



Perfect Ricotta **COOKBOOK**



SCRUMPTIOUS BRUNCH, LUNCH, DINNER AND DESSERTS



OUR STORY

Founded by Italian immigrant Natale Italiano, *Perfect Italiano* has been making specialty cheese since 1930.

Our Parmesan, Ricotta and Mozzarella making methods came from all over Italy and have been perfected for the meals you love – to make your risottos creamier, your pizzas stretchier and your pastas, soups and salads tastier. With our extensive range of parmesan cheese blocks, grated cooking blends, and creamy ricotta; we are the trusted choice for hassle-free dinner times in Australian kitchens. The undisputed go-to brand of cooking cheese, *Perfect Italiano* offers quality cheese that's...

PERFECT FOR THAT.

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**FOR SMOOTH AND
CREAMY SWEET
AND SAVOURY
DISHES, CHOOSE
PERFECT ITALIANO
*Ricotta.***

Our *Ricotta* is a versatile cheese with its distinctly light flavour and smooth creamy texture making it perfect for baking in a cheesecake, stirring through pasta or spreading over toast.

Enjoy it in the traditional Spinach and Ricotta Cannelloni, or try it on Grilled Tomato Bruschetta or in Chicken and Vegetable Frittata. When you need a smooth and creamy texture, *Ricotta* is **PERFECT FOR THAT.**



PERFECT FOR THAT



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BREAKFAST & Brunch

Kickstart your day with a delectable range of creamy breakfast and brunch recipe creations, from savory pies to delightful sweet pancakes.





PIE MAKER CHICKEN, SPINACH & RICOTTA *Filo Pies*

PREP 35 MIN COOK 30 MIN SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp olive oil

250g frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed of excess moisture

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 cup (150g) shredded cooked chicken, warmed (see tip)

250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

1 cup (125g) Perfect Italiano™ Traditional Grated Parmesan

2 eggs, lightly beaten

14 sheets filo pastry

125g butter, melted

Tomato chutney, to serve

METHOD

1. Heat oil in a small frying pan over a medium heat. Add spinach and garlic, cook for 1 minute. Remove to a large bowl. Cool for 2 minutes.
2. Add chicken, Ricotta, parmesan and eggs. Season to taste. Mix well.
3. Place one sheet of filo onto a clean dry surface. Brush with butter and top with one more sheet of filo. Repeat layering with another sheet of filo to make 3 layers. Brush filo with butter. Fold over. Cut into 4 equal squares.
4. Repeat process with another two sheets of filo and butter and set aside for the top.
5. Brush pie maker with butter. Press a square of pastry into each pie hole and fill with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup filling. Fold over pastry tips to enclose filling. Brush remaining filo with butter and gently scrunch on top of pies to cover filling. Close lid and turn on pie maker. Cook for 15 minutes or until pastry is golden.
6. Transfer pies to a cooling rack. Repeat with remaining filo, butter and filling to make 8 pies.
7. Keep warm in the oven if necessary. Serve with tomato chutney.

TIP

- Make this recipe even easier by using a pre-cooked roast or BBQ chicken from the supermarket. Shred chicken using two forks. Make sure chicken is not cold from the fridge; best to warm slightly so centre of pies remains hot.





RICOTTA & GREEN *Veg Fritters*

PREP 20 MIN COOK 25 MIN MAKES 12

INGREDIENTS

120g bag baby spinach leaves (you will need ½ cup)

1 cup (150g) frozen peas, thawed, lightly mashed

1 medium zucchini (175g), coarsely grated

2 green onions, finely sliced

4 eggs

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 cup (125g) Perfect Italiano™ Traditional Grated Parmesan

¾ cup self raising flour

250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

Light olive oil, for shallow frying

Medley tomato salad and chives with balsamic vinegar and olive oil, to serve

METHOD

1. Pour boiling water over spinach to wilt. Drain well. Using hands, squeeze spinach and zucchini separately to remove any excess moisture. Coarsely chop spinach.
2. Preheat oven to 120°C/100°C (fan-forced). Combine spinach, peas, zucchini, green onion, eggs, garlic and parmesan in a large bowl. Mix well. Season well. Fold in flour until just combined. Dollop in half the Ricotta. Fold gently.
3. Heat oil in a large, non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Using about ¼ cup mixture per fritter, flatten slightly and cook fritters in batches, for 3-4 minutes on each side or until golden and cooked through (add extra oil to the pan if necessary). Transfer to a baking tray. Keep warm in oven.
4. Serve warm fritters with remaining Ricotta and tomato chive salad with balsamic drizzled with oil.

TIPS

- These fritters can be made a day ahead and reheated in a low oven until hot.
- Adjust cooking temperature to allow for an even golden colour on the fritters. Medium to medium-low.
- Freeze fritters, thaw and reheat in the microwave.





GRILLED TOMATO *Bruschetta*

PREP 10 MIN COOK 10 MIN SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

Extra virgin olive oil,
to drizzle

4 thick slices sourdough
bread

200g cherry tomatoes

**¾ cup (190g) Perfect
Italiano™ Ricotta**

Basil leaves, to serve

METHOD

1. Heat a char-grill pan over medium-high heat. Drizzle olive oil over both sides of the bread. Cook until bread is charred and golden, turn over and repeat with the other side. Set aside.
2. Drizzle tomatoes with oil and season to taste. Place on the char-grill pan and cook, turning once, until tomatoes are charred and softened.
3. Spread each bread slice generously with Ricotta. Top with warm tomatoes and basil leaves. Season with black pepper and serve immediately.

TIPS

- For a lighter recipe, swap out the Ricotta for Perfect Italiano Light Ricotta.
- For a more garlicky bruschetta, crush fresh garlic and combine with olive oil and salt. Brush over bread.
- For a twist, drizzle balsamic or vincotto vinegar over the top just before serving.
- Choose good quality sourdough and cut into thick slices.





HONEYED RICOTTA ON FRUITBREAD WITH *Strawberries*

PREP 10 MIN COOK 50 MIN SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

4 thick slices of fruit bread
½ cup Perfect Italiano™
Ricotta
1 tbsp honey
12 strawberries, sliced
¼ cup almonds
Pinch of cinnamon

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Spread the almonds onto a tray and place into the oven to toast for 10 minutes or until golden. Remove the almonds from the oven and when they have cooled, roughly chop and set aside.
3. In a small bowl, mix together the Ricotta, cinnamon and honey until combined. Toast the fruit bread until golden.
4. To serve, spread the Ricotta over the toast and top with sliced strawberries. Finish by scattering over the roasted almonds.

TIP

- Drizzle over more honey for extra sweetness or use some figs or other seasonal fruits as an alternative to strawberries for a delicious twist.





RICOTTA PANCAKES WITH BERRIES *and Cream*

PREP 15 MIN COOK 15 MIN SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

2 tbsp caster sugar

1 egg

1 cup milk

1 cup self raising flour

20g Western Star Chef's Choice Butter, melted

½ cup berries

½ cup cream, whipped

¼ cup maple syrup

METHOD

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the Ricotta, sugar and egg until well combined. Stir in the milk, followed by the flour, and mix well until everything is incorporated.
2. Place a medium sized non-stick fry pan over a medium heat.
3. Lightly brush the fry pan with a small amount of the melted butter. Add ¼ cup of the batter to the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes or until bubbles appear on the surface.
4. Flip the pancake over using a metal spatula and cook for another minute or until golden. Place the pancake onto a plate and cover with a clean tea towel.
5. Repeat with the remaining batter, being sure to brush the pan with a small amount of butter each time.
6. Serve the pancakes warm with the whipped cream, berries and a drizzle of maple syrup.

TIP

- Use other toppings such as grilled banana and chocolate sauce, yoghurt and peaches, or your favourite ice cream for a great alternative.



PERFECT PAIRINGS *with Ricotta*

Blend these fresh ingredients with Ricotta cheese to create a heavenly match of creamy flavours!



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LUNCH & Dinner

Include ricotta to add an extra creamy but light texture to pasta and meat dishes, perfect for both lunch and dinner.





CHICKEN RICOTTA *Involtini*

PREP 30 MIN COOK 35 MIN MAKES 4-6

INGREDIENTS

250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

¼ cup (60g) semi-dried tomatoes, drained, chopped

1 ¾ (210g) cups Perfect Italiano™ Perfect Bakes cheese

2 x 500g (8) uncrumbed chicken breast schnitzel cuts

12 thin asparagus spears, halved

¼ cup olive oil

500g jar pasta sauce

Salad, to serve

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200°C / 180°C fan forced.
2. Combine Ricotta, tomatoes and ¾ cup of the cheese. Season to taste. Dollop two level tablespoons of Ricotta mixture in the centre of chicken schnitzels. Lay 3 pieces of asparagus crossways. Roll up and secure with a toothpick or tie with kitchen string.
3. Heat oil in a large, non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Add involtini's and cook for 7 minutes until brown all over.
4. Spoon one third of the pasta sauce in the base of a roasting pan. Arrange chicken on top. Spoon remaining pasta sauce over chicken. Sprinkle remaining cheese over chicken and bake for 25-30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.
5. Remove toothpicks or string and serve with salad.

TIPS

- You can make up Involtini up to 8 hours ahead and store covered in the fridge or make up to the end of step 2 and freeze. Thaw completely before cooking.
- Swap out the semi-dried tomatoes for char-grilled capsicum or use a mixture of chopped antipasto mix.
- Add chopped rosemary, thyme or chives to incorporate a fresh herb flavour.





CREAMY RICOTTA *Pasta Salad*

PREP 10 MIN COOK 20 MIN SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

2 zucchini, halved lengthwise, sliced
1 tbsp olive oil
250g cherry tomatoes
250g yellow baby tomatoes
300g large spiral pasta
½ cup (150g) Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta
⅓ cup basil pesto
2 tbsp warm water
⅓ cup pitted Kalamata olives, sliced
⅓ cup (35g) Perfect Italiano™ Traditional Parmesan Grated
Baby basil leaves, to serve

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 220°C / 200°C fan-forced. Toss zucchini with olive oil in a roasting pan. Season to taste. Roast for 10 minutes. Add cherry and yellow baby tomatoes to pan and roast for a further 10 minutes or until tomatoes just collapse and zucchini is tender. Remove from oven. Cool.
2. Meanwhile, cook pasta following packet directions for 12 minutes or until tender. Drain well.
3. Whisk Ricotta, basil pesto and water in a bowl.
4. Combine pasta, zucchini mixture, pesto Ricotta and olives in a large bowl. Serve sprinkled with parmesan and basil leaves.

TIP

- For a lighter recipe, swap out the Ricotta for Perfect Italiano Light Ricotta.





SPINACH & RICOTTA *Cannelloni*

PREP 15 MIN + 15 MIN COOLING COOK 25 MIN SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

2 tbsp (40 g) Western Star Original Butter

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

¼ tsp ground nutmeg

150g baby spinach, washed and finely chopped

500g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

½ cup (50g) Perfect Italiano™ Traditional Parmesan Grated

16 cannelloni tubes

1 x 700 ml bottle passata

2 ¼ cups (200g) Perfect Italiano™ Mozzarella

Mixed green salad, to serve

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C / 160°C fan-forced.
2. In a large non-stick fry pan, heat the oil and butter. Add garlic and cook for a few minutes. Add nutmeg and spinach and cook for 5 minutes. Place in a bowl and set aside to cool.
3. Once spinach mixture is cool, add in Ricotta and ¼ cup of parmesan, mixing well to combine. Using a piping bag squeeze the Ricotta mixture into the cannelloni tubes.
4. Pour half the passata into a large baking dish. Layer the filled cannelloni on top, then spoon the remaining tomato passata over. Drizzle with extra olive oil, then sprinkle the mozzarella and remaining ¼ cup of parmesan over the top. Bake for 25 minutes or until golden and bubbling.
5. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes before serving with a green salad.

TIP

- Try to use a baking dish where the cannelloni can fit snugly in one layer.





PUMPKIN, SPINACH & RICOTTA *Stuffed Shells*

PREP 20 MIN COOK 50-55 MIN SERVES 4-6

INGREDIENTS

300g butternut pumpkin, peeled and chopped into small cubes
2 tbsp olive oil
250g jumbo pasta shells
4 bacon rashers, chopped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
¼ tsp nutmeg
100g baby spinach, washed and finely chopped
350g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta
⅓ cup (30g) Perfect Italiano™ Traditional Parmesan Grated
1 x 700g bottle passata
1⅔ cup (150g) Perfect Italiano™ Perfect Bakes cheese

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200°C / 180°C fan-forced. Toss pumpkin in 1 tablespoon of olive oil and then place on a medium baking tray. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes or until just cooked through. Set aside to cool.
2. Meanwhile, cook the pasta shells according to packet instructions. Drain shells and set aside.
3. In a large non-stick fry pan, heat remaining tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook for 3-4 minutes or until the bacon starts to turn golden brown. Add the garlic and cook for a further minute. Add the nutmeg and spinach and continue to cook for a further 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and leave to cool.
4. Once the spinach, bacon and pumpkin are cool, combine with the Ricotta and parmesan. Season to taste. Mix well then spoon the mixture into the pasta shells.
5. Pour two thirds of the passata into a medium baking dish. Add the stuffed shells in a layer, then pour the remaining passata around the shells, being careful to not cover the shells in the passata. Top with Perfect Bakes cheese.
6. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is melted and golden brown. Allow to rest for about 10 minutes before serving.





CHICKEN, SPINACH & *Mushroom Lasagne*

PREP 15 MIN COOK 55 MIN SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

RICOTTA TOPPING

500g Perfect Italiano™

Ricotta

1 egg, lightly beaten

½ cup (125ml) milk

450g Perfect Italiano™

Perfect Bakes cheese

120g baby spinach leaves,
roughly chopped

CHICKEN MINCE, SPINACH & MUSHROOM LASAGNE

2 tbsp olive oil

1 (80g) small onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1kg chicken mince

200g Swiss brown mushrooms, sliced

1 tbsp plain flour

300ml cooking cream

2 tbsp Dijon mustard

375g packet fresh lasagne sheets



CHICKEN, SPINACH & *Mushroom Lasagne*

METHOD

RICOTTA TOPPING

1. Mix together the Ricotta, eggs, and milk. Season to taste. Stir through $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the Perfect Bakes cheese. Refrigerate until ready to use. Reserve remaining cheese.

CHICKEN MINCE, SPINACH & MUSHROOM LASAGNE

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan-forced. Lightly grease a 2Ltr (8 cup) oven proof lasagne dish.
2. To make the filling, heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook, stirring for 1-2 minutes or until onion softens.
3. Add mince and cook for 2-3 minutes, breaking up the mince until browned. Add mushrooms and cook for 1 minute.
4. Stir through the flour and cook a further 1 minute. Add cooking cream and mustard and mix well. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered on low for 5 minutes or until sauce thickens. Season to taste and set aside.
5. Spread $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the Ricotta sauce over base of dish. Top with lasagne sheets, trimming to fit the size of the dish if necessary.
6. Stir chopped spinach through remaining Ricotta mixture; divide into three portions.
7. Top lasagne sheet layer with one third of the chicken sauce, sprinkle with a handful of cheese and cover with another layer of lasagne sheets. Continue layering with chicken sauce, then cheese, followed by a layer of Ricotta and spinach sauce. Repeat these layers again, finishing with a layer of lasagne sheets.
8. Spread the remaining Ricotta and spinach sauce over the top and sprinkle with reserved cheese. Bake uncovered for 35–40 minutes until golden and lasagne sheets are cooked. Stand 10 minutes before serving. Serve with fresh green salad.

TIP

- Store leftover lasagne in an airtight container in the fridge for 2-3 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

Simple Ways WITH RICOTTA

The light but smooth and creamy consistency of ricotta makes it the perfect alternative to heavier creams and cheeses in cooking or on its own.



OMELETTE

Whisk 2 eggs, then fold in about a tablespoon of ricotta. Season to taste. Pour into a pan and just before it's set, scatter over sautéed garlic mushrooms. Cook until set then fold in half and serve scattered with herbs.



CHEAT'S WHITE SAUCE

Whisk a 500g tub ricotta, 2 tablespoon sour cream and 1 egg in a jug and season to taste. Use it in a quick and easy cheat's lasagne or other baked pasta dishes.



FINGER FOOD PASTIES

Ricotta and spinach are a match made in heaven. Combine a 500g tub of ricotta with chopped, blanched spinach and season to taste. Wrap in ready-rolled puff pastry and bake to make an easy appetiser.



AS A SPREAD

Toast slices of banana bread or sourdough toast, spread with ricotta and drizzle with honey and fruit for a snack or brekky.



BAKING & *Dessert*

Enhance your baking and desserts by incorporating the smooth and creamy goodness of ricotta for an extra flavourful twist.





RICOTTA & RASPBERRY *Croissant Bake*

PREP 20 MIN + 15 MIN SETTING TIME COOK 50 MIN SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

VANILLA RICOTTA CREAM

250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

2 tbsp caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

FRENCH TOAST BAKE

8 mini croissants

250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

1/3 cup raspberry jam

500mls thickened cream

1/3 cup caster sugar

4 eggs

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

125g punnet fresh raspberries

Icing sugar, to dust

METHOD

VANILLA RICOTTA CREAM

1. Process Ricotta, sugar and paste in a food processor until smooth and creamy. Cover and refrigerate.

FRENCH TOAST BAKE

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C (fan-forced). Grease a 6 1/2-cup capacity oval ceramic baking dish.
2. Split croissants through the centre, making sure you don't cut all the way through. Place Ricotta in a small bowl, add jam and swirl gently to just combine. Spoon Ricotta mixture evenly into croissants. Arrange in base of prepared pan.
3. Whisk cream, eggs, paste and sugar in a bowl. Pour over croissants and scatter with half the raspberries.
4. Place baking dish into large roasting pan and pour enough boiling water to come halfway up the sides of baking dish. Bake for 35 minutes, remove paper and foil and bake for a further 15 minutes or until custard is set (there will be a slight wobble, but this will thicken on standing), Cover with foil if overbrowning. Sit for 15 minutes, before serving.
5. Dust with icing sugar. Serve with extra raspberries and the vanilla Ricotta cream.

TIPS

- A rich dessert for the occasional indulgence and a great way to use up leftover croissants. If using regular sized croissants, use 5 croissants and divide filling accordingly between them.
- Replace raspberries with blueberries or blackberries.





MINI BAKED LEMON & BLUEBERRY *Ricotta Cakes*

PREP 10 MIN COOK 25 MIN MAKES 12

INGREDIENTS

2 cups (300g) self raising flour
1 tsp ground cinnamon
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (165g) caster sugar
2 eggs
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125g) unsalted butter, melted and cooled
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125ml) milk
Zest from 1 medium lemon
250g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta
125g fresh or frozen blueberries

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced.
2. Place 12 patty cases into a 12 hole, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup muffin tray and set aside.
3. Sift the flour and cinnamon into a large bowl. Add the caster sugar and mix well.
4. Whisk together eggs, melted and cooled butter, milk and lemon zest. Fold in flour until just mixed through. Add Ricotta and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the blueberries. Fold through carefully, making sure to not overmix.
5. Divide mixture amongst patty cases and top with the remaining blueberries.
6. Bake for 25-30 minutes or cooked through. Stand for 5 minutes before removing from tin and cooling on a wire rack.

TIPS

- Turn these into a quick dessert by serving warm with extra berries and a spoonful of cream, creme fraiche or extra Ricotta.
- Make a double batch and freeze individually. Great for lunch boxes and family afternoon teas. To defrost, leave at room temperature for 10 minutes or microwave for 30 second bursts until warm.





CANNOLI WITH *Ricotta Cream*

PREP 45 MIN COOK 15 MIN MAKES X

INGREDIENTS

CANNOLI

150g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 tbsp caster sugar

1/8 tsp bi-carb soda

1/3 cup marsala

1/2 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp Dutch cocoa

1 egg yolk, lightly beaten

40g lard, melted and cooled slightly

Vegetable oil, for frying

RICOTTA CREAM

750g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta

40g icing sugar

1 tbsp orange zest

Icing sugar, for dusting

METHOD

CANNOLI

1. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, sugar, bi-carb soda, cocoa and cinnamon. In another medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolk, lard and marsala. Pour the liquid into the dry ingredients, and stir until a dough forms.
2. Place the dough onto a lightly floured clean surface and knead for 5-10 minutes or until elastic.
3. Cut the dough in half and roll each piece of dough using a floured rolling pin (or pasta machine on the second lowest setting) until very thin. Cut the pastry into 11cm squares.
4. Working with one square at a time, lay a lightly oiled metal cannoli tube diagonally along a pastry square, and fold the opposite corners of the pastry inwards to connect the corners.
5. Heat the oil in a large pot or deep fryer until it reaches 180°C. Working in batches, deep fry the cannoli shells for 2-3 minutes or until golden, and then remove from the oil and drain on paper towel.
6. Once cooled slightly, slide the cannoli off the metal tube. Continue this process until all the cannoli are cooked.

RICOTTA CREAM

1. Meanwhile, make the Ricotta cream by combining the Ricotta, icing sugar and orange zest in a medium bowl until thoroughly mixed. Refrigerate until ready to assemble.
2. Once completely cool, assemble the cannoli by piping Ricotta filling into the pastry shells, and dust generously with icing sugar. Serve immediately.





BAKED RICOTTA & RASPBERRY *Puddings*

PREP 15 MIN COOK 35 MIN SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp butter for greasing
2 eggs
½ cup (110g) caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp finely zested lemon
500g Perfect Italiano™ Ricotta
¼ cup (30g) almond meal
1 tbsp cornflour
¼ tsp baking powder
80g fresh or frozen raspberries

METHOD

1. Preheat oven 150°C (fan forced) and grease 6 x 150ml ceramic ramekins.
2. Combine eggs, caster sugar, vanilla and lemon zest. Whisk together until thick and pale; whisk in Ricotta until smooth.
3. Sift almond meal, cornflour and baking powder together and add to egg Ricotta mixture. Mix well until smooth.
4. Spoon evenly into prepared ramekins. Making sure to only fill ¾ full.
5. Place onto a baking tray and add 3 raspberries into the top of each pudding. Bake 30-35 minutes. Serve immediately.

TIP

- Turn these into a quick dessert by serving warm with extra berries and an extra dollop of ricotta or Greek yoghurt.



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