

Olive Festival Coming Soon!

By Susie Iventosch



Italian ravioli stuffed with Kalamata olives, basil, sundried tomatoes and goat cheese.

Photos Susie Iventosch

The Fourth Annual Olive Festival is just around the corner, so olive lovers will want to head on down to the Wagner Ranch Nature Center on Sunday, Oct. 6. The event will take place from 1 to 4 p.m. and will feature cooking demonstrations, olive tasting, music, art, games and living history of a heritage olive grove, which was planted by California's first Surveyor General in 1882.

The festival, organized by the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, raises funds to preserve the 40-year tradition of teaching children about the environment and how their ancestors lived in close contact with nature. There will be a raffle and silent auction, which is supported by more than 50 local businesses.

Though there won't be a recipe contest this year, Katharine Barrett, one of the event coordinators for the past four years, is planning to incorporate an olive recipe contest for next year's Fifth Annual Olive Festival. Contest hopefuls can learn a lot about California olives and maybe even get a few ideas from this year's cooking demonstrations to start cultivating their own recipes!

Next year, I hope to feature one of your winning recipes in the Lamorinda Weekly food column. In the meantime, please enjoy this recipe made of Kalamata olives, goat cheese and sundried tomatoes ... with a touch of fresh basil and pesto! Making homemade raviolis is not necessarily a quick dish, but it is a lot of fun and quite satisfying to see the recipe come together from a bowl of flour and salt to the finished raviolis! And, it is a really fun family endeavor. My daughter and I had a great time making these raviolis together.



Dough with mounds of ravioli filling



Dough with filling and top layer of dough



Cutting and sealing the raviolis

Kalamata Olive-Stuffed Ravioli

Pasta

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 eggs
- 1 tablespoon water

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, mix flour and salt. Make a mound with a well in the middle and crack eggs into the well. Add oil to well and with a fork, begin to incorporate liquids into flour by bringing more and more flour into the dough. Add water and continue to incorporate as much flour as will go into the dough. You may not need all of the flour. Gather dough into a ball and knead for 3-4 minutes on a floured surface. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes.

Divide dough in half, and roll each half on a floured surface until about 1/16 to 1/8-inch thick and shaped into a 10x15 inch rectangle. It might be a little difficult to roll out dough due to elasticity, but keep rolling and you'll get there! Also, you probably won't have a perfect rectangle, but not to worry, you can always trim excess dough.

Place one rectangle on a flat work surface that has been dusted with flour. Cover the second rectangle completely with plastic wrap to keep from drying out.

Filling

INGREDIENTS

- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3-4 leaves of fresh basil, minced
- 1/4 cup sundried tomatoes, chopped ... and drained, if packed in oil
- 3/4 cup Kalamata olives, pitted
- 1 cup goat cheese

DIRECTIONS

Saute garlic and shallot in oil until beginning to brown. Remove from heat and set aside.

Place sundried tomatoes in the bowl of a food processor. Puree until smooth. Add basil, shallot and garlic and olives and continue to process until smooth. Finally, add goat cheese and puree until well mixed and creamy.

Place 1-2 teaspoons of filling on top of bottom layer of dough, leaving about 1.5 inches of space in between each mound of filling.

Dip a pastry brush in water and brush each channel in between mounds of filling with water to help the top layer stick to the bottom layer.

Now, place top layer over bottom layer lined with filling and with your fingers, press down in between each ravioli mound to adhere top layer to bottom layer of dough. Using a knife or pastry cutter, cut into ravioli squares and again, with fingers, seal each edge of the individual raviolis to prevent filling from escaping during the cooking process.

Place raviolis in plastic container, separating each layer with plastic wrap and store in refrigerator until ready to cook.

When ready to cook, bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Drop raviolis in water and continue to boil until raviolis float to the surface. Remove with a slotted spoon and serve with hot Chicken Pesto Cream Sauce. Garnish with fresh basil leaves and freshly grated Parmesan.

Sauce

INGREDIENTS

- 2 chicken breasts, cooked and cut into thin slices
- 1 large red bell pepper, roasted, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup pesto (homemade or store-bought)
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/2 cup Half & Half

DIRECTIONS

Heat roasted red bell pepper and pesto in a pot with wine and Half & Half just to boiling. Place pieces of chicken in sauce for about 1-2 minutes, just to heat through, because chicken should already be cooked. Serve over hot raviolis.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website:

www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



Author Offers Lunch Box Tips, Signs Books in Moraga

Submitted by Lucy Dendinger



Alcalanes High School alumna Katie Sullivan Morford introduced her new book, "The Best Lunch Box Ever," to a group of moms at the home of Lucy Dendinger in Moraga earlier this month. As a registered dietician, food writer and mother of three, she had plenty of tips to help liven up the lunch box routine. She demonstrated a few lunch box ideas to kick off the new school year. Guests were impressed

with the tasty treats and nutritional benefits of her food selection. Diane Eames of Orinda commented, "I love the versatility of the book. I can make delicious and healthful lunches for my kids and me. Plus, the book is very kid friendly and I can involve my boys in the lunch making process."

The guests appreciated the simplicity of the recipes and the sound nutritional advice. Her book includes a section titled

"Fill Your Arsenal" which tells readers everything to have on hand to prepare great lunches every day. The "Plan Ahead" section offers great tips on establishing a healthy lunch routine without the morning frenzy. The "Dirty Dozen" and "Clean 15" are helpful to anyone trying to decide which organic foods are worth the extra expense. For more information about Morford and her new book, visit www.momskitchenhandbook.com.

Author Katie Sullivan Morford signs books at an event in Moraga. Photo provided

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk @lamorinda weekly.com

Business Directory

Heating

ATLAS
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING COMPANY
CA LIC. #489501

Old-fashioned service and high-quality installations.

925-944-1122
www.atlasheating.com
Since 1908

Underpinning

Bay Area UNDERPINNING
GENERAL CONTRACTOR LIC. 947129

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS • LIFTING
LEVELING • STABILIZING

707 310-0602
www.bayareaunderpinning.org

Gardening

Garden of Eden
Landscaping

Design & Installation
Small & Large Jobs

www.abeautifulgarden.com
925-370-9445

Gardening

J. Limon Gardening

Maintenance/Clean-up
Monthly Service
Sprinkler System Repair

Call Jose
(925) 787-5743
License #: 018287

25 yrs. experience in Lamorinda