

Delightful Traditional And Regional Dishes From Italy

(NAPSA)—Lovers of *la cucina Italiana* may be delighted to discover that the most delectable Italian cooking marries a medley of regional styles from nearly 100 provinces within Italy's 20 regions.

To celebrate this delicious variety, the Olive Garden Italian Restaurant draws from the flavors and cooking styles of Italy's varied regions in delivering the genuine Italian dining experience.

In fact, the staples of a typical Italian kitchen—olive oil, fresh herbs, garlic and vegetables—serve as basic ingredients for many of Olive Garden's new menu items, including these appetizers:

- **Bruschetta:** A Tuscan favorite that is made with Roma tomatoes tossed with sun-dried tomatoes to enhance sweetness and flavor; fresh basil and garlic. It's served with toasted *ciabatta*, a slipper-shaped bread also found in Tuscany.

- **Tomato & Mozzarella Caprese:** This traditional Italian appetizer is layered with sliced vine-ripened tomatoes (drizzled with balsamic vinegar), fresh basil leaves, fresh mozzarella, then seasoned with extra-virgin olive oil, crushed black pepper and sea salt.

New entrées are bursting with flavorful fresh vegetables, seasoned with Italian herbs and enhanced with classically Italian sauces:

- **Spaghetti delle Rocca:** This light dish originates in Southern Italy, but variations are enjoyed throughout the country. It features a savory tomato sauce with vine-ripened cherry tomatoes, olives, mushrooms, onions, basil and garlic tossed with spaghetti.

- **Mediterranean Shrimp Scampi:** From Venice and areas around the Adriatic Sea comes this dish with large sautéed shrimp, fresh, vine-ripened cherry tomatoes, olives and white wine served over linguine.

- **Mixed Grill:** A mainstay throughout the Italian countryside, this entrée is comparable to *spiedino misto* found on most menus in the region of Tuscany. Mixed Grill is skewers of chicken and Italian sausage served with roasted potatoes and seasonal veg-



A favorite throughout the Italian countryside, Mixed Grill consists of skewers of chicken and sausage served with roasted potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

etables. The chicken is marinated with olive oil, fresh lemon juice, garlic and rosemary; the sausage is served over a rosemary demi-glace.

Reminiscent of the sweets found in an Italian *pasticcERIA*, Olive Garden's new desserts are light and traditional:

- **Lemon Cream Cake:** A delicate white cake with a subtle whipped lemon filling.

- **Berries & Zabaione:** Strawberries and blueberries topped with a light Marsala custard.

Throughout the year, Olive Garden sends culinary managers to its own Culinary Institute of Tuscany to enhance their knowledge of traditional Italian cooking, bringing the genuine Italian dining experience to its guest. To date more than 200 managers have trained there and have been immersed in the food, wine and culture of Italy.

Bring the freshness and flavor of Italy to your dinner table with this recipe for Mixed Grill:

Olive Garden's Mixed Grill

"Spiedino misto (skewered mix), the traditional style of skewering chicken and sausage, is a mainstay in Italy," says Giacomo Ciabattini, Olive Garden executive chef and director of culinary development. "This favorite summertime dish can be found in restaurants throughout the Italian countryside."

Olive Garden's Mixed Grill is skewers of grilled chicken and Italian sausage served with roasted potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

**Wine Pairing
Recommendation: Ruffino
Aziانو Chianti Classico**

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs skinless boneless chicken breast (4 oz each)
- 1 lb Italian sausage links, mild
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 1 bag bamboo skewers, soaked in water

Marinade:

- 2 tbsps Colavita pepper oil
- 2 tbsps chopped fresh rosemary
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 bay leaves broken into pieces
- 2 large garlic cloves pressed

Directions:

- * Cut each piece of chicken in half length-wise.

- * Thread each chicken piece onto a skewer; add a cherry tomato to the end of each skewer.

- * For chicken marinade, in a large baking dish mix pepper oil, rosemary, lemon juice, salt, bay leaves and pressed garlic.

- * Place each chicken skewer in the marinade and marinate for at least three hours.

- * Bake sausage at 350° F for 20 minutes. Cut each link into three pieces; set aside.

- * Cook chicken on grill until internal temperature reaches 165° F or cook in oven at 350° F until internal temperature reaches 165° F.

- * Skewer sausage and place on hot grill until internal temperature reaches 155° F or cook in oven at 350° F until internal temperature reaches 155° F.

- * When cooked completely, place on a large platter, garnish with rosemary sprigs, lemon halves and any remaining cherry tomatoes.

- * Serves four

For more information, visit www.olivegarden.com.