



APERITIVO HOUR!

ABOUT VIRTUAL CLASSES - Please Read First!

- Below you'll find a shopping list as well as the recipes. We highly recommend reading over the recipes prior to the class.
- **Please have all ingredients washed and pre-measured and equipment ready so we can get started right away.**
- Remember, when it comes to Zoom, the bigger the screen, the better the experience.
- If you won't have all of the ingredients listed in the shopping list by the time of your scheduled class, **DON'T PANIC & DON'T RUN TO THE STORE!** We'll figure out a way to improvise with what you **DO** have in your pantry & fridge!
- Don't feel like cooking along? No problem! Feel free to watch, take notes and ask questions so you can prepare the dishes at your leisure.

*An Italian **aperitivo** is often described as being similar to the American happy hour, but in reality, it's much more than that. An aperitivo (or apéritif) is a pre-meal drink specifically meant to whet your appetite. The concept of the modern apéritif is generally thought to have been invented by one of the early creators of vermouth in Torino in the late 18th century. He claimed that his special combination of fortified white wine and various herbs and spices stimulated the appetite and was more suitable for ladies to drink than red wine.*

The modern aperitivo in Italy generally takes place between 7pm and 9 pm – when Italians meet to relax over a glass of wine or a light cocktail and finger foods. Although the food to accompany an aperitivo is not meant to replace your dinner, in recent years, the "aperitivo cenato" - in which the aperitivo is used in lieu of dinner - has taken off among younger Italians.

During the program, we'll create an impressive aperitivo spread to share with friends!

Supplies/Equipment

- A board or platter
- Small bowls (for anything that is oily or watery)
- Teaspoons or demitasse spoons
- Toothpicks or skewers
- Small plates & cocktail napkins

Food Ideas

- Olives (different varieties/colors - some Italian olives include Castelvetrano, Cerignola, Gaeta, Italian-style oil-cured)
- Preserved vegetables such as sun-dried tomatoes, roasted peppers, grilled artichoke hearts, pickled eggplant
- At least 2 different types of Italian cheeses
 - Hard cheeses - Parmigiano-Reggiano (the king!), Grana Padano (also a nutty cow's milk cheese), Pecorino Toscano or Sardo (hard sheep's milk)

- Soft or Semi-soft cheeses - Fontina di Valle D'Aosta (nutty & buttery), Robiola or Taleggio (creamy & tangy), Moliterno al Tartufo (sheep's milk truffle cheese), Gorgonzola (blue cheese - consider serving with honey), Ricotta (when fresh, lovely to spread on bread - you can also season with fresh herbs or chili flakes)
- Fresh mozzarella bocconcini (little balls)
- Cured Meats
 - Affettati - thinly sliced cured meats such as prosciutto, coppa, mortadella, bresaola, salame
 - Dried sausage or sopressata
- Sliced or hand-torn bread, crackers, grissini (thin bread sticks) or taralli (cracker "loops" made with olive oil in the dough)
- Toasted bruschetta topped with seasonal vegetables, pesto or tapenade
- Nuts (cashews, almonds (I love Spanish Marcona), macadamia)
- Dried fruit (apricots, cherries, figs, dates)
- Fresh fruit (grapes, pomegranate, slices of seasonal fruit or berries)

Aperitivo Drink Ideas - *Traditionally, aperitivo cocktail options tend to be light on alcohol and bitter in taste - a perfect pairing with salty snacks*

Aperol Spritz

- 3 ounces prosecco
- 2 ounces Aperol
- 1 ounce club soda
- Garnish: orange slice
- Serve on the rocks

Negroni

- 1 ounce gin
- 1 ounce Campari
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth
- Garnish: orange peel
- Serve on the rocks

Bollicine (Sparkling Wines)

- Franciacorta - a high-quality sparkling wine from the area around Brescia in Northern Italy; drier and less fruity than prosecco
- Prosecco - a sparkling wine produced in a vast area in the Veneto and Friuli regions in Northeastern Italy

A Few Lesser-known Aperitivo-Friendly Still Wines

- White Wines - Frascati (Lazio), Gavi (Campania), Pecorino (Abruzzo), Falanghina (Campania)
- Red Wines - less typical for an aperitivo pairing, but if you're going with a red, try a wine with a bit of fizz such as Lambrusco (Emilia-Romagna) or a young, light-bodied Sangiovese (Tuscany) or Barbera (Piemonte)

Although we won't prepare them together during class, set forth on the following pages are some easy recipes for hot antipasti that you can add to your aperitivo spread

Crostini con stracchino e salsiccia

Serves 6-8

- 1/2 lb (250g) stracchino or robiola cheese (or ¼ cup mascarpone + ¼ cup ricotta)
- 1 lb sweet Italian pork sausage, casings removed
- Loaf of ciabatta or country bread, sliced

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a mixing bowl, mix stracchino cheese and sausages into a paste. Generously spread the mixture on each slice of bread. Bake until golden brown, 12-15 minutes. Drizzle with truffle oil, if desired.

Stuffed Mushrooms

Makes 4 dozen

- 4 and 1/2 dozen cremini mushrooms, cleaned with a brush or damp paper towel
- 2 shallots, finely minced
- 10 twigs of thyme, leaves only, finely minced
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 heaping cup fine breadcrumbs or more if needed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil plus more for stuffing mixture
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Truffle oil (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Remove stems from 4 dozen mushrooms. Add stems and remaining 6 mushrooms (the stems alone won't make enough stuffing) to the bowl of a food processor and pulse until finely minced.

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a wide skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the leeks and thyme along with two pinches of salt to the skillet, stirring often until the leeks are soft and sweetened (it's ok to taste!). Add the pulsed mushrooms, turn the heat up to high and stir frequently. The mushrooms will release their liquid – once evaporated, add the white wine and simmer until the wine is reduced. Turn off heat and taste for seasoning.

Transfer the mushrooms to a bowl and add breadcrumbs. Stir together along with a 2 tablespoons of olive oil. The mixture should hold together but not be too wet. Add more breadcrumbs if too wet and a bit more oil if too dry.

Season the inside of the mushroom caps with salt and pepper. Spoon stuffing into mushroom caps and set them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Bake for 15-17 minutes until mushrooms are cooked through and stuffing is crispy on top.

Place under the broiler for one minute to crisp up. Remove from the oven, drizzle with truffle oil and serve.

Panelle (Sicilian Chickpea Flour Polenta Fritters)

Serves 2-3

- 1 cup chickpea flour
- Salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- *Optional: 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley, plus more for garnish*
- Olive oil, for frying

Add the chickpea flour, 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, the pepper and 3 cups water to a medium saucepan set over medium heat and whisk until smooth. Cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the mixture is very thick (almost like polenta) and pulling away from the sides of the pan when stirred; this should take around 5 minutes at most. (Stir in the parsley if using.)

Wet the back of a rimmed baking sheet with water and pour the mixture smoothly and evenly over it, spreading out with a silicone spatula. Cover with parchment and press down with your hands or a rolling pin to even out into a 1/8 inch thick layer. Let cool until firm.

Heat 1/2 inch olive oil in a heavy-bottomed high-sided skillet or Dutch oven until hot.

Cut the panelle into small triangles or thin strips. Fry in batches until lightly golden, about 2 minutes per side. Drain on a sheet tray lined with paper towels. Season with a touch more salt and garnish with a sprinkling of chopped parsley. Serve immediately.