

style wise

WHO

Donatella Arpaia

WHERE

New York City

DAY JOB

Owns restaurants Donatella, DBAR, and Kefi in New York, cookbook author, judge on Food Network series *The Next Iron Chef* and *Iron Chef America*, regular contributor to *The Today Show*.

STYLE MEANS

Getting out of the “safe” mold. For pasta, serve it on a plate with a freeform shape or use a purple basil accent instead of green. These little things make pasta extra special.

BEST WAY TO SPEND \$50

Invest in pots of herbs for the kitchen. Just a few snips bring almost any kind of food to life.

Back to Comfort

Her pasta-making skills have helped Donatella Arpaia build a successful career as a restaurateur and author. She shares her best tips in four stylish recipes.

BY RICHARD SWEARINGER | RECIPES DONATELLA ARPAIA

PHOTOS CON POULOS | FOOD STYLING CONSTANCE PIKULAS | PROP STYLING SARAH CAVE

Fresh Pasta Cavatelli is the easiest of homemade pastas, no pasta machine needed. “There’s something about working with dough that will make you happy,” Donatella says. “You’ll know you’ve kneaded enough when it looks like a baby’s bottom.” Here’s how to do it:

- 1 On a large work surface sift together 2 cups double-zero flour and 1 cup semolina flour to form a mound. (“Double-zero flour is the most finely milled of flours, almost like talcum powder,” Donatella says. “If you can’t find it, substitute all-purpose flour.”) Make a well in the center. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water into well and add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Using a fork, slowly swirl flours into the water, beginning with inner rim of well, until a dough begins to form. Continue adding water by tablespoonful until dough comes together (count on using about 1 cup). Gather dough to form a rounded mass.
- 2 Begin kneading with the heels of your hands (*Step 2 photo*). “Knead by pushing it forward,” Donatella says. “You’re not killing it, but it is a forceful motion.” Knead until dough becomes smooth and elastic, 10 minutes, lightly dusting surface with flour to prevent sticking. “It’s crucial to knead the full 10 minutes,” Donatella says. Divide dough and wrap each half with plastic wrap. Let rest 1 hour.
- 3 Cut each piece of dough in half. Working with one piece at a time, roll out dough $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Cut dough into 1-inch-wide strips and with your palms roll into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick ropes (*Step 3 photo*).
- 4 Lay ropes on countertop and roll with palms to an even diameter. Cut rope crosswise in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (*Step 4 photo*); lightly dust with flour. Repeat with the remaining dough.
- 5 To form the cavatelli, place a piece of dough on the ridged side of a cavatelli paddle and press with two fingers as you roll dough downward (*Step 5 photo*). Cavatelli should have ridges on one side and a depression on opposite side. Repeat with remaining dough, placing cavatelli on a floured baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap or a damp towel until ready to use. Cook cavatelli in boiling lightly salted water until they float, 3 to 4 minutes, or until they are just tender to the bite (*al dente*). To judge *al dente*: “Split a piece in half. If it has a white center, it needs more cooking,” Donatella says.

Step 2

 **How-To**
At bhg.com/cavatelli find step-by-step photos of Donatella taking you through this recipe.

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

CAVATELLI WITH SPICY SHRIMP
Recipe on page 174.



Cavatelli with Spicy Shrimp

SHRIMP AND ARUGULA 20 min.

CAVATELLI (PAGE 172) 2 hr.

- 1 recipe Homemade Cavatelli (page 170)
- 2 oz. country-style white bread, crust removed (about 4 slices)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ⅛ to ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 4 cups arugula
- Shaved ricotta salata cheese (optional)

1. Prepare Homemade Cavatelli (or cook purchased cavatelli according to package directions).

2. In a food processor, process bread to coarse crumbs. In large skillet, heat 1 Tbsp. of the olive oil over medium heat. Add bread crumbs; cook and stir until golden. Remove from skillet; set aside.

3. Add remaining oil to skillet; increase heat to medium-high. Add garlic and crushed red pepper; cook and stir 30 seconds. Add shrimp. Cook and stir about 3 minutes, until shrimp are opaque. Add arugula; cook just until wilted.

4. To serve, spoon shrimp and arugula onto cavatelli. Sprinkle with toasted bread crumbs and serve with ricotta salata. Makes 4 servings.

EACH SERVING 673 cal, 18 g fat, 225 mg chol, 567 mg sodium, 86 g carb, 4 g fiber, 36 g pro.

Entertain with style
In *Donatella Cooks* (Rodale, \$32.50), Donatella offers recipes and ideas for memorable gatherings.



Stuffed Pasta “This is one of those old-school recipes you seldom see anymore, but you should,” Donatella says. “It’s a complete meal all by itself.”

Stuffed Shells

PREP 50 min. BAKE 30 min. OVEN 350°F

- 12 oz. dried jumbo pasta shells (about 35)
- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ lb. lean ground beef
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 28-oz. cans peeled San Marzano tomatoes or whole tomatoes
- 1 15-oz. carton whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 1½ cups grated or finely shredded Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a 15×10×1-inch baking sheet and a 3-quart oval or rectangular baking dish.

2. Bring a large pot of water with 1 tablespoon salt to boiling. Add shells and cook just until slightly tender, about 4 to 5 minutes. Drain pasta and spread in a single layer on baking sheet so they don’t stick together.

3. In a large skillet heat 1 Tbsp. of the olive oil over medium heat. Add beef and 1 clove of garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Cook

and stir 6 to 8 minutes until no pink remains. Transfer to bowl; set aside.

4. For tomato sauce, in a second skillet over low heat combine remaining olive oil, remaining garlic, and undrained tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer and cook for 15 to 20 minutes until thickened somewhat, breaking up tomatoes with the back of spoon.

5. Stir 1½ cups of the tomato mixture into ground beef, add ricotta and ⅔ cup of the Parmigiano cheese; stir until combined.

6. Spoon 1½ cups tomato sauce into prepared baking dish. Fill each pasta shell with about 1 tablespoon meat and cheese mixture. Arrange shells in prepared baking dish. Spoon remaining tomato sauce over shells then sprinkle remaining ⅔ cup cheese.

7. Bake about 30 minutes, until filling is heated through and top is golden brown. Makes 8 servings.

EACH SERVING (4 SHELLS) 537 cal, 26 g fat, 94 mg chol, 661 mg sodium, 42 g carb, 3 g fiber, 35 g pro.

Dried Pasta Cooking dry pasta requires only water and salt, Donatella says. Oil isn't necessary to prevent sticking. "It will never stick as long as you leave enough room in the pot for pasta to dance."

Gemelli with Asparagus and Sausage

Donatella loves using high-quality imported pasta when making her dishes.

START TO FINISH 40 min.

- 2 bunches small or medium asparagus or 8 oz. broccoli florets
- 1 lb. gemelli or fusilli
- ½ cup pine nuts (optional)
- 1 lb. bulk Italian sausage
- 1 medium onion, chopped (about ½ cup)
- ¼ cup whipping cream
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup sheep's milk or whole milk ricotta
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ⅓ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 10 fresh basil leaves
- Ricotta cheese (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Bring a large pot of water with 1 tablespoon of salt to boiling. Cut top 2 inches from asparagus stalks (reserve asparagus stalks for another use, see "What About the Stalks," right).

Cook asparagus tips or broccoli in the boiling water for 3 to 4 minutes just until tender. Transfer to colander using a large skimmer or long-handled strainer then rinse under cold running water to stop the cooking.

2. Bring asparagus cooking water back to boiling. Add pasta and cook according to package directions just until tender to the bite (al dente). While pasta is cooking, spread pine nuts on a baking sheet and bake about 10 minutes or until the pine nuts are golden.

3. Meanwhile, in large skillet cook sausage and onion until meat is browned and onion is tender; drain fat. Add asparagus tips or broccoli, all but 1 Tbsp. of the pine nuts, the cream, and salt; simmer 2 minutes. When pasta is almost done, use a skimmer or long-handled strainer to transfer to skillet, reserving cooking water. Add ricotta, plenty of freshly ground black pepper, and about ½ cup of the pasta cooking water. Increase heat to high; toss until pasta is well coated, about 30 seconds. Add Parmigiano and toss again. Transfer to platter; top with reserved pine nuts and basil. Serve with additional ricotta. Makes 6 servings.

EACH SERVING 701 cal, 36 g fat, 101 mg chol, 1,149 mg sodium, 63 g carb, 4 g fiber, 29 g pro.

What about the stalks?

Donatella's recipe calls for the tips only of the asparagus, so she uses the leftover stalks for a side dish. Cut stalks in 2-inch pieces, cook in lightly salted water just until they turn bright green, drain, then transfer to a baking dish. Drizzle with a little melted butter, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, and bake at 450°F for 6 to 8 minutes until cheese is crusty and browned.



Baked Pasta “Serve this fuss-free, big-flavored dish on a weeknight as a main course,” Donatella says, “or serve it in smaller portions as a sophisticated starter or side.”



Donatella's Italian Mac and Cheese

PREP 40 min. COOK 15 min.
STAND 5 min. OVEN 400°F

- 1 lb. elbow macaroni
- 3 large egg whites
- ½ cup unsalted butter plus more for bowls
- ½ of a medium onion, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 3½ cups whole milk
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 9 whole black peppercorns
- 1 to 2 tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 8-oz. carton mascarpone cheese
- 6 oz. Taleggio or Muenster cheese, rind removed and diced
- 6 oz. Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
- 6 oz. Pecorino Romano, coarsely grated
- 1 cup Garlic Bread Crumbs, *below*
- Truffle oil and fresh thyme (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Butter ten to twelve 10-oz. ovenproof bowls or ramekins; set aside.
2. Bring a large pot of water with 1 tablespoon of salt to boiling. Add pasta, stir until water returns to boiling. Cook pasta according to package directions just until tender to the bite (al dente). Drain, shaking well. Meanwhile, in mixing bowl beat egg whites with electric mixer to stiff peaks.
3. In Dutch oven melt butter over medium-low heat. Add onion and cook until softened. Sprinkle the flour over onion; stir constantly for 2 minutes (do not allow to brown). Add 1 cup of the milk a little at a time, stirring constantly until smooth.
4. In an 8-inch-square double-thickness of cheesecloth place the bay leaf, thyme, and peppercorns. Gather corners and tie with 100% cotton string. Add to Dutch oven with 1 to 2 tsp. salt and remaining 2½ cups milk. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to boiling, stirring frequently (don't let it boil over). Boil 1 minute; reduce heat to low so milk barely simmers. Cook, stirring frequently, 10 minutes more. Remove from heat, let stand 5 minutes. Remove herb bundle. Immediately stir in plenty of *ground black pepper*, the nutmeg, and the cheeses. Stir just until cheeses are melted.
5. Stir cooked macaroni into cheese mixture. Fold in beaten egg whites. Spoon mac and cheese into prepared bowls. Top with Garlic Bread Crumbs.
6. Bake 15 minutes or until heated through (160°F) and crumbs are toasted. To serve, top with truffle oil and fresh thyme. Makes 10 main-dish servings.

Garlic Bread Crumbs: In food processor, process 5 oz. (3 thick slices) country-style white bread, crust removed, to coarse crumbs. Transfer to bowl. Toss with 2 cloves *garlic*, minced; ½ tsp. salt; ¼ tsp. freshly ground *black pepper*. Add 2½ Tbsp. *olive oil*; with rubber spatula work oil into the crumbs.

EACH SERVING 688 cal, 41 g fat, 94 mg chol, 1,131 mg sodium, 52 g carb, 2 g fiber, 31 g pro. ■