

FEATURED CHEF

Mario Batali

Very tasty!

THE ITALIANS brought us Michelangelo, Galileo and Pavarotti, and a unique approach to food, says chef Mario Batali. His latest cookbook, *Molto Gusto: Easy Italian Cooking* (Ecco, 2010, available in select Costcos and online at Costco.com), celebrates the traditional Italian meal.

Q: Many Americans are discovering a diet with less meat and more vegetables. But you're saying this is nothing new to the Italians. Can you elaborate?

A: On the traditional Italian table, farming, foraging and gardening have always yielded the bulk of the food in the daily diet, and the occasional pig, chicken or cow was the exception to the rule. In my new book, most of the protein comes from small portions of cured meats, cheeses and grains, while the bulk of the meal is plant-based.

Mario Batali
MELANIE DUNEA

Q: So what are the benefits of following this eating plan?

A: The idea is to enjoy a kind of happy, passing sense of content and fullness not associated with the consumption of a huge steak or chop. A balanced meal creates energy for our constantly moving lives and our brains, and our laughing and singing and dancing and playing.

Q: You've said that, to Italians, a meal is more than just food. What is it?

A: Italians feel that it's their birthright to have something homemade and delicious every meal. The meal is not only about food, but about maintaining the crucial connection between family members as we all get even busier than we thought possible. A simple and perfect pasta night once or twice a week bring families together around delicious tastes. [E]

Penne alla Puttanesca

Courtesy of *Molto Gusto*, by Mario Batali

- 8 to 10 salt-packed anchovy fillets
- Kosher salt
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ medium red onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1½ cups Mario Batali Marinara Sauce or similar sauce
- 1½ to 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes
- 1 pound penne
- 2 tablespoons salt-packed capers, rinsed and soaked overnight in cold water (change the water frequently)
- ⅓ cup pitted Gaeta olives, coarsely chopped
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped fresh Italian parsley
- Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Put the anchovies in a small bowl and set it in the sink under a light stream of cold running water for 20 minutes. Drain the anchovies, pat dry and coarsely chop them.

Bring 6 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot and add 3 tablespoons kosher salt. Meanwhile, combine the olive oil, onion, garlic and anchovies in another large pot and cook over medium heat, stirring, until the onion is lightly browned and the anchovies have broken down, about 5 minutes. Add the marinara sauce and



QUENTIN BACON

red pepper flakes, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Drop the pasta into the boiling water and cook until just al dente. Drain, reserving ¾ cup of the pasta water.

Add the pasta and the reserved pasta water to the pasta sauce mixture; stir and toss over medium heat until the pasta is well coated. Stir in the capers, olives and parsley, and serve immediately, with Parmigiano-Reggiano on the side. Makes 6 servings. [E]

Member
RECIPE

Avid Costco shopper Katie Goodman from New Mexico shares her recipes at www.goodlifeeats.com.

Quinoa Taco Salad

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 tablespoon Kirkland Signature™ Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ½ teaspoons cumin
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- 1 to 2 teaspoons chili powder, depending on heat preferences
- Dash cayenne pepper
- Half each red, green and yellow bell peppers, chopped
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained
- ¾ cup diced tomatoes (fresh or canned)
- 2 limes
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 6 to 8 ounces baby spinach
- 1 bunch cilantro
- ⅓ cup cheddar or feta cheese
- 1 avocado, diced

Cook the quinoa according to package instructions.

Heat olive oil in a sauté pan over medium-high heat; add onion and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, until translucent and tender. Add garlic, cumin, oregano, chili powder, cayenne and peppers; sauté an additional 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in the black beans, tomatoes and the juice of 1 lime. Stir in quinoa. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Chill.

Roughly cut baby spinach into strips. Remove about 1 cup of cilantro leaves from the bunch, rinse and pat dry, and toss with the spinach. Divide spinach and cilantro mixture evenly among 4 salad plates. Top each plate with a scoop of the quinoa salad. Top each salad with your choice of cheese and diced avocado. Cut the remaining lime into slices to garnish the plates. Makes 4 servings. [E]

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