

International Cooking

Italian Influences In The American Cucina

(NAPSA)—The romanticism of the Italian culture has found its way into American society, leaving a bit of Italian elegance everywhere you go. The mysteriousness and excitement of the Italian culture continues to be a never-ending topic of discussion and always an interest to most Americans. Little slices of Italy are seen in many neighborhoods throughout the U.S. offering the food, sounds and culture of a country strong in heritage.

Influences of the countryside, fashion, art and history are all important attributes of this dynamic culture; however, it is the rich and mouthwatering gastronomy of Italy that stands in the forefront of the minds of most Americans. Whether it be with mounds of pasta such as fettuccine and ziti topped with rich, thick red and white sauces or large dessert platters adorned with cannoli and tiramisu, food is the essence of entertaining, bringing together friends and family. One of the best ways to celebrate and share the kindness and comfort of loved ones is over a delicious meal using the most simple or elaborate recipes, capturing the essence of Italy.

When pulling together a traditional Italian dish at home like the always-popular bruschetta recipe, why not strengthen its flavor with the satisfying taste of S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water or Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water. S.Pellegrino, imported from the Italian Alps in the province of Bergamo, and Acqua Panna from the Apennine mountains in Tuscany, are the perfect meal accompaniment, creating a complete Italian experi-



Italian food has a long history in American cuisine.

ence by celebrating the heritage, romanticism and flavors of a country rich in history.

Bruschetta with Fresh Tomatoes and Basil Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1½ lbs ripe juicy tomatoes**
- 1 Loaf of Italian bread**
- 1 Whole garlic clove minced**
- ¼ c loosely packed fresh oregano or fresh basil**
- To taste—salt and pepper (optional)**
- ½ c extra virgin olive oil**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Slice Italian bread into slender slices. Spread olive oil on top of bread slices. Place bread slices in oven for 5-10 minutes or until lightly browned. While bread is toasting, rinse and dry ripe tomatoes. Slice tomatoes and place in bowl. Add garlic, basil and olive oil to tomatoes and mix together. Season with salt and pepper. Place bread slices equally apart on a large serving platter and spoon tomato mixture over each bread slice. Sprinkle additional basil over the top and serve.