

# Food column: A tour of Italy

Judy Warner, For The Lebanon Daily News      Published 2:42 p.m. ET July 30, 2016



(Photo: Judy Warner, For The Lebanon Daily News)

In June, my husband, Bill, and I visited with my paternal cousin Robert Lenza and his wife, Patty, in their beautiful lake house in Whitefield, N.H. It was a very enjoyable visit, with wonderful people, beautiful scenery and delicious food. Of course, lots of food, being of Italian descent.

Last year, for their 30th wedding anniversary, the Lenzas went to Italy. Robert Lenza surprised Patty Lenza with a week’s stay in an Italian cooking school. The experience is called Tuscookany. Their two grown children, Ann Marie and Greg, accompanied them. They stayed in a villa where they had cooking lessons and cooked authentic Italian dishes (<http://www.tuscookany.com/about-us/chefs/>). Then, they were able to eat and enjoy the dishes they made.

They learned to make homemade pastas, including ravioli and gnocchi. They prepared various main dishes and side dishes. They made pizza in a wood-burning oven. The desserts were varied from cookies to pies to cakes. Robert Lenza said his favorite dessert was a chocolate roll with cream.

Food column: Use fruit, veggies in summer meals  
(<http://www.flipsidepa.com/story/life/food/2016/06/29/food-column-use-fruit-veggies-summer-meals/86535958/>).

Bill and I got to sample some of the recipes during our visit. Patty Lenza prepared recipes she learned. On one evening, we had ravioli with butter and sage sauce. The recipe calls for spinach-cheese ravioli, but any flavor of cheese ravioli will work with this recipe. You can find ravioli in the freezer or the refrigerated section of most grocery stores. Sam’s Club or Costco sell delicious spinach-cheese ravioli in the freezer section. This meal was served with a salad and bread. It is easy to prepare and may be used for any pasta. Patty Lenza served a delicious blueberry pie for dessert.

On our last night in New Hampshire, we were served grilled chicken with a salad, and the side dish was pumpkin and parmesan cheese cup. The dessert was homemade biscotti.

I looked through the cookbook from Tuscookany and found a few interesting recipes to add. I love the taste of pesto, and this is the season of zucchini, so I added zucchini pesto to the recipes. This can be served over any pasta or in a vegetarian lasagna. The version from Tuscookany cooks the zucchini and onions. I also included a different version from <http://www.epicurious.com> (<http://www.epicurious.com/>).

Many Italian recipes include fresh herbs, tomatoes, cheese, vegetables, olive oil and pasta. The Mediterranean diet consists of eating a diet of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, fish, lean white meat and olive oil. This is considered a healthy way of living. Eating vegetables in season is beneficial to add variety and nutrients to the diet. Fruits and vegetables are high in antioxidants that can prevent many diseases. There are many farm stands to visit in our area at this time of the year. There is a bounty of fresh foods to enjoy.





The ravioli used in this dish can be purchased in the frozen section of most grocery stores. *(Photo: Judy Warner, For The Lebanon Daily News)*

## Ravioli with Butter and Sage Sauce

Serves four

Ingredients:

- One 10-ounce bag ravioli,
- 3-ounce butter
- 20 sage leaves, whole
- One cup heavy cream
- Salt and pepper
- Parmesan cheese, grated to sprinkle

## Instructions

1. Boil ravioli as directed on package.
1. Melt the butter on a low flame with the sage.
2. Add the cream and cook on a low flame for 5 minutes.
3. Simmer for another 5 minutes infuse flavors. Put half the ravioli into a warmed bowl.
4. Add half the sauce.
5. Mix well and repeat with the remaining ravioli, sauce and cheese. Serve immediately. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

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## Pumpkin and Parmesan Cheese Cup

- Two 1/3 cups pureed pumpkin
- One tablespoon cornstarch
- One cup cream
- Two eggs
- One tablespoon grated Provolone cheese or a soft cheese of your choice
- Two tablespoons parmesan cheese
- Pepper to taste
- Brown sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix pumpkin, cream, eggs, pepper, and grated cheese in bowl.
3. Pour into casserole and bake about 50 minutes until set.
4. Remove from oven. Turn on broiler.
5. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and brown sugar.
6. Return to oven under broiler until golden brown and sugar caramelizes.
7. Serve warm.

## Chocolate Roll with Cream

- Six ounces Dark chocolate
- Six eggs
- One cup sugar
- One cup heavy cream, whipped
- Four tablespoons sugar

### Instructions:

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees
2. Chop the chocolate and melt in a double boiler
3. Beat egg yolks with sugar well in a bowl until it resembles a soft, clear cream
4. In a separate bowl beat the egg whites until stiff then gently fold into egg yolk mixture.
5. Gently add the melted chocolate.
6. Line a 8 X 10 baking pan with parchment paper, pour the mixture into the pan and spread it evenly with spatula.
7. Bake in oven for around 30 minutes or until crisp.
8. Remove from oven and sprinkle with powder sugar. Cover with a sheet pf parchment paper and a tea towel.
9. Turn pan upside down, remove the cake and cool.
10. When cool remove the paper and spread with whipped cream mixed with 4 tablespoons sugar.
11. Roll the cookie dough from the long side with the help of Parchment paper.
12. Garnish with powder sugar and chocolate slivers.
13. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate.

## Zucchini Pesto

- Two cups zucchini
- 1 ½ cups onions
- ¼ cup pine nuts or walnuts
- Two cloves garlic
- One cup fresh basil
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil for cooking onion and zucchini
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### **Instructions:**

1. Peel and thinly slice onions. Cook in large pot with olive oil with a pinch of salt.
2. Wash and slice zucchini. Add to onions.
3. Add 1 clove garlic and seasonings. Cover with lid and simmer about 10 minutes till cooked.
4. Put basil, nuts, cooked vegetables, 1 clove garlic, and olive oil into a food processor. Process until all combined as a paste.

#### **Another version of Zucchini Pesto from Epicurious.com**

- One cup (packed) fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup walnuts (1 ounce), toasted
- Two garlic cloves
- Three small zucchinis (about 9 ounces), trimmed, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup (packed) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- One green onion, choppe
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Assorted raw vegetables or pasta

#### **Preparation**

Blend basil, walnuts and garlic in processor until finely chopped. Add zucchini, Parmesan cheese and greed onion; process until coarsely chopped. Add oil. Using on/off turns, process until mixture is finely chopped. Season pesto to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl. (Can be prepared 2 days ahead. Press plastic wrap onto surface of pesto and refrigerate.) Serve with assorted raw vegetables or over your favorite pasta.

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