

Kids' Corner

Dinner for Dad

Teens can create a sensational Italian feast this Father's Day

THIS FATHER'S DAY, IMPRESS YOUR DAD WITH A THREE-COURSE ITALIAN DINNER YOU MADE YOURSELF. It may sound intimidating, but preparing this meal is actually really easy, especially when you take it a step at a time.

- Father's Day is Sunday, June 18. You can put together the main course—the layered meatball casserole—on Friday or Saturday and store it in the refrigerator. A few hours before dinner on Sunday, assemble the green salad. While you're at it, quickly make the salad dressing. About an hour before dinner, pull out the casserole, top it with the crushed croutons, and put it in the oven. While it cooks, slice strawberries for dessert sundaes and set the table. • Since so much of the work is done in advance, cleanup will be quick, allowing you to spend more time afterward with Dad.



FOR DESSERT, PUT SLICED STRAWBERRIES IN FOUR BOWLS, SCOOP IN STRAWBERRY ICE CREAM, AND TOP WITH CHOCOLATE SAUCE YOU'VE WARMED IN THE MICROWAVE.

GREEN SALAD WITH MELON AND SALAMI

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

NOTES: You can prepare this salad up to 4 hours in advance. Cover the plates with plastic wrap after Step 4, and stack them 2 high in your refrigerator until dinnertime. Put the dressing on just before serving.

MAKES: 4 servings

Salad

- 4 cups packaged romaine lettuce leaves, torn into bite-size pieces if necessary
- 1 cup pre-shredded carrots (sold in a bag in produce section)
- 1 hothouse cucumber, plastic removed, washed
- 1 small ripe cantaloupe

- 8 slices "light" Italian dry salami
- 2 green onions, rinsed

Dressing

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Safeway SELECT Verdi Balsamic Vinegar
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup Safeway SELECT Verdi Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon garlic purée from a jar or pressed fresh garlic
- $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. On each of 4 salad plates put 1 cup romaine leaves. Sprinkle about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the pre-shredded carrots on top of each.
2. Cut the cucumber in half, across the middle. Save one half for another use. Cut the remaining half lengthwise down the center. Place one half, cut side down, on the cutting board and slice it into thin half moons. Arrange about 8 to 10 slices around the

David Tsay

**MAKE THE SALAD (TOP)
A FEW HOURS BEFORE, THE
CASSEROLE (MIDDLE) THE DAY
BEFORE. YOU'LL BE PROUD OF
THE RESULT (BOTTOM).**

edge of each plate.

3. Slice the melon in half. Save one half for another use. Using a spoon, scoop the seeds out of the remaining melon half. Place the cut side of the melon on the cutting board, and with a knife, slice it into four equal pieces. Slice the skin off of each piece, then cut the melon into bite-size pieces. Arrange about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup melon pieces on top of each salad.
4. Cut the salami slices into thin (about $\frac{1}{4}$ -in.-wide) strips. Slice the green ends off the green onions and throw them away. Slice the white part into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick pieces. Sprinkle equal amounts of salami and onions over the melon on each plate.
5. In a 2-cup container with an airtight top, add balsamic vinegar, olive oil, garlic, and salt and pepper to taste. Cover tightly and shake to combine. Store in the refrigerator (up to 3 weeks) until you're ready to dress the salads. Just before serving, shake the dressing well and drizzle over the salads.

Per serving: 427 cal., 78% (354 cal.) from fat; 5.9 g protein; 39 g fat (5.9 g sat.); 19 g carbo (3.8 g fiber); 294 mg sodium; 3.3 mg chol.

LASAGNA-STYLE MEATBALL CASSEROLE

PREP TIME: 40 minutes

COOK TIME: About 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours

NOTES: You can make this casserole up to two days ahead: Follow the directions through Step 9, but don't add the crushed croutons. Cover the dish tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate it. One hour before baking, remove casserole from fridge and let stand at room temperature. Remove the plastic wrap and add the crushed croutons. Bake according to Step 10. The cooked casserole can be frozen in an airtight container for up to 3 months. Defrost and reheat in the microwave.

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon Safeway SELECT Verdi Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 cups garlic-and-cheese croutons
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups low-fat ricotta
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon dry basil
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons grated lemon peel (just the yellow part)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups part-skim shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
 - 1 cup Safeway SELECT Verdi Shredded Parmesan or Romano cheese, divided
- 30 frozen fully cooked meatballs (about 1 in. in diameter), thawed
 - 1 bag (12 oz.) penne pasta
 - 1 jar (26 oz.) Safeway SELECT Verdi Marinara Pasta Sauce
 - 2 cups Safeway SELECT Verdi Four Cheese Pasta Sauce

1. Preheat your oven to 375° and put a large colander in the sink.
2. In a 4- to 5-quart pan, add 4 quarts (16 cups) water, salt, and olive oil. Bring to a boil over high heat, about 12 to 15 minutes.

Do Steps 3 through 5 while the water is heating.

3. Place whole croutons in a large resealable plastic food bag. Squeeze the air out and zip it closed. Put the filled bag on the counter, then roll a rolling pin over it to evenly crush the contents into small crumbs.
4. In a 2-quart mixing bowl, mix ricotta, nutmeg, dried basil, lemon peel, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the shredded mozzarella, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the parmesan cheese. Set the bowl aside.
5. Cut the meatballs in half and put in another 2-quart bowl. Mix in another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded mozzarella and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup parmesan cheese. Set the bowl aside.
6. When the water comes to a boil, pour in the pasta. The water will stop boiling. Stir with a spoon so the pasta won't stick together, then put a lid on the pan. Keep the heat high and bring the water back to a boil, which will take about 2 to 3 minutes. Watch the covered pan carefully to make sure it doesn't boil over. When the water starts to boil, remove the lid. Cook pasta uncovered about 13 minutes.

7. When pasta is done, pour it into the colander in the sink to drain. Then rinse under cool running water to stop pasta

from cooking. Drain very well.

8. Put the pasta back into the pan. With a rubber spatula, gently mix in the marinara and the four cheese sauces. Mix the meatball mixture (from Step 5) into the pan.

9. Using a large spoon, put half of the meatball and pasta mixture into a 9- by 13-inch pan. Smooth it with a spatula to make the surface even. Then spread the ricotta mixture (from Step 4) evenly over the pasta.

Top with the remaining meatball and pasta mixture and use the spatula to lightly press it into the cheese layer to make the surface even. Sprinkle evenly with the last $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mozzarella, then with the crushed croutons.

10. Cover the pan with aluminum foil that is raised in the middle like a tent so it does not touch the surface of the casserole. Set the pan on another large piece of foil (to catch the drips) and put in the oven. (The dish will be heavy, so you may want to ask an adult to help you put it into the oven.)

11. Bake in the preheated oven. After 45 minutes, remove the aluminum foil from pan and set aside. Close the oven and continue to bake an additional 20 to 25 minutes or until crushed croutons are lightly browned and the casserole is hot in the center. Remove from oven and let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Per serving: 648 cal., 42% (264 cal.) from fat; 32 g protein; 29 g fat (12 g sat.); 58 g carbo (3.0 g fiber); 1,940 mg sodium; 70 mg chol.



by HOLLY RUDIN-BRASCHI