

ITALIAN NEW YEAR'S MENU

New Year's Eve in an Italian home doesn't have to be expensive to be special.

This **budget-friendly Italian New Year's Eve menu** is inspired by simple family gatherings, where tradition, comfort, and good luck matter more than luxury ingredients.

Every dish can be prepared **ahead of time**, uses **easy-to-find ingredients**, and still delivers that unmistakable *Nonna-style* warmth.

From a creamy baked pasta to the iconic lentils for good fortune, this menu proves that simplicity is the real secret to an unforgettable Capodanno.

Simple Italian Appetizer Board

Introduction

A no-cook appetizer that sets the mood for the evening. Easy, flexible, and perfect for guests to snack on while toasting with prosecco.

Cooking Times

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 0 minutes

Servings

- Serves 6–8

Ingredients

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 baguette, sliced
- 1 cup mixed olives
- 1 cup crackers or homemade savory biscuits

Step-by-Step Method

1. Remove the cream cheese from the refrigerator 15 minutes before serving to soften.
2. Slice the baguette into ½-inch slices.
3. Optional: lightly toast the bread slices until just golden.
4. Spread cream cheese evenly on each slice.
5. Arrange bread, crackers, and olives on a large serving board.
6. Serve at room temperature.

Tuna & Potato Salad (Antipasto Unico)

Introduction

A classic Italian cold appetizer that is filling, inexpensive, and perfect for preparing in advance. Even better after resting overnight.

Cooking Times

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 20 minutes

Servings

- Serves 6

Ingredients

- 2 lbs potatoes (Yukon Gold or similar)
- 10 oz canned tuna in olive oil, drained
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Salt, to taste
- Fresh parsley, finely chopped

Step-by-Step Method

1. Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water.
 2. Bring to a boil, then simmer until fork-tender (about 20 minutes).
 3. Drain and let cool slightly, then peel and cut into large chunks.
 4. Transfer potatoes to a mixing bowl.
 5. Add drained tuna, breaking it into large pieces.
 6. Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice.
 7. Season lightly with salt.
 8. Add chopped parsley and gently toss.
 9. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving.
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Classic Italian Baked Pasta

Introduction

A comforting, crowd-pleasing dish that stretches simple ingredients into a festive main course. Perfect for feeding many without stress.

Cooking Times

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 35 minutes

Servings

- Serves 8

Ingredients

- 1 lb short pasta (ziti, rigatoni, or penne)
- 3 cups tomato sauce
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt, to taste

Step-by-Step Method

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
 2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
 3. Cook pasta until **very al dente** (2 minutes less than package instructions).
 4. Drain pasta and return it to the pot.
 5. Add tomato sauce and olive oil; mix well.
 6. Transfer half of the pasta to a greased baking dish.
 7. Sprinkle half of the mozzarella and Parmigiano Reggiano.
 8. Add remaining pasta and top with remaining cheese.
 9. Bake uncovered for 35 minutes, until bubbling and lightly golden.
 10. Let rest 5 minutes before serving.
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Cotechino with Lentils (Good Luck Dish)

Introduction

A symbolic and essential New Year's dish. Lentils represent prosperity, and cotechino brings richness and tradition to the table.

Cooking Times

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 40 minutes

Servings

- Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 pre-cooked cotechino (about 16 oz)
- 2 cups dried lentils (or 3 cups cooked lentils)
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 celery stalk, finely diced
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt, to taste

Step-by-Step Method

1. Rinse lentils under cold water.
 2. Place lentils, carrot, and celery in a pot and cover with water.
 3. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 30 minutes until tender.
 4. Drain excess liquid if needed.
 5. Heat olive oil in a pan and add cooked lentils.
 6. Season lightly with salt and warm gently.
 7. Heat cotechino according to package instructions.
 8. Slice and serve over the lentils.
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Pandoro with Mascarpone Cream

Introduction

A simple yet festive dessert that transforms a store-bought pandoro into a creamy, celebratory finale.

Cooking Times

- Prep Time: 10 minutes
- Cook Time: 0 minutes

Servings

- Serves 8

Ingredients

- 1 pandoro
- 1 cup mascarpone
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Step-by-Step Method

1. Place mascarpone in a bowl.
2. Add powdered sugar and vanilla extract.
3. Whisk until smooth and creamy.
4. Slice pandoro into wedges.
5. Lightly dust pandoro with powdered sugar.
6. Serve with mascarpone cream on the side or spooned on top.