



Italian Appetizers

For the Love of Good Food

Since we keep getting bombarded with the healthy virtues of the Mediterranean diet, and I cannot think of anything I can add to the traditional Thanksgiving recipes in this short space, I will give you 2 Appetizers to delight your guests. Tapenade is from around Nice and both French and Italians claim to have invented it. The second is Bagna Caoda and that is definitely Italian for Hot Bath!

Tapenade

Ingredients (makes about 1 ½ cups)

9 oz whole black olives, pitted

1 ¾ oz tin anchovy fillets

1 tablespoon capers, drained

2 garlic cloves, crushed

½ oz basil, finely chopped

grated zest and juice of one lemon

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

Finely chop the olives, anchovies and capers together with a knife or food processor and place in a bowl. Add the garlic, basil, lemon zest and juice, stir in the olive oil and season well. The tapenade will keep in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a month.

Bagna Caoda

Ingredients (serves 4)

40 pieces assorted raw vegetables (carrot, celery, fennel or cauliflower etc.)

¾ cup olive oil

6 garlic cloves crushed

4 ½ oz anchovy fillets, finely minced

3 ¼ oz butter

'country style' bread, e.g. ciabatta

1. Trim, wash and dry the vegetable and cut them into strips for dipping.
2. Put the oil, garlic and anchovies in a saucepan and place it over moderately low heat. Cook gently, stirring once or twice, until the anchovies dissolve. Do not let the garlic brown. Add the butter and leave over low heat until it has melted. Season with pepper.
3. Transfer the sauce to a bowl and keep it warm at the table by placing on a food warmer or over a burner or spirit stove.
4. Serve the vegetables and bread arranged on a platter. Guests dip their choice of vegetables and bread into the bagna caoda and use a piece of bread to catch any stray drips.