



## INTRODUCTION

Laura Vitale is an Italian-American television host and YouTube personality. She was born and raised in Naples, Italy. At twelve years of age, she moved to the United States. She started her cooking journey working with her father in their restaurants. The restaurants have since closed due to the poor economy, but she never let that crush her dreams or stop her from doing what she loves.

Now a web sensation and online superstar, Vitale brings her take on American mealtimes to television. Although Laura's roots are in Italian food, she is first and foremost an all-American girl. With emphasis on seasonal and simple, Laura's blend of easy but enticing recipes and girl-next-door charm will make for meals that America will adore.

Due to the popularity of her video series "Laura in the Kitchen," there she cooks Italian cuisine, the Cooking Channel hired her as a chef and host of "Simply Laura." She has appeared on many other cooking shows since, including "Beat Bobby Flay," "The Today Show," and "Rachael Ray Kitchen"

## Wasatch County Cooking Class, February 2026

**Tricia Mathis, FCS/4-H Educator** 55 S. 500 E. Heber City, UT 84032 | [patricia.mathis@usu.edu](mailto:patricia.mathis@usu.edu) | 435-657-3234



# Whipped Ricotta

## with Honey & Pistachio

### INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup roasted salted Pistachios
- 16 ounces fresh whole milk ricotta cheese
- 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves picked
- ½ small garlic clove
- ½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- Kosher salt
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- Charred Bread or ruffled potato chips, for serving

### DIRECTIONS

In a food processor, pulse the pistachios until finely chopped. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Without wiping out the food processor, add the ricotta, 1 Tablespoon of the olive oil, the thyme leaves, garlic, lemon zest, and a pinch of salt. Process until thick and creamy, about 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to a shallow serving bowl.

Drizzle the ricotta with the remaining 1 Tablespoon olive oil and the honey and sprinkle with the chopped pistachios. Serve with charred bread or chips.

### Wasatch County Cooking Class, February 2026

**Tricia Mathis, FCS/4-H Educator** 55 S. 500 E. Heber City, UT 84032 | [patricia.mathis@usu.edu](mailto:patricia.mathis@usu.edu) | 435-657-3234



# Italian Chopped Salad

## INGREDIENTS

### Dressing:

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian oregano
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Salad:

- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
- Kosher salt
- 1 large head of romaine, shredded
- 1 medium head of radicchio, shredded
- 6 ounces salami, cut into 1/4-inch thick strips
- 6 ounces provolone, cut into 1/4-inch strips
- ¼ cup peperoncini rings
- ½ small red onion, halved and thinly sliced

## DIRECTIONS

Make the dressing: In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, add the oil, vinegar, parm, garlic, Dijon, anchovy paste, and oregano. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper and shake to incorporate well.

Make the salad: In a large salad bowl, add the tomatoes and season them with a pinch of salt. Add the romaine, radicchio, salami, provolone, peperoncini, and onion and drizzle with about half of the dressing (use more or less depending on your preference). Store the remainder of the dressing in the fridge. Give everything a good toss to combine, then serve right away.

## Wasatch County Cooking Class, February 2026

**Tricia Mathis, FCS/4-H Educator** 55 S. 500 E. Heber City, UT 84032 | [patricia.mathis@usu.edu](mailto:patricia.mathis@usu.edu) | 435-657-3234



# RIGATONI

## with Sausage & Mushrooms

### INGREDIENTS

- Kosher Salt
- 1 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pound sweet or spicy Italian sausage, casings removed
- 10 ounces button of cremini mushrooms, stems trimmed, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 pound rigatoni
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup freshly grated pecorino cheese, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 Tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley

### DIRECTIONS

Fill a large pot with water, add a generous pinch of salt, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

Meanwhile in a large skillet or shallow Dutch oven (my preference for this dish), heat the oil over medium to medium-high heat. When the oil shimmers, add the sausage and cook, breaking it up with a wooden spoon or spatula, until just about cooked through, 6 to 8 minutes.

Add the mushrooms along with a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms have cooked down about 10 minutes. Add the garlic, cook, stirring, for 1 more minute, then reduce the heat to low while you cook the rigatoni.

Add the rigatoni to the boiling water and cook for 2 minutes less than the package directions.

While the pasta cooks, in a small bowl, whisk together the eggs, pecorino, and a few cracks of black pepper.

Just before the rigatoni is ready, scoop out 1 cup of the starchy cooking water. Slowly whisk ½ cup of the water into the eggs to temper them. Set the egg mixture and the remaining pasta cooking water aside.

Drain the rigatoni and add it to the sausage mixture. Add the egg mixture and toss to combine. Remove the pan from the heat. Add the parsley and more pecorino to taste, then toss vigorously to make sure the pasta is well coated. You could add a splash more of the reserved cooking water if you need to, but you most likely won't. Serve immediately.

## Wasatch County Cooking Class, February 2026

**Tricia Mathis, FCS/4-H Educator** 55 S. 500 E. Heber City, UT 84032 | [patricia.mathis@usu.edu](mailto:patricia.mathis@usu.edu) | 435-657-3234



# Olive Oil Apple Snack Cake

## INGREDIENTS

- Cooking spray
- 1 cup sugar, plus more for sprinkling
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large eggs
- 2 medium Honeycrisp apples, peeled and grated
- ¼ cup + 2 Tablespoons whole milk
- 1 Tablespoon pure vanilla paste or extract
- Grated zest of 1 lemon
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat an 8-inch springform pan with cooking spray and line the bottom with a round of parchment paper.

In a large bowl with a hand or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, combine the sugar, oil, and eggs and whisk on medium speed until the ingredients are completely emulsified, about 2 minutes. Add the apples, milk, vanilla, and lemon zest and mix until combined.

Switch to a spatula or wooden spoon, add the flour, baking powder, and salt and stir until the dry ingredients are well incorporated. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and sprinkle about 1 Tablespoon of sugar over the top.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Allow the cake to cool in the pan for about 30 minutes.

Carefully remove the sides of the pan and transfer the cake (still on the cake bottom) to a wire rack to cool completely before serving. I keep this cake tightly covered at room temperature for up to 3 days, but it's really best eaten within a day or two of baking.

## Wasatch County Cooking Class, February 2026

**Tricia Mathis, FCS/4-H Educator** 55 S. 500 E. Heber City, UT 84032 | [patricia.mathis@usu.edu](mailto:patricia.mathis@usu.edu) | 435-657-3234