

Eggplant Rollatini with Spinach-Basil Ricotta and Pesto Rosso paired with Davis Estates Merlot

INGREDIENTS:

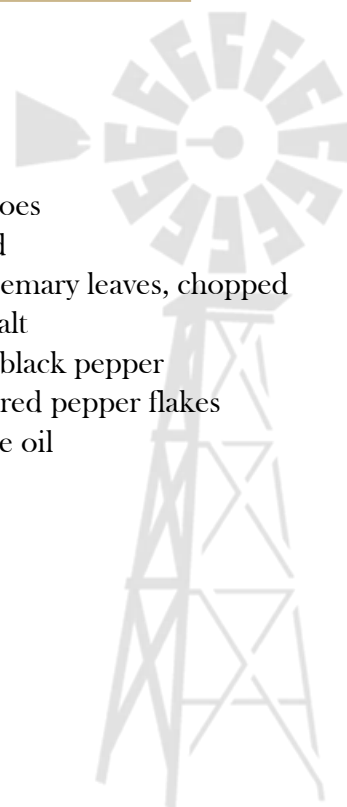
Eggplant Rollatini with Spinach-Basil Ricotta

3 medium-sized eggplants (about 4 pounds total)
16 ounces frozen spinach, thawed
18 ounces whole milk ricotta cheese
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 cup grated Parmesan
½ cup fresh basil, chiffonade (plus a bit extra for garnish)
1 cup shredded mozzarella
2 teaspoons rosemary leaves for garnish
3 tablespoons toasted pine nuts
Salt and pepper to taste
As needed extra-virgin olive oil

SERVES: 4-6

Pesto Rosso

1 cup sun-dried tomatoes
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary leaves, chopped
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon cracked black pepper
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup water



METHOD:

Pesto Rosso

- Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until all ingredients are finely chopped, scrapping down the sides every so often. Use at room temperature or heat.

Eggplant Rollatini with Spinach-Basil Ricotta

- Preheat the oven to 375°.
- Cut the eggplants lengthwise, into ¼ inch thick slices. Brush the eggplants with olive oil, and salt and pepper, then lay eggplant on a sheet tray.
- Bake for 15 minutes or until tender (if you would like more color, place under broiler for a couple minutes). Remove and let cool.
- Squeeze spinach dry. Pulse spinach in food processor until smooth, scraping down sides every few pulses. Add ricotta, Parmesan, basil, egg, salt, and pepper and process until combined.
- Place about 3 tablespoons of the cheese mixture on the wide end of the eggplant and roll up tightly.
- Place the eggplant rollatini into a greased 13 by 9-inch baking dish, seam side down. Continue with remaining eggplant.
- Smear a little pesto rosso (save most of the pesto rosso for serving) over top of the eggplant rollatini.
- Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and bake covered for 20 minutes.
- If you have leftover filling, Chef likes to place it in a corner of the pan with eggplant and bake, then use as a spread on crostini with some pesto rosso as an appetizer or snack the next day.

To Finish

Garnish with pine nuts, chopped fresh rosemary, basil, and plenty of pesto rosso. Serve immediately with a glass of Merlot.