

Top 10 Authentic Italian Sunday Dinner Recipes

A clean printable collection of traditional Italian Sunday recipes to save, print, and cook for family dinner.

1. Sunday Tomato Sauce with Meat

A true Italian Sunday classic. This rich tomato sauce simmers slowly with pork, beef, and sausage until the meat becomes tender and the sauce is deep, sweet, and full of flavor.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 3-4 hours

Total Time: 3 hours 20 minutes to 4 hours 20 minutes

Servings: 6 people

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, lightly crushed
- 1 lb pork ribs or pork shoulder pieces
- 1 lb beef chuck or stew meat
- 2 Italian sausages
- 2 cans crushed tomatoes, 28 oz each
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 6 fresh basil leaves
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 lb rigatoni, ziti, or paccheri
- Grated Parmigiano Reggiano, for serving

Instructions

- 1 Heat olive oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat.
- 2 Brown the pork, beef, and sausages on all sides. Remove and set aside.
- 3 Add onion and cook until soft.
- 4 Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds.
- 5 Stir in tomato paste and cook for 1 minute.
- 6 Add red wine and scrape the bottom of the pot.
- 7 Add crushed tomatoes, basil, salt, and pepper.
- 8 Return the meat to the pot.

- 9 Simmer gently for 3-4 hours, stirring occasionally.
- 10 Cook pasta until al dente, toss with sauce, and serve with Parmigiano Reggiano.
- 11 Serve the meat separately as a second course.

Nonna's Tip

The sauce should barely bubble. A slow simmer gives the best flavor.

2. Baked Ziti with Mozzarella and Ricotta

Baked ziti is one of the most loved Italian-American Sunday dishes. It is cheesy, saucy, rich, and perfect for serving a hungry family.

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes
Resting Time: 10 minutes
Total Time: 1 hour
Servings: 6 people

Ingredients

- 1 lb ziti or penne
- 4 cups tomato sauce or meat sauce
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk ricotta
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°F.
- 2 Cook pasta until very al dente. Drain well.
- 3 Mix ricotta, egg, parsley, salt, pepper, and half of the Parmigiano Reggiano.
- 4 Toss pasta with 2 cups of sauce.
- 5 Spread a thin layer of sauce in a baking dish.
- 6 Add half the pasta, ricotta mixture, mozzarella, and sauce.
- 7 Repeat with remaining pasta, sauce, mozzarella, and Parmigiano Reggiano.
- 8 Bake for 25-30 minutes until bubbling and golden.
- 9 Rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Nonna's Tip

Keep the pasta firm before baking so it does not become mushy.

3. Italian Meatballs in Tomato Sauce

Soft, tender, and full of flavor, Italian meatballs are always welcome at Sunday dinner. Serve them with pasta, bread, or alongside a big family meal.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Servings: 6 people

Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1/2 lb ground pork
- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 cups tomato sauce
- Olive oil, for browning

Instructions

- 1 Soak breadcrumbs in milk for 5 minutes.
- 2 Combine beef, pork, breadcrumbs, egg, Parmigiano Reggiano, garlic, parsley, salt, and pepper.
- 3 Mix gently until combined.
- 4 Shape into meatballs.
- 5 Brown in olive oil on all sides.
- 6 Transfer to tomato sauce.
- 7 Simmer for 30-40 minutes.
- 8 Serve hot with extra sauce.

Nonna's Tip

Do not overmix the meat. Gentle mixing makes softer meatballs.

4. Lasagna alla Bolognese

Lasagna is a showstopper Sunday dish. Layers of pasta, ragu, bechamel, and Parmigiano Reggiano bake together into one of Italy's most beloved comfort foods.

Prep Time: 45 minutes
Cook Time: 40 minutes
Resting Time: 15 minutes
Total Time: 1 hour 40 minutes
Servings: 8 people

Ingredients

12 lasagna sheets
4 cups Bolognese sauce
3 cups bechamel sauce
1 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
Butter, for the baking dish
For the bechamel: 4 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 cups whole milk, warm
Salt, black pepper, and nutmeg, to taste

Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°F.
- 2 Make the bechamel by melting butter in a saucepan.
- 3 Add flour and whisk for 1 minute.
- 4 Slowly add warm milk, whisking until smooth and thickened.
- 5 Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg.
- 6 Spread a little Bolognese sauce in a buttered baking dish.
- 7 Add lasagna sheets, Bolognese, bechamel, and Parmigiano Reggiano.
- 8 Repeat layers until all ingredients are used.
- 9 Finish with bechamel and Parmigiano Reggiano.
- 10 Bake for 35-40 minutes.
- 11 Rest for 15 minutes before slicing.

Nonna's Tip

Lasagna tastes even better after resting because the layers settle beautifully.

5. Chicken Cacciatore

Chicken Cacciatore is rustic, saucy, and deeply flavorful. Bone-in chicken is braised with tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic, herbs, and wine.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Servings: 4-6 people

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 chicken thighs or drumsticks
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 can crushed tomatoes, 28 oz
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Instructions

- 1 Season chicken with salt and pepper.
- 2 Brown chicken in olive oil on both sides. Remove from pan.
- 3 Add onion and bell pepper. Cook until softened.
- 4 Add garlic and cook briefly.
- 5 Pour in white wine and reduce for 2 minutes.
- 6 Add tomatoes, broth, oregano, salt, and pepper.
- 7 Return chicken to the pan.
- 8 Cover and simmer for 35-45 minutes.
- 9 Garnish with parsley and serve.

Nonna's Tip

Serve with crusty bread because the sauce is too good to leave behind.

6. Eggplant Parmigiana

Eggplant Parmigiana is rich, savory, and satisfying. Layers of eggplant, tomato sauce, mozzarella, basil, and Parmigiano Reggiano make this a perfect meatless Sunday dish.

Prep Time: 40 minutes
Cook Time: 35 minutes
Resting Time: 15 minutes
Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes
Servings: 6 people

Ingredients

- 2 large eggplants
- Salt, for draining
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 3/4 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups breadcrumbs
- Olive oil, for frying or baking
- Fresh basil leaves

Instructions

- 1 Slice eggplants into 1/4-inch rounds.
- 2 Sprinkle with salt and drain for 30 minutes. Pat dry.
- 3 Dredge in flour, dip in eggs, and coat with breadcrumbs.
- 4 Fry until golden, or bake at 400°F until crisp.
- 5 Spread sauce in a baking dish.
- 6 Add layers of eggplant, mozzarella, Parmigiano Reggiano, basil, and sauce.
- 7 Repeat layers.
- 8 Bake at 375°F for 30-35 minutes.
- 9 Rest for 15 minutes before serving.

Nonna's Tip

Resting the dish before cutting helps the layers stay together.

7. Sausage and Peppers

Sausage and peppers is simple, colorful, and perfect for a family table. Serve it with crusty bread, pasta, roasted potatoes, or as part of a larger Sunday spread.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes

Servings: 4-6 people

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs Italian sausage
- 3 bell peppers, sliced
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 can diced tomatoes, 14 oz
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Instructions

- 1 Brown sausages in olive oil. Remove and set aside.
- 2 Add peppers and onions to the pan. Cook until softened.
- 3 Add garlic and cook briefly.
- 4 Pour in white wine and reduce slightly.
- 5 Add diced tomatoes, oregano, salt, and pepper.
- 6 Return sausages to the pan.
- 7 Cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes.
- 8 Serve hot.

Nonna's Tip

Use both sweet and hot Italian sausage for more depth of flavor.

8. Pasta al Forno

Pasta al forno is baked pasta the Italian way: sauce, cheese, pasta, and sometimes meatballs, eggs, ham, or peas depending on the family tradition.

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes
Resting Time: 10 minutes
Total Time: 1 hour 5 minutes
Servings: 6-8 people

Ingredients

- 1 lb short pasta, such as rigatoni or penne
- 4 cups tomato sauce
- 1 1/2 cups mozzarella, cubed
- 3/4 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 cup small cooked meatballs, optional
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced, optional
- 1/2 cup peas, optional
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°F.
- 2 Cook pasta until very al dente. Drain well.
- 3 Toss pasta with tomato sauce.
- 4 Add mozzarella, Parmigiano Reggiano, meatballs, eggs, and peas if using.
- 5 Transfer to an oiled baking dish.
- 6 Top with extra sauce and cheese.
- 7 Bake for 25-30 minutes until bubbling.
- 8 Rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Nonna's Tip

Every family has its own version. Use what your family loves most.

9. Italian Roast Potatoes with Rosemary

Crispy, golden potatoes are the perfect side dish for Sunday dinner. They go beautifully with chicken, meatballs, sausage, or roasted meats.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 55 minutes

Servings: 4-6 people

Ingredients

2 lbs potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

3 garlic cloves, smashed

2 rosemary sprigs

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Instructions

- 1 Preheat oven to 425°F.
- 2 Toss potatoes with olive oil, garlic, rosemary, salt, and pepper.
- 3 Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet.
- 4 Roast for 35-45 minutes, turning once.
- 5 Serve hot and crispy.

Nonna's Tip

Do not crowd the pan. Space helps the potatoes become crisp.

10. Classic Tiramisu

A proper Sunday dinner deserves a beautiful dessert. Tiramisu is creamy, elegant, and always impressive, made with mascarpone, espresso, ladyfingers, and cocoa.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Chilling Time: 6 hours

Total Time: 6 hours 30 minutes

Servings: 8 people

Ingredients

6 egg yolks

3/4 cup sugar

1 1/4 cups mascarpone cheese

1 3/4 cups heavy cream

2 cups strong espresso, cooled

2 tablespoons coffee liqueur, optional

30-36 ladyfingers

Unsweetened cocoa powder, for dusting

Instructions

- 1 Beat egg yolks and sugar until pale and creamy.
- 2 Add mascarpone and mix until smooth.
- 3 Whip heavy cream until soft peaks form.
- 4 Fold whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture.
- 5 Mix espresso with coffee liqueur, if using.
- 6 Quickly dip ladyfingers in coffee.
- 7 Arrange a layer of ladyfingers in a dish.
- 8 Spread half the mascarpone cream over the top.
- 9 Repeat with another layer of ladyfingers and cream.
- 10 Refrigerate for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.
- 11 Dust with cocoa before serving.

Nonna's Tip

A quick dip is enough. If the ladyfingers soak too long, the tiramisu becomes watery.