



With marble-topped tables and hand-made linens, my grandma's house was a little slice of Italy, and as often as possible, my extended family was beckoned for dinner... but this was no ordinary dinner. I used to enjoy inviting my non-Italian friends so I could watch Grandma guilt them into eating so much food they thought they would explode. For her, it was a way of life. She was the center of attention by preparing the greatest meal of anyone's life, but she was humble; when we complimented her, she

would always say the food was only "okay" or she would grumble that something didn't turn out the way she wanted. Trust me. She was an expert cook, and everything was always delicious.

Pizza Rustica is just about my favorite of Grandma's dishes. If you haven't already peeked, take a look at the recipe. It's a sweet pastry (pasta frolla) filled with ricotta, mozzarella and pecorino Romano cheese (no parmigiano reggiano for my grandma), Italian and American ham, prosciutto and mortadella... tutti buoni Italiano. "Everything good Italian," as my grandma would say.

I could ramble on and on about growing up in this special world, but that would keep you from enjoying this great dish. So put down the magazine, and get cooking!

—Frank Isganitis, *The LimeRock Inn, Rockland, ME*

Memories with Grandma's Pizza Rustica

The LimeRock Inn's savory Pizza Rustica is famous on Rockland, ME's Parade of Pies each January

See page 96 for more on the Inn to Inn Pie Tour.

This quiche-like pork and cheese pie may be served while still warm, or at room temperature, but not piping hot. Servings: 6-8

The sweet egg pastry (pasta frolla):

- 2 cups flour
- 2 egg yolks
- A tiny pinch salt
- ½ cup butter cut into small pieces
- 3 tbsp ice water
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar

Mix all ingredients, then knead them together briefly, preferably on a cold surface such as marble. When well-amalgamated into a compact dough, wrap the dough in wax paper and put in refrigerator for at least one hour but not more than 4-5.

(If you have a food processor, all the mixing and kneading can be done in it. Put all ingredients into the beaker and spin the blade on and off until balls of dough form. When you take the dough out of the processor, shape it into a single ball before wrapping and refrigerating it.)

The filling:

- 2 egg yolks
- ¾ lb whole milk ricotta
- ¼ lb prosciutto or country ham, salami or boiled ham, chunked
- ¼ lb mortadella, chunked
- ¼ lb whole milk mozzarella cut in small pieces
- 2 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Butter to grease pan
- Chilled sweet egg pastry

Preheat oven to 375°

1. Beat egg yolks briefly with a whisk.
2. Add ricotta, and beat until rather creamy.
3. Add chopped meats, mozzarella, grated cheese, a liberal amount of salt, and several grindings of pepper. Mix all ingredients roughly.

4. Thickly grease the inside of an 8" round souffle or baking dish with butter.

5. Cut off approximately 1/3 of the pastry dough. Over a sheet of kitchen parchment, roll it into a round, large enough to line the bottom and partly up the sides of the baking dish. Turn the dough over into the dish, peeling the sheet away from the dough. Fit the dough into the bottom of the dish, spreading it evenly.

6. Cut another third of the dough, and, over parchment, roll into rectangular strips as wide as the baking dish is deep. With them, line the sides of the dish. Overlap where necessary; if there are gaps, fill them by pressing little bits of dough where the sides meet the bottom to create a tightly sealed seam.

7. Pour all the filling from the bowl into the dish. Press it lightly to force out any air bubbles trapped in it.

8. Roll out the rest of the dough into a disk large enough to cover the top of the pizza. Place it over the filling, and press its edges tightly against the dough lining the sides of the dish, making a tight seal. Trim away the dough along the sides wherever it comes up higher than ½" above the top of the pizza; fold the rest of it down. Smooth out all rough connections with a moistened fingertip.

9. Place in the upper level of the oven. Bake for 45 minutes, until the top has turned a light golden brown. Do not open the oven door during this time. If the crust requires a little more browning, turn the thermostat to 400°, and bake for another 6 to 8 minutes.

10. When cool enough to handle, unmold the pizza by inverting it on a plate. It can also be served from the dish.

Frank Isganitis, a recovering banker, is co-owner and chef at Rockland's LimeRock Inn.