

# International Cooking

## A Delicious Appetizer From Italy: Smoked Mozzarella Fonduta

(NAPSA)—Smoked flavors are popular in Italy and are becoming more so in many American kitchens. Smoked flavors are intensified by cooking times—the longer the smoking process, the more defined the taste. For example, a shorter smoking time produces a light, natural flavor, as found in Olive Garden's Smoked Mozzarella Fonduta, inspired by their Culinary Institute at Tuscan and Riserva di Fizzano restaurant in Italy. This appetizer is a blend of oven-baked smoked mozzarella, provolone, Parmesan and Romano cheeses, and is served with fresh Tuscan bread.

"We're always looking for new, creative ways to bring authentic Italian flavors to our menu," said Terry Stanley, senior vice president of culinary and beverage for Olive Garden. "In Smoked Mozzarella Fonduta, the four Italian cheeses complement each other perfectly, resulting in a savory and delicious appetizer."

### AT-HOME RECIPE FOR SMOKED MOZZARELLA FONDUTA

Serves Eight

#### Ingredients:

- 1 loaf Italian bread, such as ciabatta or semolina, sliced into ¼-inch slices
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 tsp. thyme



A White Zinfandel, such as Beringer PVS, is a great complement to Smoked Mozzarella Fonduta.

- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 c. shredded mozzarella or smoked mozzarella cheese\*
- 3 c. shredded smoked provolone or provolone cheese\*
- (\*This recipe calls for one of these two cheeses to be smoked and one to be regular)
- 3 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 Tbsp. grated Romano cheese
- 8 tsp. fresh diced tomatoes
- Fresh chopped parsley

#### Preparation:

- Arrange sliced Italian bread flat on a baking sheet and cover with foil. Set aside until ready to use.

- Preheat oven to 450° F.
- Combine sour cream, thyme, red pepper, cayenne pepper and four cheeses in a large bowl and blend thoroughly.
- If serving family style, spray an 8" x 10" casserole dish with pan spray, then use a spatula to transfer the mixture. For individual servings, spray eight individual heat-resistant serving bowls, such as soufflé cups, with pan spray and fill each with ½ c. of mixture. Place individual bowls on a baking sheet.
- Using a large spoon, spread cheese mixture to create an even surface.
- Place casserole dish or baking sheet with individual bowls on center rack in oven.
- After five minutes, place baking sheet with bread, still covered, on top rack in oven. Bake for an additional five minutes.
- Remove bread and fonduta from oven.
- Garnish casserole dish with diced tomatoes and parsley in center of fonduta or divide evenly among smaller bowls.
- Arrange bread slices around bowl(s) and serve immediately.

For more information or to find an Olive Garden location, visit [www.olivegarden.com](http://www.olivegarden.com).