

## Involtini alla Benedettina (Veal Rolls Stuffed with Ham)



### STUFFING

2 cups fresh bread crumbs (soaked in a little water for a few seconds and squeezed dry)  
1/3 cup freshly chopped Italian parsley  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
2 tablespoons canned Italian plum tomatoes, finely chopped and squeezed dry  
3/4 lb frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry in paper towels

### SCALLOPINI

12 thin veal scallops (about 2 1/2 ounces each)<sup>i</sup>  
6 thin slices boiled ham, cut lengthwise into 2-inch-wide pieces  
Olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 teaspoons chopped rosemary  
1 cup finely chopped onions  
1/2 cup tomato paste  
Flour  
6 small fresh rosemary sprigs

Mix the stuffing ingredients together in a bowl.

Spread out the pieces of veal on a marble or other work area. At the widest end of the veal scallop, put a piece of ham. Place a rounded spoonful of the stuffing a little over an inch from the edge of the veal on top of the ham. Fold over the end piece of the veal with the stuffing and roll up snugly to the opposite end. Secure by sticking a toothpick through the loose end of the veal and through the center. Make the remaining involtini in the same manner.

Heat 1/3 cup of olive oil in a large pan and brown the veal rolls on all sides over medium-high heat. Cook them in batches, if necessary. A medium light brown is the objective. Transfer the veal to a large pot, season to taste with salt and pepper, add the rosemary, and mix gently.

In the same pan, combine the onions, tomato paste, and 1 cup of water, and simmer over low heat for 5 minutes. Pour the sauce over the involtini and then add enough water to almost cover the veal rolls. Sprinkle the tops of the rolls, which are sticking out of the water, lightly with flour and bring to a boil. Partially cover and cook over medium heat for about one hour, until the veal is very tender. After the first 15 minutes of cooking time, stir the involtini often to prevent any from sticking to the bottom of the pan—the flour will have dissolved and begun to thicken the sauce.

With tongs, transfer the cooked involtini to a dish, shaking any extra sauce back into the pot. Remove the toothpicks from the rolls. Arrange the involtini in rows or in a circle in a serving dish and spoon about 1 cup of sauce over the top. Garnish with rosemary sprigs. Pass the extra sauce in a bowl. Any remaining sauce is excellent on spaghetti for another meal, and it freezes well.

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<sup>i</sup> (The veal must be cut from the thigh section of the leg and flattened very thin. There must be no breaks or holes in the meat, or the cheese in the stuffing will leak out. If the veal isn't flattened thin enough and if the muscle isn't broken down, the involtini won't be tender enough. Insist that the butcher cut and prepare the veal in this manner. Once you have taught him the correct method, it will be more convenient for you to use the same butcher, so you won't have to explain repeatedly how you like the veal.)