





## TONY'S NEGRONIS

MAKES 2 DRINKS

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN START TO FINISH: 5 MIN

These cocktails are as much fun to drink as they are to say. Tony Oltranti adds freshly squeezed orange juice to a traditional Italian aperitif and serves it straight up in a chilled Martini glass. Salute!

- 3 oz (6 Tbsp) gin
- 3 oz (6 Tbsp) Campari
- 3 oz (6 Tbsp) sweet (red) vermouth
- 2 splashes fresh orange juice

EQUIPMENT: a cocktail shaker

GARNISH: orange twists

► Combine all ingredients with ice in shaker. Shake well and strain into chilled Martini glasses.

## CHICKEN-LIVER CROSTINI

SERVES 8 (ANTIPASTO)

ACTIVE TIME: 45 MIN START TO FINISH: 45 MIN

Anna Di Bene, Oltranti's grandmother, never let anything go to waste in her kitchen in Lucca, Italy. Whenever she cooked chicken, she saved the livers for this delicious antipasto. Spicy red-pepper flakes and salty capers cut through the richness of the topping.

- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, finely chopped
- ½ lb chicken livers, trimmed and patted dry
- ¼ to ½ tsp hot red-pepper flakes
- 3 Tbsp capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped
- ½ cup sweet (red) vermouth
- 1 cup chopped parsley
- 1 sourdough baguette, thinly sliced and toasted
- 1 lemon wedge

► Heat butter and oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium heat until foam subsides, then cook onion, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add livers and cook over medium-high heat until undersides are browned, about 3 minutes. Turn livers over and add red-pepper flakes, capers, and 1 tsp salt. Cook until livers are just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes more. Increase heat to high and add vermouth. Boil, stirring, until slightly thickened and glossy, about 3 minutes. Transfer livers with a slotted spoon to a cutting board, then transfer sauce to a bowl.

► Coarsely chop livers and add to sauce. Season with salt and pepper and gently stir in parsley. Spoon onto toasts and squeeze a little lemon juice over each.

COOKS' NOTES: Liver mixture, without parsley, can be made 1 day ahead and chilled. Reheat, then stir in parsley, before spreading on toasts.

• For a Web-exclusive recipe using leftover capers, go to [gourmet.com/go/morerecipes](http://gourmet.com/go/morerecipes).

## ROAST CHICKEN WITH PANCETTA AND OLIVES

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN START TO FINISH: 1½ HR

Oltranti and his family prepare this dish with rabbit, but it's equally appealing with chicken. Roasted with super-savory pancetta and olives, the garlicky meat stays moist in a shallow bath of white wine.

- 2 chickens (about 3½ lb each), backbones cut out and each chicken cut into 12 pieces (see cooks' note, below)

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ Tbsp chopped thyme
- 1 Tbsp chopped rosemary
- 1 Tbsp fine sea salt
- ½ to 1 tsp hot red-pepper flakes
- 10 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 (¼-inch-thick) slices pancetta, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 24 oil-cured black olives

► Preheat oven to 450°F with rack in middle.

► Toss chicken with oil, thyme, rosemary, sea salt, red-pepper flakes, and 1 tsp pepper, rubbing mixture into chicken.

► Arrange chicken, skin side up, in 1 layer in a 17- by 11-inch 4-sided sheet pan. Scatter garlic and pancetta on top and roast until chicken begins to brown, about 20 minutes. Drizzle wine over chicken and roast 8 minutes more. Scatter olives over chicken and roast until skin is golden brown and chicken is cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes more. Let stand 10 minutes.

COOKS' NOTE: To cut a chicken into 12 pieces, remove wings and cut each breast half into 3 pieces, then separate drumsticks and thighs. Backbones can be used to make chicken stock.

## POLENTA WITH FRANKLIN'S TELEME

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN START TO FINISH: 40 MIN

Oltranti gives this dish a velvety finish with Franklin's Teleme, a soft, tangy cheese made in Northern California. If you can't find it, use a combination of mascarpone and Parmigiano-Reggiano.

- 6 cups cold water
- 1½ cups polenta (not quick-cooking)
- 2 tsp fine sea salt
- ½ stick unsalted butter
- ½ lb Franklin's Teleme cheese (see Kitchen Notebook, page 101, for availability), or ¾ cup mascarpone and ⅓ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

► Stir together water, polenta, and sea salt in a heavy medium saucepan, then bring to a boil, covered. Simmer, uncovered, stirring constantly with a long-handled wooden spoon, until smooth and creamy, about 20 minutes. If mixture starts to tighten and get dry, add more water (up to ½ cup). ► Remove from heat and stir in butter. Pull cheese into pieces and stir into polenta until incorporated. Season with sea salt and pepper.

COOKS' NOTE: For a Web-exclusive recipe using leftover polenta, go to [gourmet.com/go/morerecipes](http://gourmet.com/go/morerecipes).

## BROCCOLI RABE WITH SWEET ITALIAN SAUSAGE

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 30 MIN

No surprises here: The classic combination of bitter greens and sweet sausage is as warming and comforting as the Italian grandmothers who have been making it for generations.

- 3 lb broccoli rabe (about 3 medium bunches), trimmed
- 1½ lb sweet Italian sausage links, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 5 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, chopped

► Cut broccoli rabe into 3-inch-long pieces. Cook in a large pot of boiling salted water (3 Tbsp salt for 6 qt water), uncovered, until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain, then rinse under cold water to stop cooking. Squeeze out excess water from handfuls of broccoli rabe. ►





‘Luccan food is very simple,’ Oltranti says. ‘It’s basic, fresh, and traditional.’ And he keeps it that way, though he’s added a touch of California to some of his family dishes—locally made cheese in his polenta, Meyer lemon juice in his salads. Oltranti still thinks like an Italian when cooking, but his meals are right at home in America.

► Meanwhile, preheat broiler. ► Broil sausage in a 4-sided sheet pan 3 to 4 inches from heat, turning occasionally, until cooked through, about 5 minutes. Keep warm, covered.

► While sausage broils, heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium-high heat until it shimmers, then cook garlic, stirring, until fragrant but not browned, about 1 minute.

► Separate broccoli rabe, then sauté in garlic oil until coated with oil and heated through, about 4 minutes. Stir in sausage.

**COOKS’ NOTE:** Broccoli rabe can be cooked 1 day ahead and chilled.

## FENNEL, FRISÉE, AND ESCAROLE SALAD

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN START TO FINISH: 20 MIN

*This refreshing salad serves as a palate cleanser before dessert. Oltranti updates a traditional Italian-style salad dressing with the modern flavors of California cuisine: Floral Meyer lemon amplifies the acidity of red-wine vinegar in a bright shallot vinaigrette.*

- 3 Tbsp minced shallot
- 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice (preferably Meyer lemon)
- 1 tsp red-wine vinegar, or to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp fine sea salt
- 1 small head escarole ( $\frac{3}{4}$  lb), torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 small head frisée ( $\frac{3}{4}$  lb), torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 small fennel bulb, quartered and thinly sliced or shaved with an adjustable-blade slicer
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fine-quality extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 ( $\frac{1}{2}$ -lb) piece Parmigiano-Reggiano

► Stir together shallot, lemon juice, vinegar, sea salt, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp pepper in a small bowl. Let stand 5 minutes.

► Meanwhile, toss together greens and fennel in a salad bowl.

► Whisk oil into shallot mixture, then toss with salad. Top with shaved parmesan.

## PANETTONE BREAD PUDDING

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 2 HR (INCLUDES STANDING AND COOLING)

*Store-bought panettone is the foundation of this raisin and bread pudding. Because the bread is so eggy, it bakes into an extra-silky custard that contrasts with a generous expanse of buttery golden brown crispness on top. (Using a shallow pan is key.)*

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup golden raisins
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup brandy, heated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 lb panettone, sliced 1 inch thick
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups half-and-half
- 2 Tbsp pure vanilla extract

ACCOMPANIMENT: lightly whipped heavy cream

► Soak raisins in hot brandy 15 minutes, then drain (discard brandy or reserve for making biscotti; recipe follows).

► Meanwhile, butter panettone on both sides and cook in batches in a large heavy skillet over medium heat until golden brown on both sides.

► Whisk together remaining ingredients.

► Tear panettone into bite-size pieces and spread evenly in a buttered 13- by 9-inch baking dish. Scatter raisins over top, then pour in egg mixture. Let stand 30 minutes.

► Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle.

► Bake until pudding is golden and just set, 35 to 40 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**COOKS’ NOTE:** Bread pudding can be made 2 days ahead and chilled. Reheat before serving.

• For a Web-exclusive recipe using leftover golden raisins, go to [gourmet.com/go/morerecipes](http://gourmet.com/go/morerecipes).

## NONNA’S BISCOTTI

MAKES ABOUT 42 COOKIES

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN START TO FINISH: 2½ HR (INCLUDES COOLING)

*Oltranti doesn’t consider himself a baker, but he should. We all agree that his biscotti are among the best we’ve had. Starting with a lot of almonds in a sticky dough, his recipe produces crunchy cookies that taste even better a day or two later—if they last that long.*

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 stick unsalted butter, melted
- 3 Tbsp brandy
- 2 tsp pure almond extract
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup whole almonds with skin, lightly toasted (see Tips, page 106), cooled, and coarsely chopped
- 3 large eggs
- $2\frac{3}{4}$  cups all-purpose flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt

► Stir together sugar, butter, brandy, and extracts in a large bowl, then stir in almonds and eggs. Stir in flour, baking powder, and salt until just combined.

► Chill dough, covered, 30 minutes.

► Preheat oven to 350°F with rack in middle.

► Using moistened hands, halve dough and form 2 (16- by 2-inch) loaves on an ungreased large baking sheet.

► Bake until pale golden, about 30 minutes. Carefully transfer loaves to a rack and cool 15 minutes.

► Cut loaves into  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch slices with a serrated knife.

► Arrange biscotti, with a cut side down, on a clean baking sheet and bake until golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer to rack to cool completely.

**COOKS’ NOTE:** Biscotti improve in flavor if made 1 to 2 days ahead. Keep in an airtight container at room temperature. ■