

'Nfigghiulata Antica



Sicilian
Bread Roll, in the
Old Style

This bread roll may predate calzone, pita, and empanadas. Its shape may date from the time of the Saracen occupation, in ninth-century Sicily, because the crescent is important in Oriental culture. The filling ingredients vary, but as long as you learn the taste and method of this particular recipe, you can improvise. Cauliflower may have been a more recent addition, and you can substitute spinach for the Swiss chard. Bread rolls can even be made without meat by adding more of the vegetables or different kinds, and perhaps some Ricotta.

MENU SUGGESTIONS: 'Nfigghiulata can be eaten as a meal in itself with salad and some wine. Or use thinner slices of it as a first course followed by Mussels with Saffron (page 103) or Braised Rabbit Sardinian Style (page 198).

WINE: Rosso del Salento (page 301)

- 2 *recipes Basic Bread Dough* (page 47), once risen
- 5 or 6 *tablespoons virgin olive oil, or q.b.*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ *pound ground veal*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ *pound ground pork*
- 1 *yellow onion, peeled and diced coarsely*
- 1 *bunch green Swiss chard, well washed*
- 1 *small head cauliflower, washed and broken into small flowerettes about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch all around*
- 4 *scallions, chopped coarsely (more if you like)*
- $\frac{1}{4}$ *pound Sicilian black oil-cured olives, pitted and coarsely chopped*
- 6 *thin slices of salami, cut into julienne strips*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ *pound Provolone, cut into small dice (more if you like)*
- Plenty of salt and pepper*

Put about 1 tablespoon of oil into a large frying pan, and gently sauté the veal and pork, being careful not to overcook the meat. As soon as it loses color, it is done. Set aside the meat and its pan juices in a small bowl to cool.

In the same pan sauté the onion in another tablespoon of olive oil until it is soft and transparent. Add it to the bowl with the meat, and let it cool also.

Cut the Swiss chard crosswise into 1-inch-wide pieces either before or after washing. It does not matter. Put the pieces into a pan with a lid and cook them using just the water clinging to the leaves for 5 to 6 minutes, or until they are tender but not overcooked. Drain them very well, gently squeeze them dry. Set the Swiss chard aside in a small bowl.

The cauliflower should be cooked in lightly salted water for 4 or 5 minutes. Drain it well, cool, and reserve in a small bowl to use later.

In individual bowls or dishes, put the chopped scallions, pitted chopped olives, julienned salami, and the diced Provolone.

Grease an 11 × 16-inch jelly-roll pan with 2 tablespoons of the oil, spreading it all around. Set this aside. Preheat the oven to 350° F.

On a lightly floured surface pound and push the dough into an oval shape. (Use a rolling pin if it helps.) The dough should be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and quite large, perhaps bigger than the size of the jelly-roll pan. Drizzle on a few teaspoons of the olive oil, and then scatter on all the rest of the ingredients. (I usually do this by scattering all of one ingredient to within an inch of the borders all around. You could also mix all of the ingredients together, once they are cool, and scatter that on just as well.) Carefully roll the dough and filling up, lengthwise, to resemble a giant sausage, being sure that the filling is compact and the roll tight. (Do not stretch the dough, because it could easily rip.) You do not want to end up with a roll that is loose with lots of air spaces. After the rolling, pinch the ends hard so that no filling leaks out.

Transfer the *'nfigghiulata* to the oiled jelly-roll pan. Try using a cookie sheet with no borders as a giant spatula. Oil the cookie sheet and very gently slide it under the roll. Tilt the cookie sheet alongside the jelly-roll pan and gently ease the *'nfigghiulata* off the cookie sheet and onto the pan. Be sure that the seam side of the roll is down and gently push the *'nfigghiulata* into a curved shape like a wide-open horse shoe or a crescent. Brush it all over with any remaining olive oil, or use more if you need to. Put the *'nfigghiulata* into the preheated oven to bake.

After 15 minutes, brush the roll again with more oil. If there is a lot of oil in the pan, use it to brush onto the roll. The *'nfigghiulata* should bake for about 1½ hours. Continue to brush the surface with oil every 15 minutes. If it browns too fast, lower the temperature to 325° F.

Let the *'nfigghiulata* cool in the jelly-roll pan for about 20 minutes before cutting it. Remove it later to a wooden board, and cut it into slices 1½ to 2 inches wide.