlic and cook 1 minute longer.

2. Brown the sausage:

Add the sausage and cook until browned, breaking it up with a spoon.

Drain any excess fat.

3. Add flavor and liquid:

Stir in Italian seasoning and crushed red pepper flakes.

Add the tomatoes, cannellini beans, chicken broth, and water.

Bring to a gentle boil.

Simmer for 10 minutes

4. Cook the pasta:

Add ditalini pasta and cook until al dente, about 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.

5. Make it creamy:

Reduce heat to low.

Stir in the heavy cream, Parmesan cheese, and spinach.

Simmer gently until the spinach wilts and the soup thickens slightly, 2–3 minutes.

6. Taste and serve:

Season with salt and black pepper.

Serve warm with extra Parmesan and crusty Italian bread