

K's Kitchen: Time for comfort food

By Kathryn Reed

With the change in seasons, so comes the change in what I'm cooking. The cooler temps make me want to whip up foods that are more comforting.

Below is a recipe I don't make often, but I don't know why. And it's one that is good for guests.

It is from the cookbook "Cucina Viansa". It's a cookbook I bought several years ago at the winery. Sam and Vicki Sebastiani owned Viansa Winery at the time – they've since divorced – and someone else owns the winery. He ran the winery; she ran the eatery and wrote the cookbook.



I like that the cookbook suggests wines to serve with each dish. This particular one calls for a Chardonnay or Nebbiolo. Since the recipe needs red wine and I didn't have any Nebbiolo in the house, I cooked with Merlot and finished the meal with a Cabernet.

I took the easy route and bought cannelloni (manicotti does the trick too) shells. I lightened the fat content with reduced fat cheeses. And I really did grate the Parmesan, but pre-grated (not the stuff in a green can found on a shelf) should suffice. I didn't save any liquid from the tomatoes, and I couldn't find this variety in that size can so I bought something similar that worked just fine. I had filling left over and just put it on top of the stuffed shells. You might want to put foil under the pan in case the marinara sauce overflows.

I served it with a salad and bread.

Cannelloni di Formaggio e Erbe con Salsa Marinara (Cheese and Herb Cannelloni with Marinara Sauce)

Crepes:

2 large eggs

1 tsp salt

1 T sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ C chilled white wine

$\frac{3}{4}$ C flour

$1\frac{1}{4}$ C milk

Olive oil

In a medium bowl, whisk eggs until frothy. Add salt, sugar and wine and whisk thoroughly. Add flour and milk alternately, beating well after each addition. Cover and allow the batter to rest one hour in the refrigerator. Whisk again to mix.

Spread a very small amount of olive oil with a brush (or paper towel) on a 6- to 8-inch non-stick crepe pan or skillet. Pour 3 tablespoons batter into the skillet for each crepe (use a large cooking or serving spoon that holds 3 tablespoons, so you can pour the batter all at once). Quickly swirl to spread the batter to a 6-inch circle. Brown lightly on the underside over medium heat, turn to briefly brown the second side (use a rubber spatula to loosen the crepe around the edges, slide it under and flip the crepe over). Slide each crepe onto waxed paper. Crepes can be stacked between layers of waxed paper until ready for use. If preparing well ahead of time, wrap the stack of crepes in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Makes 12 to 14 crepes.

Filling:

2 C ricotta cheese

$\frac{3}{4}$ C freshly grated Parmesan cheese

2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese at room temperature

2 eggs slightly beaten

$\frac{1}{2}$ C minced green onions, including green tops

2 T minced Italian parsley

2 T minced fresh basil

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

Dash pepper

Combine the ricotta, grated Parmesan, cream cheese and eggs in an electric mixer or food processor and mix until well blended. Add the remaining filling ingredients and mix to combine. Spread about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of filling down the center of each crepe. Fold the sides of the crepe over the filling to form a roll. Place filled crepes, seam side down, in a single layer in shallow 9 x 13 inch baking dish.

Marinara Sauce:

$\frac{1}{4}$ C olive oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

2 medium yellow onions, chopped

2 cans (28 ounces each) Italian plum tomatoes

$\frac{1}{2}$ C red wine

1 tsp minced fresh oregano

1 tsp minced fresh basil

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp pepper

$\frac{3}{4}$ C freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Heat oil in a large skillet and sauté garlic and onions for 10 to 12 minutes, until tender. Drain 1 cup of the liquid from the canned tomatoes and discard or save for another use. Stir the tomatoes (mashing with a fork or spoon to incorporate), remaining tomato liquid, wine, oregano, basil, salt and pepper into the onions. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour the marinara sauce over the cannelloni and sprinkle Parmesan over the top. Bake 40 minutes. Makes 6 cups sauce.