

From Indians to Italians, their lessons we learn

by Lydia Lovell



Cape Cod cuisine has been enriched time and again by influences from distant lands. When the Pilgrims brought the Mayflower to anchor at Plymouth, their stores were meagre and their very survival depended upon the kindness and generosity of native American Indians who not only shared of their food, but taught the English to raise and preserve food to see them through winters to come.

Learning those lessons must have set a precedent for Cape Codders who accept change in cooking methods, welcome introductions to new foods, and have developed a catholic taste for foreign flavors. Not only will we try almost any dish once, but often as not we make it our own by adapting it to recipes passed down to us through generations.

Around the turn of the last century, many Italian families immigrated to America and a goodly number of them found their way to Sagamore where work was available at the Keith Car Works. With them came, of course, Italian cooking. Like many other Cape Codders, Aunt Olivia and Uncle Henry were quick to appreciate the delicious products of Italian kitchens. Not long after they acquired their first automobile, the Lovells began patronizing one of the small Italian restaurants near the bank of the newly opened Cape Cod Canal. Here Aunt Olivia discovered new combinations of flavors, ones she soon incorporated in her own culinary efforts.

Obtaining recipes from the people presiding over Italian kitchens was not the easiest of tasks because, initially, Aunt Olivia understood but little Italian. Her willingness to learn, however, together with repeat visits and high praise for the food, endeared her to her hosts. Furthermore, after a particularly satisfying meal consisting of dishes she especially desired to learn how to prepare, she returned carrying one of her own creations. Reciprocity soon built a firm foundation for lasting friendships and exchanging recipes.

It was in this way that Aunt Olivia added to her repertoire **Clam Sauce** to serve with linguine (a flat pasta) or small shells. It's equally as good served with spaghetti or spaghetti squash.

2 stalks celery, thin sliced	1/2 bay leaf
3-T. minced onion	1/2 t. sugar
2 T. margarine	1/8 t. pepper
1 C. water	1 C. clam broth
3 T. snipped parsley	2 C. ground clams
1/8 t. dried basil	

Olivia and Uncle Henry enjoyed this dish, Aunt Olivia experimented and successfully adapted it to make her own version, **Lasagne Beef Rolls**.

12 lasagne noodles	2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 lb. ground beef	2 t. each: basil and oregano
2 small onions, diced	1/2 t. each: pepper and thyme
1/4 C. celery, minced	2 16-oz. cans tomato sauce
2 C. shredded Provolone	Parmesan cheese
2 eggs, lightly beaten	1/4 C. fresh chopped parsley
6T. fine dry bread crumbs	

Cook noodles according to package directions. Drain and when cool enough to handle, cut each crosswise, making 24 short fat strips of pasta. In a large skillet, cook beef, onions, and celery, stirring until meat is brown and broken in small pieces. Drain off and discard all fat and any liquid. In a large bowl mix beef, Provolone and Parmesan cheeses, eggs, bread

crumbs, and seasonings. Spread mixture over strips of lasagne, allowing about a heaping tablespoon of mixture to each strip. Roll strips jellyroll fashion.

Spread one can of tomato sauce over the bottom of a 13'x9' baking pan. Arrange lasagne rolls on top of sauce. Pour second can of tomato sauce over noodle rolls. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Refrigerate, covered, for at least an hour or overnight. Bake about 45 minutes to an hour at 350° or until rolls are hot and sauce is bubbly. Garnish with fresh parsley and serve with any green vegetable. Yield: six to eight servings.

Tossed green salads are excellent complements to Italian dishes; not only are fresh greens nutritionally superior to cooked vegetables, but oil and vinegar dressings are refreshing follow-ups to tomato sauces which tend to be cloying. Aunt Olivia's file contains **Maria's Oil and Vinegar Dressing for Spinach Salad**.

1 clove garlic	1/3 C. ketchup
1/4 C. white vinegar	1/2 t. salt, dash of pepper
1/3 C. sugar	1 C. salad oil

Cut clove of garlic in half, lengthwise, and rub a wooden salad bowl with the cut sides. Mix dressing in the bowl, adding ingredients in order given. Stir in oil after sugar and salt are dissolved in vinegar and ketchup. **Spinach Salad** consists of:

2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced	4C. (1 bag) fresh spinach
1/2 lb. sliced mushrooms	8-10 lettuce leaves
1/4 C. fine-sliced scallions	1 small can of anchovies

Add salad ingredients to dressing in order given, tossing scallions, eggs, and mushrooms lightly in dressing, then tearing (not cutting) washed, dried, and de-stemmed spinach and lettuce leaves and spreading them over dressing. Do not toss yet. Refrigerate until serving time; then, using two forks and lifting from edges of bowl toward center, dress the greens. Garnish with anchovies. Pass a tray of warm Italian bread to sop up excess dressing from individual salad bowls.

Those with hearty appetites will enjoy **Banana Cream Pie** for dessert. Aunt Olivia made hers this way:

1/2 C. sugar	2 T. butter
4 T. cornstarch	1 t. vanilla
1/8 t. salt	1/2 pint whipping cream
2-3/4 C. milk	1 baked pie shell
	3 or 4 bananas

In a heavy saucepan, combine sugar, cornstarch, and salt; blend milk in a little at a time. Bring to boil over medium heat, stirring, and cook, stirring, two minutes. Remove from heat and add butter and vanilla. Allow to cool to room temperature, stirring now and then to prevent a skin forming on top. Bake pie shell, line with slices of banana, and layer cooled custard with banana slices alternately, ending with custard. Refrigerate until serving time. Whip cream and divide among six to eight individual servings.

For smaller appetites, lime or lemon sherbet is a more traditional dessert for topping off an Italian dinner. and with the wine, "Alla sua salute!"

In a large skillet, gently saute celery and onion in margarine for 10 minutes. Add water and seasonings. Simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Add clam broth; simmer 10 minutes more. Add ground clams. If clams are raw, simmer five minutes longer. If clams have been steamed before being ground (or if canned clams are used), do not cook further; just heat through before serving to four.

A traditional Italian dish and one enjoyed by everyone who appreciates Neapolitan cooking (and that includes all members of the Lovell family), is lasagne. Although Aunt