



*Annalisa Russo*

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Dear Reader,

It is said there is a little of every author in everything they write.

I was raised in a close, Italian family of five siblings, much like the Cavelli family in my Cavelli Angel Saga quartet. Food was always at the center, with my sainted grandmother cooking for the nine of us. Most of the dishes mentioned in my books are hers. She came to this country as a new bride, and to make ends meet, she and my grandfather took in boarders – at times, she had up to six other men to cook for. And, in order to become a citizen of the United States, my grandfather enlisted in the army during WWI where, like many other Italians, was assigned to the mess halls where he learned to cook and bake.

Many of the recipes here deal with traditions I grew up with – bagna cauda on New Year’s Eve, ravioli for Christmas, hearty minestrone when you were sick. Every time I cook one of the recipes, I love that my kitchen fills with scents that remind me of my grandmother’s kitchen. My grandfather also had a gigantic garden full of fresh vegetables, berry bushes, and a large yard with myriad fruit trees. I guess I get my green thumb from him.

So, if you try any of the recipes, give a thought to Geni Bianchi Lenci and Daliso Lenci, my wonderful grandparents. Nonno and Nonna. I miss them.

*Annalisa*

INTRODUCTION



## UNCLE BRUNO'S BAGNA CÀUDA

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 head of garlic chopped finely (or less)</li><li>• 1/3 to 1/4 lb. of butter</li><li>• 1/4 C olive oil</li><li>• 1 can of anchovies (salted); wash off salt</li><li>• 1/4 C heavy cream</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blend oil, butter, anchovies and garlic in processor until smooth. Transfer oil mixture to a heavy skillet, low heat. Cook 15 minutes, stirring, occasionally.</li><li>• Add 1/4 C (or more) of heavy cream, heat but don't boil</li><li>• Serve with:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Endive</li><li>Celery</li><li>Red or green sweet peppers</li><li>Cabbage</li><li>Cooked cauliflower</li><li>(Any desired raw vegetables)</li><li>Italian bread</li></ul></li></ul>

APPETIZER

**Pronounced BAH/nyah  
COW/dah, this recipe is  
from the Old Country.  
Traditionally, Uncle Bruno  
made this appetizer on New  
Year's Eve.**



## DOMINIC CAVELLI'S MINESTRONE

### Directions

- Salt pork – chop and fry slowly
- Add hot water
- Add chopped onions, carrots, cabbage, celery, and canned tomatoes
- Season with pepper (check for salt and add if necessary)
- Cook 2 hours adding kidney beans and digitali pasta in last ½ hour

## DOMINIC CAVELLI'S HAM & BEAN SOUP

- Soak navy beans overnight, drain
- Boil beans with leftover ham bone
- Add onion, garlic, carrot, pepper (salt if needed)
- Simmer three hours
- Flake ham off the bone and chop
- Mash beans slightly before serving to thicken the soup

*Most of Dominic's recipes do not have the quantity of ingredients. He always said the only necessary ingredient was love, and the soup would come out fine.*

SOUPS





## BRACCIOLE [BRA'ZHUL]

### Directions

- 1 piece thin-cut round steak, bone in (the butcher can do this for you)
- Sprinkle steak heavily with garlic powder, oregano, parsley (fresh or dried flakes), grated Romano cheese, salt, and pepper
- Roll from bone end, tie with kitchen twine or pin together and brown the roll in 2T butter
- Add 2 cans tomato paste, 2 cans of sauce, 2 paste cans of water,
- Add more salt and pepper to taste, garlic powder, and oregano
- Bring up heat, and then lower to simmer for 2 hours
- Slice the roll and serve with your spaghetti



ENTREES

This is Gabrielle Cavelli's recipe, the recipe he used to entice Charity. She often said she married him for the recipe.

## Fried Chicken

Gwen, a character introduced in *An Angel's Redemption*, has cooked for the Cavelli family at Bellaluna for years. She rules the kitchen with her famous fried chicken and a wicked wooden spoon. After much prodding, she agreed to share her recipe here, *in her own way*.



Gwen: *"Dis recipe is handed on down ta me by ma blessed Mama. Da main ingredient, 'sides chicken, is a whole lotta love":*

*"Now you gots ta brine this ole chicken overnight":*

½ gallon cold water	1 smashed clove garlic
juice of 1 lemon	½ cup Kosher salt
some black peppercorns	¼ cup honey
1 rosemary sprig	1-2 bay leaves
1 bunch thyme	

*"Get yoself a big ole black iron skillet. I got mine from my Mama. Das the best. Drain yo' chicken and pat 'til it's pretty dry. Den dredge dat chicken in":*

1 ½ cup flour	1 t salt
1 ½ t garlic powder	1 t pepper

*"Fill yo skillet with vegetable oil so it be 1/2 up da side of yo' chicken. Fry it up, over medium heat – 8-10 minutes each side fo white meat, an' 12-15 minutes fo dark meat. Only turn dat chicken one time, so don't fuss too much. You modern folks can use one of dose fancy thermometers if yo' not feeling too sure 'bout things – 160°. Den drain dat chicken on some butcher paper an' serve up hot or cold. My boy, Theo, an' dose Cavelli boys say it's da best. Ah guess it is."*

## RAVIOLI WITH SAUCE – RAVIOLI FILLING

Directions:

- Cut 1 loaf of dried Italian bread into small cubes
- Heat 6 cups water with 6 beef bouillon cubes
- Moisten bread with hot bouillon water and mix until fluffy
- Brown 1.5 lbs. ground round in 2T butter
- Sautee ½ cup parsley in 1T butter and add to beef
- Add beef/parsley mixture to bread and mix
- Season with 1T salt, ½t pepper, ½t oregano
- Let mixture cool before adding 4 well-beaten eggs
- Add 4T grated parmesan cheese
- Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary



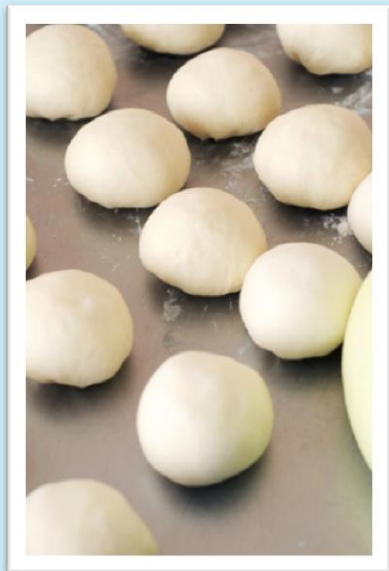
This is Maryann McBride Cavelli's recipe as taught to her by her husband, Dominic, a recipe he brought from the Old Country for the Cavelli Christmas celebrations.



## RAVIOLI DOUGH

### Ingredients

- 10 C all purpose or semolina flour
- 10 beaten eggs – do separately
- 10 t olive oil
- 10 pinches of salt
- On a marble board or counter top: Mix each batch, one cup of flour at a time – each cup of flour makes eight to ten ravioli



### Directions

- Drop one cup of flour in a pile on a lightly floured board
- Make a well in the center of the pile
- Pour 1 beaten egg in the well
- Add 1 t olive oil to the well
- Add a pinch of salt
- Using a fork, start to incorporate the wet mixture into the flour
- Continue until it forms a ball (use fingers and/or a scraper to help press the flour into a ball)
- Knead a few times
- Set aside to rest in saran wrap until 10 balls are done.
- After the dough rests, roll out each section of dough to 1/8 thick; dough may be rolled out with a ravioli press so it forms a rectangle about 4 x 12)

## RAVIOLI ASSEMBLY

### Directions:

- On one side of the rolled out dough, place 1 T piles of filling leaving a 1" space between; (space so you are able to make 8-10 ravioli per rectangle)
- Fold over the dough to cover the filling mixture
- Press between the filling with fingers and cut around them with a ravioli cutter forming a square with a fold on one side
- With a floured fork, press around the 3 open sides with fork prongs to seal (try not to puncture the ravioli package with the prongs)

Ravioli can be frozen after they sit out for a while (place on floured cloth and turn over occasionally), or cooked immediately. Cook frozen ravioli by placing them in boiling water then lower to a simmer for 20 minutes (do not salt the water); cook fresh ravioli the same way for 30 minutes; drop ravioli carefully into water as not to break any of them open.

To serve, drain well and cover with sauce. (Recipe follows) Sprinkle with additional Parmesan cheese.



## RAVIOLI SAUCE

Directions:

- Fry 3 pork steaks in small amount of olive oil, fry well; set aside
- Add 1 lb. hamburger to the pan and brown
- Add 1 medium chopped onion
- Add 1 stick of chopped celery, sauté until softened
- Add 1 can of peeled tomatoes broken up
- Add 2 cans of tomato paste
- Add 1 can tomato sauce
- Add 4 paste cans full of water
- Return pork steaks to pan
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Simmer 2 hours



## SPAGHETTI

### . Ingredients

- . 1 lb. hamburger
- . 1 large onion chopped
- . 1 large clove of garlic  
. chopped
- . 2 cans tomato paste
- . 2 cans tomato sauce
- . 2 paste cans of water (more  
or less if you like a thick or  
thinner sauce)
- . 1 T Oregano (or more)
- . Salt and Pepper to taste

### . Directions

- . Brown hamburger in large  
sauce pan
- . Add onions and garlic and  
sauté until soft
- . Add cans of tomatoes and  
water; stir until well mixed
- . Add seasoning
- . Cover, bring up heat, and then  
lower to simmer for 1 ½ to 2  
hours
- . Check seasonings as sauce  
cooks and add salt, pepper,  
and oregano (or water) as  
needed



This Cavelli style meat sauce is actually a Geni Bianchi recipe from the Old Country as a new bride, and one of any Italian's go-to recipes

My grandparents both came from a small village, Segromingo in Monte, in the hills of Tuscany. Northern Italians were often called “polentoni” because they ate so much polenta, a cornmeal base topped with a tomato sauce and some type of meat. I have had polenta with sausage, pheasant, rabbit, and even black bird. But for this recipe, let’s stick with Italian sausage.

## POLENTA

### Directions:

- Use 1 scant part polenta to 4 parts water (or chicken stock)
- Bring water and salt to a boil in a large saucepan; pour in polenta, whisking constantly until completely stirred and there are no lumps.
- Reduce heat and simmer, whisk often, until polenta thickens, about 5 minutes. Add water if it gets too thick. Cover and cook for 30 minutes, whisk every 5. When too thick to whisk, stir with a wooden spoon.
- Turn off heat and gently stir in 2 tablespoons butter until partially melted; optional: mix in ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano until melted.
- Cover and let stand a few minutes; transfer to a platter or wooden cutting board. Scoop onto plates and top with sauce and meat.

### For Sauce:

- Cut 1 lb. Italian sausage (mild or hot) into 6” links and brown in large skillet; prick sausage as it cooks so it flavors the sauce.
- Remove sausage from pan. Add 2 - 8 oz. cans of tomato paste and 4 paste cans of water. Stir until well blended
- Return sausage to pan and bring to a boil. Lower to simmer for 1 ½ hours.

*Polenta is also great the next day. Leftovers can be sliced thickly and grilled or sautéed. Serve with sauce.*

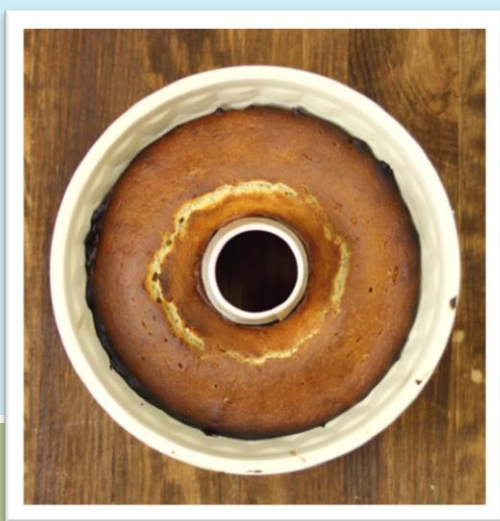




## BUCCALATA (POUND CAKE)

Ingredients:	Directions
. ½ C Spry shortening	. Cream the Spry and sugar well
. 1 ½ C sugar	. Add beaten eggs reserving 1 T
. 3 eggs well beaten	. Add alternately: the flour/baking powder mixture with the milk
. 3 C sifted flour	. Beat well with a wooden spoon
. 3 t baking powder	. Add either set of seasoning
. 1 C whole milk	. Grease and flour a Bundt pan (Nonna Cavelli used a smooth one)
1T anise seeds and 1t lemon extract OR 1 small jar Maraschino cherries chopped and 1t vanilla	. Bake for 10 min at 400°, Lower temperature to 350° and continue to bake for 45 more minutes
	. Remove from oven 10 minutes before done cooking and baste with the reserved beaten egg then finish cooking; let cool completely before unmolding

DESSERTS



*Great grandmother Cavelli would make this cake for adult company using anise seeds and lemon extract and another using Maraschino cherries and vanilla for the children.*

## PUMPKIN PIE

Ingredients:	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 eggs beaten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix ingredients together, in order</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 C pumpkin (which is 1 large can of pumpkin puree; NOT pumpkin <i>pie</i> puree)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pour into prepared crusts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 1/2 C sugar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bake for 15 minutes at 425°</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 t salt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower temperature to 350° for 45 additional minutes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 t pumpkin pie spice</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 cans Milnot (13oz. cans) – don't substitute anything else for Milnot, you can still buy it at most grocery stores</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your own pie crust recipe or store bought</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes two 9" pies</li> </ul>	

This is Aunt Anna Promesly's foolproof pumpkin pie recipe, Meg Cavelli's contribution for Thanksgiving dinner.



## FAITH CAVELLI'S RUM CAKE

Ingredients:	Directions
. 1 box yellow cake mix	. Beat the first 6 ingredients well for 2 minutes
. 1 box instant vanilla pudding	. Grease a Bundt pan and pour chopped nuts in the bottom
. 4 eggs	. Pour in batter and bake at 325° for 1 hour
. ½ C water	. Let cake cool 1 hour before unmolding onto a serving platter; drizzle with Rum Sauce
. ½ C oil	
. ½ C white rum	
. ½ C chopped walnuts	



### Rum Sauce:

½ C water

1 C sugar

¼ pound butter

1 oz. white rum

- Combine the first 3 ingredients, bring to a boil stirring well, and remove from heat.
- Add rum off heat
- Prick top of cake many times (Faith always used a turkey skewer) and drizzle with rum sauce. Pour slowly, using a spoon, so it sinks in. It is all right if it runs down the sides.

