Main dishes / Italy

Gnocchi al Burro e Salvia

Potato gnocchi made right have the texture of clouds condensed into something you can hold — impossibly light, barely structured, yielding at the touch of a fork. Brown the butter to hazelnut, fry sage leaves until they shatter, and the whole thing becomes northern Italian winter in a bowl.

Time 60 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 500 g Floury potatoes, such as Russet or King Edward (about 700g before baking)
- ☐ 130 g 00 flour (plus more for the bench)
- ☐ 18 g Egg yolk (1 large)
- ☐ 6 g Fine sea salt
- ☐ 80 g Unsalted butter (European-style, 84% fat)
- ☐ 10 g Fresh sage leaves (8-10 large)
- ☐ 40 g Parmigiano Reggiano (finely grated, to finish)

Let's make it.

01 Bake the unpeeled potatoes at 200°C (400°F) directly on the oven rack until completely tender — a skewer inserted meets no resistance, about 50 to 60 minutes. Baking, not boiling, is critical: boiling adds water to the potato, which forces you to add more flour for structure, and more flour means heavier gnocchi. While still steaming hot, halve the potatoes, scoop the flesh, and pass immediately through a potato ricer or fine-mesh drum sieve onto a clean, lightly floured surface. Spread the riced potato out and let the steam escape for 3 minutes.

02 Make a well in the centre of the riced potato. Add the egg yolk, salt, and about 100g of the flour. Using a bench scraper or your fingertips, work the flour into the potato with a cutting and folding motion — not kneading. Add more flour a tablespoon at a time only as needed. The dough is ready the moment it just comes together and no longer sticks to your hands. Overworking develops gluten and makes the gnocchi tough — the dough should feel pillowy and barely cohesive, almost impossibly soft.

03 Divide the dough into 6 portions. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a rope about 1.5cm in diameter — roll from the centre outward with flat palms, applying even pressure. Cut into 2cm pieces with a bench scraper or sharp knife. For the classic ridged gnocchi, roll each piece down the back of a fork with your thumb, creating a slight curl and ridges that grip the sauce. Place on a floured baking sheet in a single layer. Cook within 30 minutes or freeze immediately.

04 Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a rolling boil. Meanwhile, in a wide skillet, melt the butter over medium heat and continue cooking until the milk solids turn golden brown and the butter smells of toasted hazelnuts, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add sage leaves and fry until crisp and translucent, 30 to 45 seconds. Lower the heat to minimum. Drop gnocchi into boiling water in a single batch — they are ready about 30 seconds after they float to the surface. Remove with a spider directly into the brown butter pan, adding a splash of pasta water. Toss gently over medium heat for 30 seconds to coat, then serve immediately with grated Parmesan.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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