



## A Tribute to my dear friend and father-in-law Chet Najdzin (Dziagi)

### Bigos

Bigos is a rustic peasant dish also referred to as hunter's stew. Other versions include bacon, mushrooms, bay leave, and several other ingredients. Modify this recipe to include your favorite flavors.

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, diced 1/2-inch pieces, about 2 cups
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and diced 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 pound smoked pork chops, diced 1/2 inch pieces
- 1/2 pound smoked Kielbasa, diced 1/2 inch pieces
- 2 pounds fresh sauerkraut in its juice (In plastic bags in the dairy section.)  
salt and fresh ground pepper

In a medium saucepan, over medium heat, melt the butter and slowly cook the onion until tender, about 8 minutes. Next add the garlic and cook until tender, about 4 minutes. Now add the apples and cook slowly about 4 minutes. Add the meat and the sauerkraut in its juice, mix well and cover. Bring to a slow simmer. Cook for about an hour, covered, over low heat stirring frequently. Final season before serving with salt and fresh pepper.

### Chet's Put-Backs (Double Stuffed Baked Potatoes)

- 4 russet potatoes
- 1/2 pound bacon, diced and cooked until crisp, keeping it in the bacon fat
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 1/4 -1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Salt and fresh pepper to taste

Bake the potatoes, in a 400-degree oven, until they can be easily pierced with a fork. Remove from the oven, allow to cool a bit and slice in half long-ways. Scoop out the potato flesh from the skin and place the empty skins on a baking tray lined with aluminum foil. Place the potato flesh in a non-reactive bowl and add the bacon with fat, butter and cream and mash until smooth. Now add the cheddar cheese, season with salt and fresh pepper to taste and spoon the filling back into the potato skins. Bake in the oven until golden brown on top with cheese all melted. Serve at once.

## **Mozzarella en Carozza (Mozzarella in a Carriage)**

White bread slices

1-pound block of mozzarella, cut into ½ inch slices, Polly-O or whatever brand you like

Eggs, whisked with a fork for dipping

Regular olive oil for frying

Trim bread slices by cutting off the crust if you would like.

Slice pieces of fresh block mozzarella to fit in between the bread, 2 slices of mozzarella per slice of bread then cover with another slice of bread like a sandwich.

Dip these little sandwiches in beaten eggs and fry in olive oil, turning a few times in a heavy skillet until browned on all sides. Serve with Marinara Sauce for dipping, recipe below.

## **Salsa alla Marinara (Marinera's Style Sauce)**

The important thing about it is its freshness. It is not a sauce that is simmered for hours until thick and gloomy. Marinara is cooked in 15-20 minutes at most and tastes best when all ingredients have just been plucked from the garden. It goes well with all pasta, and if the pasta is freshly handmade, the result is like the first day of spring.

2      tablespoons olive oil

4      garlic cloves, minced

2      pounds plum tomatoes, blanched, skinned, and chopped  
(or 1 - 28 ounce can plum tomatoes)

handful fresh-picked basil

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

1      pound pasta

Heat the oil in a saucepan and simmer the garlic until golden. Throw in the tomatoes and raise the heat until they start to bubble. Add the basil and the salt and pepper. Break up the tomatoes with a fork and stir the sauce occasionally.

Cook about 15-20 minutes and then pour over hot pasta. Sprinkle with fresh grated Romano cheese. You will not believe it!

Sincerely yours,

David P. Martone, CCP

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