

Angela Filipczak

Angela is a widow who lives alone. She has 2 brothers and a sister who also live in Bedford. She has a son and daughter in law living in Putnoe and 2 grandchildren. Angela is a devout Catholic.



Aerial photo of Beverley Crescent 2006

I came to England from Italy in 1956. I am a trained nurse and came to England because the wages for nurses in Italy were very poor, barely enough to buy a loaf of bread a day. There was much poverty in Italy, especially during the war. I can remember young children eating the grass from the fields, they were so hungry.

I married Josef, a Polish man who came to England after being a prisoner of war in Germany. When we were first married, we lived in Souldrop, as my husband was a farm worker. I wanted a house of my own so we bought a house in Stanley Street in Bedford. The house was damp and the neighbours were very noisy, so I saved all my wages, never spending anything on luxuries like holidays and eventually we were able to pay cash to move to our house in Beverley Crescent.

We were a closely-knit family and on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas and Easter, we would all gather together for a family party. I would often cook for large numbers of people. My special recipe is for lasagne, which everyone really enjoyed.



Angela and husband's Silver Wedding

In my garden, I have a grapevine; the grapes are wine grapes, very small and sweet. My husband would make his own red wine but one grapevine wasn't enough so he used to buy grapes. Lots of Italians in Bedford made their own wine, some still do but it was mainly the older generation. When there were a lot of Italians in Queen's Park, the lorries would come in the autumn bringing the special grapes. There is nothing tastier than home made Italian wine.

Lasagne

1 packet of lasagne eg. lasagne festonata
Packet of mozzarella cheese
8 -12 oz grated hard Italian cheese
Small bunches of fresh basil and parsley
1 lb best lean mince
1 beaten egg
3 chopped garlic cloves
1 large chopped onion
Olive oil
3 - 4 jars of passata (tomato sauce)



Fry the chopped onion and garlic cloves fairly rapidly until the garlic starts to brown. In a separate pan, fry the mince to get rid of any excess fat. Put the mince, passata and herbs in the pan with the onions and simmer for at least an hour. Then remove the herbs. Cook the lasagne briefly in a large pan of salted water until it begins to soften and change colour (about 5 mins). Layer the sauce, grated cheese and mozzarella with the pasta. Brush a little beaten egg on top of the mozzarella each time. Lay the pasta diagonally in the dish, no more than 2 layers deep. Finish with a layer of sauce and cheese. Cook in a moderate oven for about 20 minutes covered with foil. Remove the foil and turn down the gas for the last 5 minutes. Serve with a crisp green salad and sprinkle with grated Parmesan and a large glass of Italian wine!

An Alternative Lasagne

1 large thinly sliced aubergine
Seasoned flour
Sunflower oil

Dip thin slices of aubergine in flour and egg and fry until soft. Continue as above but use less sauce. The slices are lovely if eaten by themselves as an appetiser or as an accompaniment to another dish.

Chicken and Rice (Kosovo) by Nuriye Ramaj

I learnt this from my mother and like it very much.

1 onion
1 carrot
2 cups of rice
Salt
Vegeta powder
4 chicken pieces



Peel the onion and carrot, chop them up and cook them in a pan. After a little while, add 2 cups of rice. We normally cook the chicken in a separate pan, adding the water from the rice. Mix it all together with some salt and vegeta powder and heat until fully cooked.