



! ITALY

Welcome to Italy!

Theme Overview: From authentic old-world classics to recipes inspired by Italian-American cooking, Italian dishes are dinnertime favorites in many American homes. Italian cuisine is more than just pasta, it can include pizza, chicken dishes, vegetables, soups, desserts and more. This cuisine dates back as far as the 4th century B.C. Italian recipes can be complex with creamy sauce and lots of ingredients or simple dishes with fresh meats and vegetables.

Food allergies: Recipes can be modified to accommodate food allergies and preferences. The recipes included in Food, Fun, 4-H are intended to introduce new recipes and food combinations to participants.

Reporting: To receive the March Food, Fun, 4-H meal kit, we need you to report back about your February experience. Reporting is easy and will take less than 5 minutes. Visit the link below to complete a brief survey by **March 13, 2025**. The survey will ask you to provide:

- 1 photo preparing one of the dishes
- 1 photo of family meal

Respond to the following statements about this month's theme, activities and recipes:

- "I like..."
- "I wish..."
- "I wonder..."

Reporting survey can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/FF4HSurvey>



Dinner Conversation Topics:

- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?
- What is one thing you are grateful for today?
- If you could travel back in time, where would you go?
- If you could eat just one food every day for a month and nothing else, what would it be?

Family Challenge:

- Go a day without any family member using their cell phone (If you must use your phone during the day, don't use it after 6 p.m.)
- Go on a family walk
- Visit a museum or explore a nearby town (Some museums are showing virtual tours!)
- No phones during dinner
- Try at least one bite of everything

IN Info: We have lots of celebrations here in the United States, and invitations are a big part of those celebrations! Create a brochure, card or invitation related to a 4-H celebration. Make sure to think about who, what, when, where and why information for your invitation. This could be an Arts & Crafts, Computer, or Do Your Own Thing project. You can also use a topic or recipe from this kit for a foods poster or demonstration. Join 4-H today and use your new found knowledge of Food Preparation! Additional resources for 4-H Enrollment and the Foods Project can be found at: bit.ly/LCFoodFun4H.

Civic Engagement:

It is important for 4-H members to give back to their communities. This month, try these ideas to show your community you care.

- Volunteer at a local food pantry. Consider taking donations of non-perishable food items like cans of vegetables with you to donate.
- Write and deliver thank you cards to healthcare workers in your community.
- Start your own community service project and send us a picture of you completing the project.

Let's Learn About Italy!

Location:

Italy is a country located in southern Europe on the Apennine Peninsula.

Distance from Indianapolis:

If you traveled from Indianapolis (Indiana's state capitol) to Rome (Italy's state capitol), you would fly 4,854 miles over the Atlantic Ocean. This amounts to more than 10 hours by airplane!

Major Landmark:

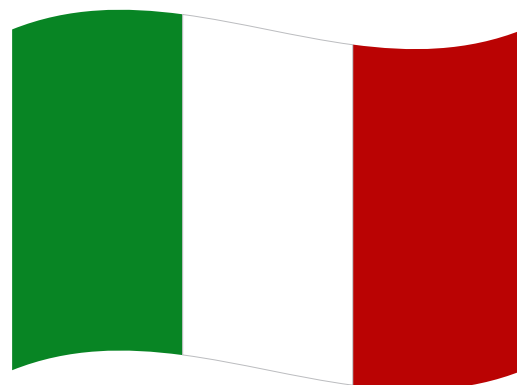
One of Italy's must-see landmarks that attracts tourists from around the world is the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Located in Pisa, the Tower of Pisa is a 192-foot tower distinguishable by its 4-degree lean to the south. The tower's construction began in 1173 and the soft consistency of the ground caused foundational issues from the start — resulting in the lean. During the tower's construction and even after its completion, many efforts have been made to correct the lean and stabilize the tower. However, the Tower of Pisa will lean always.

Holiday Celebration:

In Florence, Notte Bianca (which means White Night) is celebrated on April 30. This is the celebration of spring time and residents and visitors stay up all night. Shops and restaurants stay open late and there is a street fair with live music and vendors.

Languages Spoken:

The national language of Italy is Italian. On a global scale, between approximately 85 million people speak Italian as their first language.



The Flag of Italy



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Cook Like an Expert

Be Prepared

- Get permission from an adult.
- Keep long hair pulled back and remove dangling jewelry.
- Read the recipe all the way through and make sure you have enough time.
- Make sure you have all ingredients and equipment on hand.
- Gather everything together in one place and prepare all the ingredients.
- Follow the recipe step by step. Don't skip around or you could leave something out.
- Always allow an oven to preheat according to the recipe you are using before you put the dish in.
- Turn the oven off as soon as you remove your dish.

Be Clean

- Always wash your hands before you start preparing and eating food.
- Always wash your hands before and after touching raw meat or eggs.
- Sanitize sink and counter space before and after you cook.
- Use clean utensils when mixing and scooping ingredients to prevent cross contamination.
- Use a clean spoon every time you taste a dish. Never put your finger in foods.
- Use a separate cutting board and knife for meats and a different cutting board and knife for fresh fruits, vegetables, and ready-to-eat foods.

Be Safe

- Learn good techniques for using a chef's knife and other kitchen equipment.
- Beware of hot pans. Turn pot handles away from the edge of the stove. Remove lid by tilting the top away from you so that the pot lid shields the steam.
- Microwave steam is hot, so be every careful when removing plastic wraps or lids.
- Clean up spills when they happen to avoid slippery surfaces.
- Clean your knives separately. Do not put knives in the dishwasher.

Suggested Cooking Equipment:

Blender

Knives

Cutting board

Microwave-safe mixing bowls

Measuring spoons

Measuring cups (dry & liquid)

Colander

Grater

Whisk or fork

Vegetable brush & peeler

Saucepan with lid

Mixing spoon

Spatula

Skillet with lid

Muffin pan

Can opener

Baking sheet

Baking dish

Oven mitts

And most of all, have fun!

How to Measure Ingredients

Dry ingredients like flour: Lightly spoon ingredients into a dry measuring cup until it is heaped over the top. Level off with a flat edge.

Liquids: Place the liquid measuring cup on a flat surface. Fill to correct measurement. Bend down so you check the amount at eye level.

Sticky ingredients like peanut butter or honey: Use dry measuring cups and pack down to remove air pockets. Scrape all ingredients out into mixing bowl.

Spices: Usually needed in small amounts. Dip measuring spoon in the spice or ingredient container. Shake to level or use a flat edge if possible

T = tbsp = tablespoon

t = tsp = teaspoon

oz = ounce

c = cup

lb = pound

Recipe Reading 101

Circle all the words you know are cooking terms and put a box around anything you are not familiar with.

Simple Spaghetti Sauce

Ingredients:

1 tbsp canola oil
1 c onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 lb lean ground beef
16 ounces canned low-sodium tomato sauce
1 1/2 c water
1 tsp dried basil
1 tsp dried parsley
1/4 tsp ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat and add onion and garlic. Saute until translucent. Remove from pan and set aside.
2. Place the ground beef in skillet and cook over medium-high heat. Using a spoon, break up the ground beef into equally-sized pieces as it cooks. This ensures that all the meat cooks evenly.
3. Drain the browned beef. Add in the sautéed onion and garlic to the skillet.
4. Stir in remaining ingredients.
5. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 3 minutes.
6. Serve over cooked spaghetti pasta.

Source:

Virginia Cooperative Extension. (2017). Teen Cuisine Curriculum. Retrieved from <https://ext.vt.edu/4h-youth/healthy-living.html>



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Food and Nutrition in Italy

What produce is in season during the month of May in Italy?

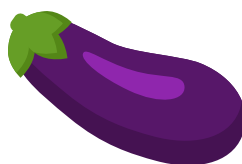
Vegetables:



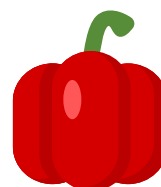
Artichoke



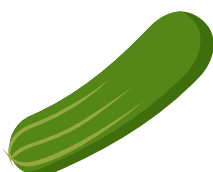
Asparagus



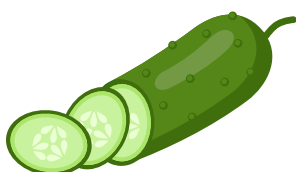
Aubergine



Bell Pepper



Zucchini



Cucumber

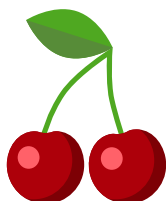


Green Bean



Pea

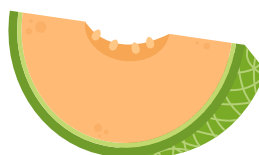
Fruits:



Cherry




Lemon



Melon



Strawberry



Italy does not have a Food Guide Pyramid or MyPlate like the United States. Most European countries have developed food-based dietary guidelines or healthy food recommendations for their populations. They provide “advice on foods, food groups and dietary patterns to provide the required nutrients to the general public to promote overall health and prevent chronic diseases.”

Traditionally, advice was only given on food consumption, but some have evolved to also include advice on food safety and lifestyle (e.g. physical activity or social settings). More recently, many countries have added advice on sustainability, where they advise choosing local, seasonal, or otherwise sustainably-sourced foods.

Italy’s recommendations are very similar to ours. The recommendations cover all age groups from infants to the elderly. There is also a focus on special requirements for people who practice sports, as well as on providing recommendations for people at increased risk of obesity and most common non-communicable chronic diseases.

Italy’s 12 recommendations have been divided into four blocks. The first block is related to balance (recommendation 1). The second is dedicated to foods for which consumption needs to be increased, such as fruits and vegetables (recommendations 2-4). The third concerns critical foods in the current diet and for which consumption should be reduced, such as fat, salt and sugar (recommendations 5-7). And the last block is dedicated to ensuring a varied, safe, healthy and sustainable diet (recommendations 8-12).

Italy’s 12 Recommendations:

1. Keep your weight under control and always be active
2. Eat more fruits and vegetables
3. Eat more whole grains and legumes
4. Drink abundant water every day
5. Fats: select which ones and limit the quantity
6. Sugar, sweets and sugar sweetened beverages: less is better
7. Salt: less is better (but iodized)
8. Enjoy a variety of food choices
9. Follow special recommendations for target groups
10. Be careful of dieting and misuse of dietary supplements
11. Food safety depends also on you
12. Select a sustainable diet

Sources:

European Food Information Council. (2020). Food Pyramids, Plates and Guides: Building a Balanced Diet. Retrieved from <https://www.eufic.org/en/healthy-living/article/food-pyramids-plates-and-guides-building-a-balanced-diet>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2018). Food-Based Dietary Guidelines. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/italy/en/>



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The contents of this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of or endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

