



ANSON MILLS

Gnocchi alla Romana

Yield

6 first course portions or 4 light main dish portions

Time

About 10 minutes to cook the semolina, at least 3 hours to rest it, and about 30 minutes to cut and bake it

Cooking Remarks

Among the myriad recipes for gnocchi alla romana, you will find some that nap the gnocchi with a light tomato sauce. Definitely tasty, but tomato sauce does not appear to lie deep in the history of this dish—nor does the sublimely delicious accompaniment of a lamb ragout. We recommend serving the gnocchi unadorned and screaming hot as a first course or unadorned and screaming hot as a main with a side salad.

Grown naturally rather than with irrigation and fertilizer to drive up protein like modern durum, our semolina makes a softer gnocchi—don't expect bulwark rounds. These gnocchi are fine and delicate. We recommend using a pizza stone on which to bake the dish unless you happen to be using a glass baking dish. The stone will allow the bottom of the rounds to brown.

Equipment Mise en Place

To make this recipe, you will need a pizza stone (unless you are baking in glass dish), a baking sheet, parchment paper, a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan, a whisk, a wooden spoon, a small offset icing spatula or a rubber spatula, a shallow 2-quart baking or gratin dish, a 2½-inch round cutter, and a pastry brush.

Ingredients

for the gnocchi

3 cups whole milk

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg (optional)

1½ cups (8 ounces) Anson Mills Ancient Emmer Semolina

5½ tablespoons (2.5 ounces) cultured butter, room temperature, plus additional for the baking sheet or baking dish

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

3 large eggs

1.25 ounces (about ¾ cup) finely grated Parmesan Reggiano

for finishing

3 tablespoons (1.5 ounces) unsalted butter, melted, plus additional for the baking dish

0.5 ounce (about ⅓ cup) finely grated Parmesan Reggiano

Directions

1. Coat a baking sheet with a light film of butter, line it with parchment paper, and lightly coat the parchment with more butter. Set the baking sheet aside.

2. *Make the gnocchi:* Bring the milk and nutmeg (if using) to a simmer in a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Whisking the milk, stream in the semolina. The mixture will thicken quickly. Reduce the heat to medium-low, exchange the whisk for a wooden spoon, and stir vigorously. Continue to cook, stirring continuously, until the mixture is very thick and stiff enough to hold the wooden spoon upright, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the butter, salt, and pepper, and stir until the butter is incorporated. Let the mixture cool for a couple of minutes.

3. Beat the eggs until well combined. Add the Parmesan and the eggs to the semolina mixture and whisk until fully incorporated. Scrape the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet and use a small offset icing spatula or a rubber spatula to spread and smooth it into a 1/2-inch-thick rectangular slab measuring about 12 inches by 9 inches. Press plastic wrap directly against the surface and smooth the surface with your hands. Let cool until barely warm, and then refrigerate until firm and well chilled, at least 3 hours or for up to 48 hours.

4. *Finish the gnocchi:* Adjust the oven rack to the upper-middle position and place a pizza stone on the rack (unless you are baking in a glass baking dish). Heat the oven to 475 degrees. Liberally butter a shallow 2-quart baking dish. Remove the semolina slab from the refrigerator and peel off the plastic wrap. Lay a sheet of parchment paper on the work surface and invert the slab of semolina on top of it. Peel off the parchment that is now on top of the semolina and set it to the side. Using a 2 1/2-inch round cutter, stamp out rounds from the slab, cutting the rounds as close together as possible and wiping the cutter after each cut to prevent sticking. Lay the rounds on the parchment. Press together the scraps and stamp out additional rounds until you have 24. Layer the rounds in the prepared baking dish, shingling them to fit. Discard any scraps.

5. Brush the melted butter onto the semolina rounds and sprinkle with the Parmesan. Bake until the gnocchi are nicely browned and the butter is bubbling around them, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the baking dish about halfway through. If the gnocchi aren't toasty enough to suit you, you may run the gratin under the broiler for a short time. Let cool for about 5 minutes and serve.