Stuffed Endive, Sicilian Style

Endive can be a bit bitter when eaten raw. Cooking it helps a lot, but plain greens can be boring. Here is my favorite endive dish.



Wash a head of endive really well. Trim off the roots, but try to keep most of the stem intact (to hold everything together).

Toss the good outer leaves of endive that fall off while you are washing into the bottom of a heavy-bottomed pan.

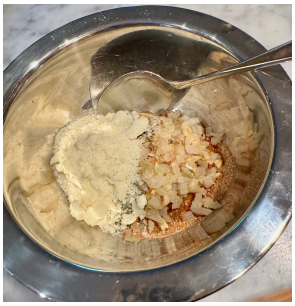
Set the cleaned head of endive into the pan, with the stem side down.



Make Italian bread crumb stuffing.

Toast some bread crumbs in a dry frying pan over medium heat. (This takes some patience – it looks like nothing is happening and then suddenly they are starting to burn. Stir frequently, and have a bowl handy to dump them into when they are done.)

Add some olive oil to the hot pan after you remove the bread crumbs — about enough to cover the bottom of the pan. Toss in some diced onions and a couple of minced garlic cloves and saute until the onions just starting to brown. Add them to the bowl with the bread crumbs.



Toss in a couple of tablespoons (or more!) of grated Italian cheese (pecorino Romano is my favorite). Season with salt, pepper, and some fresh or dried herbs (parsley, oregano and basil).



Mix it all together and add a bit more olive oil if it seems too dry.

Spoon the stuffing into the center of the endive and between the leaves. Gather up the leaves at the top, and gently roll the entire head onto its side, which will keep it more or less together.



Pour about half a cup of water or broth down the side of the pan. Pour a little olive oil over the endive. Cover the pot with a tight-fitting lid and put the pot over medium high heat until the liquid in the bottom of the pot just starts to boil. Then lower the heat to low to keep it at a simmer. Watch carefully to be sure it doesn't burn.



It's done when the endive is tender – about 20 minutes. Scoop or roll the endive into a serving bowl, let it cool slightly, and make a couple of vertical slices, and then serve with a spoon.

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