

Margherita Gnocchi with Grammy's Sauce

This recipe is my Grammy's recipe and it is very dear to my heart. My memories of my Grammy are always surrounded by food - whether it was her feeding us ravioli or feeding us cappelletti or feeding us pizelles...or threatening us with a wooden spoon when we misbehaved. Food was everywhere at my Gram's house. I don't think she would know a store bought ravioli if it hit her in the face. And the house always had the slight smell of anise because she always had homemade biscotti on hand. She passed away last year and I miss her everyday. But I have her recipes and through them her spirit lives on. I was so happy to make her gnocchi with my fellow Italian-American Lesli Margherita! I'm sure Gram was in heaven loving every minute of it.

Ingredients

Gnocchi

2 lbs russet potatoes, scrubbed (about 4 medium)

1 ¼ - 1 ½ c flour (more for dusting)

1 tsp salt

1 egg, lightly beaten

Grammy's Sauce (recipe follows)

Special tool - ricer

Preparation

Put the potatoes in a large pot and cover them with cold water by about 2 inches. Cover the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer the potatoes until they are super tender and you can pierce them easily with the tip of a knife.

Drain the potatoes and let them cool until you can handle them but not completely cool. Peel the potatoes with your hands - the peel should slip right off. Cut them cross-wise and pass them through a ricer. If you don't have a ricer mash them very well by hand.

Flour your surface and line two large baking sheets with parchment and lightly dust with flour. In a small bowl add 1 ¼ cup flour and salt and mix. Add the egg to the riced potatoes and mix well with your hands. Now roll up your sleeves and add the potato mixture to the flour mixture. Mix with your hands until the flour and potatoes are incorporated. The dough will still be a bit crumbly at this point. If it's not add more flour. Then press the mixture to the bottom of the bowl and form one big ball. Dump it out onto your floured work surface.

Knead gently until the flour is fully incorporated - 30 seconds to 1 minute. Now the dough should feel a little sticky. If it doesn't, add a little water. Don't overwork the dough. Gnocchi is supposed to feel like eating pillows. if you overwork it, it will feel like eating rocks. Move the dough to one side (make sure it's floured underneath) and cover with a kitchen towel.

Take a handful of dough off and with the palms of your hands roll the dough into a rope about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. Then with a sharp knife or a bench knife cut the gnocchi into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch rectangles. Put the cut gnocchi on the prepped baking sheet and repeat until all the dough is used.

At this point you are ready to either make your gnocchi (they can sit out for up to 3 hours) or freeze it! If cooking gnocchi right away, bring a large pot of water to boil. Put gnocchi in boiling water and once they float they're done! Take them out with a slotted spoon and put into serving bowl. Top with Grammy's sauce and enjoy!!

If you are gonna freeze it put the gnocchi in the freezer while they are still on the baking sheets. once they are completely frozen through you can transfer them to zip top baggies and freeze for up to two months. Cook them from their frozen state but do it in a couple batches. If the temperature drops too much they'll fall apart.

Grammy's Sauce (as made by Kirsten)*

This is my Grammy's sauce, but with my adjustments I've made over the years. :) Gram says to use ribs and rump roast for the very best flavor, but ground chuck will do in a pinch. It's also another meal in itself. She and my Pap pap would eat the ribs and rump roast for dinner after they had been flavoring the sauce all day.

- 1 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs country style pork ribs or pork spare ribs
- 1 - 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb piece of rump roast or 1 lb ground chuck
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c red wine
- 2 28 oz cans tomato puree
- 4 6 oz cans
- 1 tablespoon basil, finely chopped (more to taste)
- 2 teaspoons parsley, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup parmigiano reggiano cheese, grated
- Salt & pepper

Heat oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium high heat. Add the country ribs and brown on all sides. Remove to a plate and brown the rump roast on all sides. Remove to a plate.

Add the garlic and onion to the pot and saute until light brown - about 7 minutes. Add the red wine to deglaze the pan. Scrape off the brown bits and let it reduce by half. Add the tomato puree and the tomato paste. Add 6 tomato paste cans of water (which is just 36 oz...aka 4 cups). Add the basil, parsley and sugar and mix everything together. Then add the ribs and rump roast along with their juices back into the pot. If the sauce feels too thick at this moment then add water.

Let everything come to a boil and cook on low heat, uncovered, for 1 ½ hours. Add cheese to sauce. Salt and pepper to taste.

And five, six, seven, EAT!