



Tea Times

In this session, we are giving you six Renaissance recipes for our tea time: Pumpkin Torte, Fruit and Nut Pie, Rose Water Bread, Fruit-Filled Cinammon Twists, Mostaccioli a la Romana (Almond Cakes), and Castagnaccio (Italian Chestnut Cake).

Additionally, we have included a short biography of a famous Renaissance-era chef below.

We will also have six storytime teas:

Fairy Tale Tea 1: *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper*, by Andrew Lang

Fable Tea 2: *The Hare and the Tortoise*, by Aesop

Fairy Tale Tea 3: *Rapunzel*, by the Brothers Grimm

Fable Tea 4: *The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf*, by Aesop

Fairy Tale Tea 5: *Hansel and Grettel*, by Andrew Lang

Fable Tea 6: *The Lion and the Mouse*, by Aesop

“For a man to write well, there are required three necessities—to read the best authors, observe the best speakers, and much exercise of his own style.”

~ Ben Jonson

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Bartolomeo Scappi

circa 1500 – April 13, 1577



Bartolomeo Scappi, often called “the Michelangelo of cooking,” was one of the most celebrated chefs of the Renaissance.

Born around 1500 in northern Italy, he rose to fame serving in the kitchens of powerful cardinals and eventually became the personal cook to Pope Pius V.

His reputation came from both his skill and his ability to blend elegance with practicality, making him a master of the art of dining in Renaissance Italy.

In 1570, Scappi published *Opera dell’arte del cucinare* (“The Art and Craft of a Master Cook”), a massive cookbook with over 1,000 recipes. More than just recipes, it included instructions and illustrations on kitchen tools, techniques, and proper service, giving us a vivid picture of Renaissance food culture. His work influenced European cooking for generations, preserving the tastes and traditions of his time while also showing just how much creativity and artistry could be found in the kitchen.

Many of our recipes below are modern adaptations of Scappi’s Renaissance-era recipes, bringing history to life and ensuring his legacy lives on.

Pumpkin Torte



Ingredients:

2 c pumpkin puree
1 c ricotta cheese
1 c cream cheese
7 medium eggs, beaten
1 ¼ c light brown sugar
2 T cinnamon
4 tsp ginger
1 c heavy whipping cream
5 T butter, softened
1/4 c butter, melted
Cinnamon sugar (for topping)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a large bowl, mix the pumpkin puree, ricotta, and cream cheese until smooth. Beat in the eggs. Add the brown sugar.

Mix in the cinnamon and ginger, then mix in the cream and unsalted butter until smooth.

Pour the melted butter into a cake or pie pan. You really just need it to cover the bottom of the pan, so you don't have to use all of it.

Pour the batter into the pan. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes, or until it's puffed up and just a little wobbly in the center. Sprinkle the top with cinnamon sugar. Turn off the oven and leave the cheesecake in to cool for 45 minutes.

Remove from the oven and let it finish cooling until it isn't liquidy anymore.

Fruit and Nut Pie



Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ c raw almonds
- ¾ c pinenuts
- 10-12 pitted dates
- 12-14 dried figs
- ½ c raisins
- 8 egg yolks
- ¾ c granulated sugar
- 1T cinnamon
- ¼ c ground biscotti cookies
- ¼ c rosewater
- 4 T butter
- 1 pie shell

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° F. Using a food processor, grind together the almonds, pine nuts, dates, figs, and raisins. (Work in batches if it becomes too dense and sticky.) Add the egg yolks, sugar, cinnamon, ground cookies, rosewater, and butter, and mix until it forms a thick paste.

Fill the pie crust with the mixture. Bake for 15 minutes, then lower the temperature to 325° F and bake for another 30 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Store in the refrigerator.

Rose Water Bread



Ingredients:

6 T breadcrumbs
1 + ½ c warm water (divided)
4 c bread flour
2 tsp salt
1 tsp yeast
1 pound (4 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
2 T melted butter
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp rose water

Directions:

Combine 1 c of the warm water with the breadcrumbs and let them soak until they've absorbed most of the water.

Whisk the flour and salt together. Add the yeast and the soaked breadcrumbs and mix until well incorporated.

Add the ½ c warm water a little at a time while mixing. You may not need all of the water- only add enough to make the dough come together.

Turn the dough out and knead until it starts to become smooth. Put it in a lightly greased bowl and cover it. Let the dough rise in a warm place until doubled in size. Depending on your biga or yeast, this could take 2 to 4 hours.

When the dough has doubled, punch it down and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Stretch it into a square or rectangle. Scatter some of the butter pieces on top, then fold the dough over to cover the butter and knead until the butter is fully incorporated. Repeat the process until all of the butter is incorporated. As you add more butter, the dough will become stickier. Add flour a couple of T at a time if it becomes unworkable, just enough to bring it back together. If you have a stand mixer, you can use it for this part.

Once all of the butter is incorporated and the dough is silky smooth, divide it into 3 pieces. Cover and let it rest, preferably in the refrigerator, for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350°F and butter the bottom and sides of a 10-inch cake pan. If you have a springform pan, it will make getting the bread out easier.

Directions (continued):

After the dough has rested, roll each piece out to match the diameter of the pan. Layer the pieces in the pan on top of each other. Brush the top with the melted butter. Using a sharp knife, poke holes all over the top to keep it from puffing up too much.

Set the pan on a lined baking sheet and bake for 1 hour 15 minutes.

After 1 hour 15 minutes, quickly brush the rose water on top of the bread and sprinkle the sugar on it. Bake for another 15 minutes, or until it's baked all the way through. Let it cool before cutting.

Fruit-Filled Cinnamon Twists



Filling:

1 c dried currants or golden raisins
1 c raisins
1 c pitted chopped dates
1 c red wine or grape juice
¼ c raw sugar or light brown sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp cloves

Dough:

¼ c sourdough starter	3 T rosewater
discard	1 stick butter, softened
⅔ c warm water	½ tsp salt
3.5 c flour	1 beaten egg
3 egg yolks	

Directions:

Cook sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and dried fruits in red wine/grape juice until soft. (Be sure the sugar doesn't caramelize.) Allow to cool.

In a standing mixer, mix sourdough discard with warm water until the starter is mostly dissolved. Add flour, egg yolks, rosewater, butter, and salt until incorporated into a dough. Add to a standing mixer with a dough hook and let it knead for 6-7 minutes. (If mixing by hand, knead for 15-20 minutes.) You should have a very supple dough that easily slides off the dough hook without residue. You should also be able to shape and roll it without using additional flour.

Spray a sheet pan with oil and set aside. Heat oven to 375°F.

Cut the dough into four even pieces. (When not rolling out a piece of dough, keep the others in the refrigerator.) Roll the first piece of dough into a thin rectangular piece. If desired, cut the edges with a pastry cutter so that you have an even rectangle. Cut this rectangle in half the long way through the rectangle.

Take 1.5 T of the cooled fruit filling and spread it across the bottom of the rectangle. Carefully fold over the dough until it's a long roll. Then roll this up so it's shaped like a cinnamon roll and tuck the end underneath. Set the twists onto the oiled sheet pan. Repeat with the other three pieces of dough.

Cover with a towel and let rise for 30 minutes, then brush the twists with the beaten egg. Cook for 40-60 minutes, or until the crust is browned.

Mostaccioli a la Romana (Almond Cakes)



Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups almond flour
3 egg yolks
6 tbsp raisins
2 tsp cinnamon

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a 9x9 cake pan. Mix the sugar, flour, almond flour, and cinnamon. Add egg yolks, raisins, and an additional T or two of water if needed to create a batter-like consistency. Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 20 minutes. Allow to cool completely before cutting into small squares.

Castagnaccio (Italian Chestnut Cake)

Ingredients:

25 g raisins
200 g chestnut flour
Pinch sea salt
225 g water
40 g olive oil
2 tbsp honey
30 g chopped walnuts
20 g pine nuts
Pinch of rosemary

Directions:

Cover the raisins with warm water and leave to soak for at least ten minutes.
Preheat the oven to 325°F.

In a medium sized mixing bowl, mix chestnut flour with salt until there aren't any lumps. Add water and mix until smooth. Add the olive oil and honey. Drain and add the raisins, stirring until combined. Pour into a shallow pie pan and level with a spatula. Sprinkle walnuts, pine nuts, and rosemary over the top, then press them down gently with the spatula until set in the batter.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the top is firm and just starting to crack. Allow to cool for fifteen minutes, then turn out onto a serving plate and cut into eight slices. Serve warm with a drizzle of honey.

