

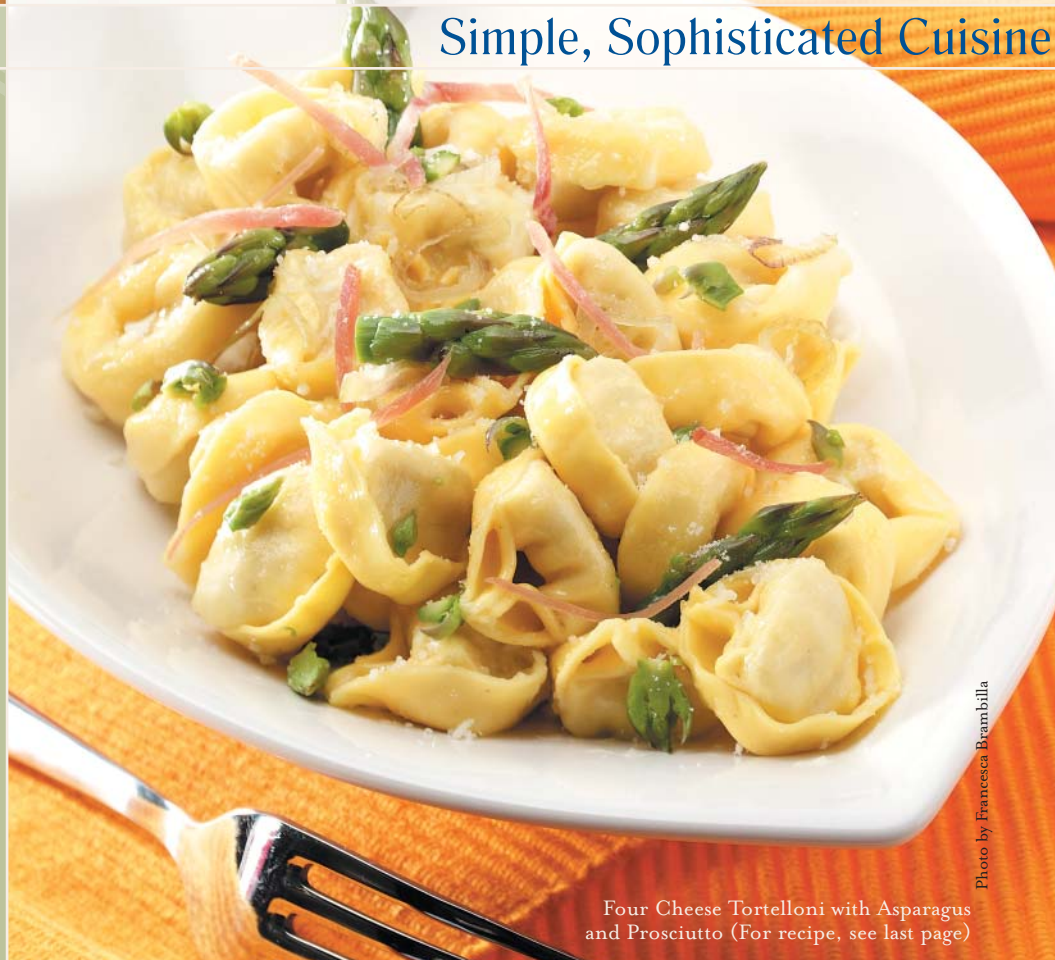
special advertising section

# THE BOUNTY OF PARMA

Simple, Sophisticated Cuisine

Barilla

*Parma and its surroundings are the source for many regional specialties. Barilla Pasta—enjoyed in Italy and around the world—has made its home in Parma for more than 125 years.*



Four Cheese Tortelloni with Asparagus and Prosciutto (For recipe, see last page)

Photo by Francesca Brambilla

When families come to the table in Parma—a culinary and cultural capital of north-central Italy—their meals reflect a tradition of excellence that has been a hallmark of this historic region for centuries. In addition to its fame as home to such musicians as Verdi and Toscanini, Parma—in the heart of Italy's Emilia-Romagna region—boasts a bounty of fresh produce and local delicacies like *prosciutto di Parma* (Parma ham), *Parmigiano Reggiano* (parmesan cheese) and *sfoglia* (hand-rolled egg pasta). This wealth of edible riches has earned the city distinction as the capital of Italy's 'food valley.' The regional dishes here, whose variety and taste rival those from any part of Italy, form one of the world's most elegant—yet alluringly simple—cuisines. It is in this setting that Barilla pasta has made its home for more than 125 years.





Produce on display at the covered market on Piazza Ghiaia

## LASAGNA WITH SAFFRON AND FRESH VEGETABLES

Serves 4

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 4 raw artichoke hearts cut into 1/2-inch cubes (keep in a bowl of acidulated water until ready to cook)
- 6 medium asparagus stalks, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 zucchinis, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/2 medium eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 4 large cultivated mushrooms, stems discarded and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- a pinch of saffron
- 4 cups whole milk, heated
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter
- 7 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/4 cups (about 4 ounces) freshly grated *Parmigiano Reggiano*
- 9 sheets Barilla Oven Ready Lasagna

Heat oil in a large skillet over moderate heat. Add artichoke hearts, drained and patted dry, and cook, stirring for 2 minutes. Add asparagus, zucchini and eggplant and cook 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook an additional 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add saffron to hot milk and let it steep for 30 minutes. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Add the flour and cook the mixture for 3 minutes, stirring. Add the milk in a stream, whisking, and bring the mixture to a boil. Simmer for 3 minutes, add 1 cup cheese and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange three sheets lasagna in a buttered 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking pan. Top with half the vegetable mixture and one third of the white sauce. Repeat the procedure with 3 more lasagna sheets, remaining vegetables and one third of the white sauce. Top with remaining lasagna, white sauce and 1/4 cup cheese. Bake in a preheated 350°F. oven until golden and bubbling, about 40 minutes.



## EMILIA-ROMAGNA: ITALY'S 'BUTTER LINE'

Though olive oil plays a prominent role in the cuisine of Emilia-Romagna, just as often cream, butter and cheese are the basis for many dishes—a fact that explains another of the region's enduring nicknames—Italy's 'Butter Line.' The shimmering lakes, lush mountains and verdant pastures of the Po Valley cut a swath through Parma, and it is here that prized Emilian cows graze, chickens lay fresh golden eggs, and fields yield the ingredients that play a part in the region's mouth watering foods. Locals shop daily for Parma's delicacies and produce at the city's covered market on Piazza Ghiaia.

## PARMIGIANO REGGIANO: THE KING OF CHEESES

Parma's creamy milk is most famously transformed into one of the city's celebrated foods: nutty, savory *Parmigiano Reggiano*. It takes about eight quarts of milk to make one pound of this delicacy, the so-called 'king of cheeses.' Its production is limited to the Emilia-Romagna region to ensure authenticity. Aged for a minimum of 24 months, *Parmigiano Reggiano* is made according to age-old traditions passed down from generation to generation. The cheese is delicious alone, in vegetable-laden soups and salads, and in many pasta preparations, some of which claim a literary pedigree. In *The Decameron*, Boccaccio speaks of "...mountains of grated Parmigiano, on which people did nothing else but prepare maccheroni and ravioli."



Lasagna with Saffron and Fresh Vegetables



Rotini with Swordfish and Peas

## PROSCIUTTO DI PARMA

It is difficult to imagine an *antipasti* plate without Parma's eponymous ham, *prosciutto di Parma*. This flavorful meat—who's name comes from the Latin word '*perexsuctum*', or 'dried'—was first referenced in the *Libro de Cucina*, a 13th-century Italian cookbook. Made from carefully raised local pigs, *prosciutto di Parma* is simplicity personified: it is salted, cured with air descended from the Appenine mountains, then aged in special underground caves and closely tended to by Parma's *salumieri*.

The meat has an unadulterated flavor that is an abiding passion for many. Its silky consistency and rich, clean taste can be enjoyed draped over a plate in thin, ribbon-like slices; wrapped around crunchy, delicate *grissini* (bread sticks); or tossed with pasta, cream, herbs and vegetables.

Silky, delicious prosciutto di Parma

## ROTINI WITH SWORDFISH AND PEAS

(as seen on page 1)

Serves 6 to 8

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

12 ounces diced swordfish

(about 1/3 to 1/2-inch size dice)

4 plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced

1/2 medium onion, chopped

(about 1/2 cup)

2 cups fresh or frozen defrosted peas

2 cups vegetable stock

1 pound Barilla Rotini

a pinch of chopped parsley

Heat 5 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet over moderate heat; add swordfish and sauté, stirring until almost cooked through, about 2 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, remove swordfish to a bowl. Add tomato to skillet and cook for 5 minutes. Add swordfish and salt and pepper to taste, take off heat and set aside. In a saucepan, cook onion in remaining tablespoon oil over moderately low heat until softened, about 3 minutes. Add peas and stock, bring mixture to boil and simmer 5 minutes.

Working in 2 batches, transfer peas and liquid to a blender and purée. Return to pan and add salt and pepper to taste.

Cook rotini in a large pot of boiling salted water for 8 minutes or until al dente. Drain and toss with fish mixture. To serve, ladle some of the pea sauce, heated, into each dish and mound some of the tossed pasta in the center on top of the sauce. Garnish with parsley.

Note: Peas can be substituted by fava beans.





A felicitous combination of pasta, vegetables and prosciutto di Parma, this tortelloni dish typifies piatti you'll find in Parma's home kitchens and restaurants.

#### FOUR CHEESE TORTELLONI WITH ASPARAGUS AND PROSCIUTTO

Serves 4

- 3 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 1/2 cups asparagus tips (cut from 4 bunches asparagus stalks, weighing about 7 ounces total – reserve stalks for another use)
- 4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto di Parma, cut into thin strips
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 bag (8.9 ounces) Barilla Four Cheese Tortelloni
- 1/4 cup (1/2 ounce) freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano

Cook shallots in oil in a large skillet over low heat until golden, about 5 minutes. Add asparagus tips and prosciutto and cook, stirring occasionally, 4 minutes more. Add heavy cream, bring to a boil and simmer 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook the tortelloni in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, about 10 to 11 minutes. Drain and toss with sauce, cheese and salt and pepper to taste.

## PASTA: SHAPING PARMA FOR CENTURIES

Parma's fresh egg pastas, or *sfoglia*, are one of Emilia-Romagna's most distinctive culinary signatures. Made using a simple, time-honored recipe of eggs, hearty flour and pure water, the pasta is hand-rolled into pliable sheets by the *sfogliatrici*—the artisan 'sheetmakers' of Parma. The golden, rich pasta is then rendered into classic shapes perfectly suited to the region's cuisine.

### A PARMA PASTA PRIMER

#### FETTUCINI



Eggy, tangly and delicious, fettucini gets its name from the Italian word *fettuccia*, or ribbons. Due to their flat surface area and pliability, fettucini and other ribbonlike shapes are ideally paired with sauces that coat the pasta from end to end. Perfect with a lighter, vegetable-based sauce or fresh vegetables, or consider a richer sauce replete with truffles, butter and cheese.

#### TORTELLONI



These perfect little parcels of dough are tiny packages of cheese, meat, herbs and vegetables. Legend has it that after a serendipitous evening with Mars and Bacchus, Venus lay resting languorously. A cook, in awe of her incredible beauty, shaped tortelloni to resemble her perfect navel.

#### LASAGNA



One of the oldest-known forms of pasta, lasagna eventually was adopted as an Emilian specialty; its broad shape and consistency lent themselves to the *sfogliare's* talents. In each region of Italy, lasagna reflects the area's culinary character. In Emilia, think butter, cream, green vegetables and—of course—*Parmigiano Reggiano*.

## BARILLA: THE PRIDE OF PARMA

Ever since Pietro Barilla opened his first pasta shop in Parma in 1877, Barilla has been an integral part of Parma's culinary legacy. Four generations of the Barilla family have carried on Pietro's passion for bringing the goodness of pasta to those who love and appreciate wholesome, delicious food. Today, Barilla operates the world's largest pasta factory, located in Parma. The production may be state-of-the-art, and the number of varieties has grown to more than 120, but each and every box of Barilla pasta still contains the very best of Parma's culinary tradition...enjoy it tonight at your table.



*The choice of Italy*