

AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA

SPLENDID
THE T·A·B·L·E

Weeknight Kitchen®
with Lynne Rossetto Kasper



Inspiration for Real Midweek Meals from *The Splendid Table*

January 18, 2005

Dear Friends,

In the next couple of weeks I want to share a sneak peak of our April adventure in Italy. The Splendid Table crew is going back to the scene of the original *Splendid Table*, my book on Italy's culinary capital, the Emilia-Romagna region.

In my mind I'm already tramping through the fields to lunch at my favorite guest farm, I'm up in the mountains stalking the wild borlengo again, and seeing the miraculous transformation that turns pork, salt, air and time into the genius of Prosciutto di Parma. These foods can happen nowhere else but here.

You can do practically the same trip (and we'll meet up a couple of times while we're all there), plus the lagniappe of roaming my other beloved area, Tuscany, on the special tour created only for Splendid Table listeners. Check out the website, <http://www.splendidtable.org/> for information.

These fast pork scallops give a great first taste of Emilia-Romagna.

BASIL AND BALSAMIC PORK SCALLOPS

Adapted from [*The Splendid Table: Recipes from Emilia-Romagna, the Heartland of Northern Italian Food*](#) by Lynne Rossetto Kasper (William Morrow, 1992). Copyright ©1992 by Lynne Rossetto Kasper. All rights reserved.

Serves 4

Fresh basil and balsamic vinegar are an unbeatable seasoning for a sauté of veal, pork, chicken, or seafood. This recipe was inspired by vinegar expert Renato Bergonzini and is a Modenese favorite. Make it for a quick supper or for a menu where you need a fast-cooking main dish. The basil must be fresh (dried cannot be substituted here) and the balsamic vinegar a richly flavored one. In dishes like this, boneless pork loin is often substituted for veal

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IN FOOTALK

Don't forget our Foodtalk forum, where the experts and the amateurs sound off on all things edible. Check out this discussion this week:

Italy! Italy Italy Italy! [Who is going to Italy?](#)

ON THE WEB:

Book your Tour to Italy now!*: You are invited to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of Italy this Spring! American Public Media, in conjunction with Marshall Field's Travel, is offering a guided 10-day tour throughout Italy with special appearances by Lynne Rossetto Kasper. (*[Download Free Acrobat Reader.](#))

- 3/4 to 1 pound pork tenderloin, trimmed of fat
- About 2 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons commercial balsamic vinegar blended with 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 20 fresh basil leaves, torn
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon shredded fresh basil leaves for garnish

1. Slice tenderloin into 1/4-inch thick rounds. Put between pieces of plastic wrap and with the back of a saucepan pound to about 1/8 inch thick.

2. Toss the scallops with flour, shaking off excess. Heat oil and butter in a big sauté pan over medium high. Quickly brown the meat in a couple of batches, taking only 20 to 30 seconds per side. Keep warm on a serving platter, sprinkling each batch with salt and pepper as it comes out of the pan. Add more oil as necessary.

3. Quickly add half the balsamic, all the torn basil, and the broth to the pan. Boil, scraping up brown bits, for 1 minute, or until fragrant. Pour over the scallops. Sprinkle remaining vinegar over meat and top with the shredded basil. Serve hot.

LYNNE'S TIPS

- At this time of year, sliced polenta is a good accompaniment. The ready-made kind sold in tubes is more than passable if served very hot (otherwise, it can resemble plastic). Use the unflavored kind; the others aren't good.
- Reliable commercial balsamic vinegars include Malpighi, Cavalli, Mamma Balducci, Elsa, Giusti, La Casa del Balsamico, Due Frati, La Vecchia Dispensa and Manicardi.
- Enrich commercial balsamic with a generous pinch of dark brown sugar per each tablespoon of vinegar. Or boil down commercial balsamic to a syrup to approximate "tradizionale." While there is no substitute for the finesse of an artisan balsamic, a drizzle of the syrup is fine on composed salads and is an excellent substitute for salt on cooked meats, fish, poultry and vegetables.
- If you use this dish for a company dinner and want to serve wine, look for a young red Valpolicella Classico from the Veneto or a Santa Maddalena from the Trentino-Alto Adige region.

THOUGHTS FROM LYNNE

This is what took me to Emilia-Romagna in the first place:

ON THE RADIO

We're meeting up with Mandy Aftel, a perfumer who paired herself up with chef Daniel Patterson to write one of the most beguiling cookbooks of the year, [Aroma, The Magic of Essential Oils in Food and Fragrance](#). The Sterns are in Cincinnati at Blue Ash Chili, and we get the story of stepping into the legendary shoes of a four-star chef from chef Eric Ripert, author of [A Return to Cooking](#).

[See January programs](#)

DONATE YOUR OLD CAR:

If you have an unwanted vehicle, consider donating it to American Public Media, producer of *The Splendid Table*. It's tax-deductible and easy. [Click here for more information](#)

Ask an Italian where to have one meal in Italy and, after recommending his mother's table, he will more than likely direct you to Emilia-Romagna.

This region, wedged between Venice and Florence, is remarkable for its cuisine. It is home to Italy's three world class foods: Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, Prosciutto di Parma, and the true "tradizionale" balsamic vinegar, which is aged for decades until it becomes so rich and intense it is sipped as a liqueur.

Each is handmade and cannot be duplicated anywhere else in the world. So the big question is how did all this excellence get compressed into one piece of geography the size of the state of Maryland? Finding the answer took me on a ten-year adventure which turned out so very different from everything I'd expected.

NEXT WEEK

Curled Pasta with Wine-Braised Sausage, a favorite in Bologna's countryside.

Have a great week,
— Lynne

