

*These delicious little dumplings
are ready for anything.*



TREVE'S WINE SUGGESTIONS

Sage Butter: Bright, juicy and earthy

PIEDMONT BARBERA

Tomato Pepper: SANGIOVESE or CHIANTI,
with red fruit, soft spice and higher acid

Lemon Sauce: VERDICCHIO, with a citrus
zestiness and herbal notes.

Potato gnocchi pure and simple ~ adorned with
sage butter and freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

FOR THE LOVE OF GNOCCHI

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I've rediscovered gnocchi thanks to a cooking adventure with my young daughter. Who knew home-made gnocchi could be child's play?

Gnocchi (pronounced *N'YOH-kee*) are light little pillow dumplings; nothing like the dense dough I once associated with this dish. Years before I had had the misfortune of ordering a heavy gnocchi dish smothered in a glop of cheese sauce that left my tummy in a stodgy knot. I swore off gnocchi right then and there. Now, all these years later, I'm making up for lost time with this versatile little gem of a dumpling.

Gnocchi complement just about every sauce or pesto imaginable. They are delicious with a hearty ragù and a pleasant surprise in a light vegetable broth. They can be served simply, sautéed with butter or dressed up with vegetables, meat or cheese. These satisfying morsels add a soft and comforting texture to just about any meal. They can be served as an appetizer, entree or side dish. What's more, they're easy to master, fun to prepare and can be frozen until needed (think easy entertaining).

I've included three easy sauce recipes to adorn your gnocchi.

There are countless recipes for gnocchi with varying shapes, textures and cooking techniques. Ingredients can include potato, semolina, breadcrumbs, ricotta cheese, walnuts, pumpkin, sweet potato, spinach and rice, to name a few. Gnocchi à la Romaine is a hearty version made with semolina and prepared much like polenta; the dough is poured onto a sheet pan, chilled until set and cut into shapes. Parisienne Gnocchi is made from *paté à choux*, a sticky dough shaped with the aid of a pastry bag. My favourite version, however, is much easier: hand-rolled potato gnocchi.

The process is straightforward: combine warm cooked potatoes, processed through a rice or food mill, with egg and enough flour to form a light dough. The dough is then shaped into long ropes and cut into bite-size morsels. The little gnocco (singular of gnocchi) can be left as is, smooth like a little cushion, or pressed against a fork or a wooden gnocchi paddle to create textured ridges for the sauce to cling. (Gnocchi paddles are likely the least expensive gadget you'll find in a kitchenware store; at about \$4.50 a pop, they're hard to pass up.)

The gnocchi are then poached in salted water where they rise to the surface within a few brief minutes. You will want to arm yourself with a slotted spoon the minute you drop them in the water. Once, after rallying a hungry crowd in the kitchen, I dropped the gnocchi in the simmering water and, distracted by the noisy camaraderie (or perhaps the second glass of wine), I lost sight of my slotted spoon. By the time I recovered it, there was nothing left to retrieve from the water, which had turned murky with disintegrated potato.

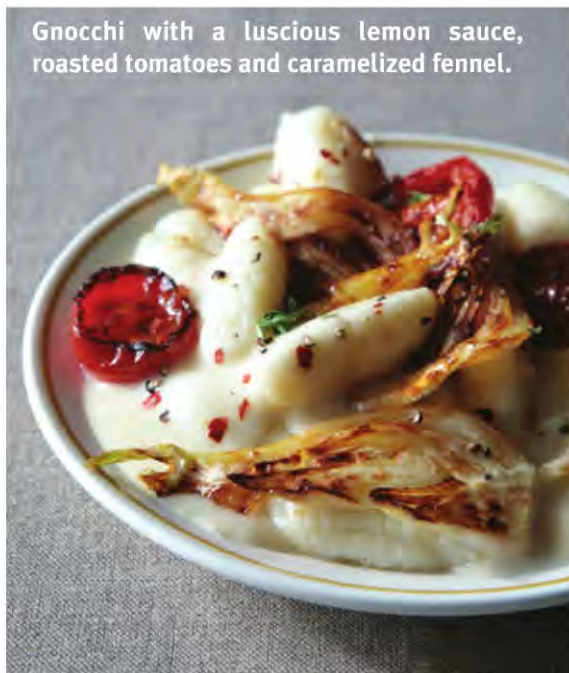
Once the gnocchi are cooked, they can be lightly sautéed in butter. Some prefer their gnocchi sautéed golden brown, while others prefer them pale. Either pale or golden, they're ready to be tossed with your favourite sauce. Gnocchi can also be placed in a baking dish, covered with tomato sauce and baked in the oven or topped with a cheese sauce and gratinéed under the broiler.

I've included three easy sauce recipes to adorn your gnocchi – a classic sage butter sauce, a rustic red pepper and tomato sauce that outshines any bottled variety, and a luscious lemon sauce with roasted tomatoes and sautéed fennel. Play around with your own sauces; gnocchi pairs well with just about everything. Just remember—when you're ready to poach those little nuggets: slotted spoon in one hand, wineglass in the other.

What's more comforting than a bowl of gnocchi with a rustic tomato and red pepper sauce?



Gnocchi with a luscious lemon sauce, roasted tomatoes and caramelized fennel.



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Potato Gnocchi With Sage Butter

6 - 8 servings or 12-14 appetizers

Ingredients

1 Kg Russet potatoes (about 5 large potatoes), washed but not peeled
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
1 egg, lightly beaten

Equipment

A ricer for processing the potatoes. If you do not have a ricer you can use a food mill, or cheese grater, but a ricer makes the lightest gnocchi.
A slotted spoon or small sieve for removing gnocchi from boiling water.
A gnocchi paddle, optional (but a lot of fun)



The potatoes can be baked or boiled in their skins, until tender.

Baked: Place (whole) potatoes on a rack in a preheated 375F oven until tender, about 45 minutes.

Boiled: Place the (whole) potatoes in a large pot of cold water. Bring the potatoes to a gentle boil and cook until potatoes can be easily pierced with the tip of a knife, about 45 minutes.

When the potatoes are cooked enough to work with, peel them. While the potatoes are still warm, press them through a ricer, food mill or cheese grater. Place the milled potatoes in a large bowl. Add the whole egg and about half the flour. Mix together with a fork until a soft dough forms. Turn the dough onto your work surface. Pour the remaining flour on a work surface near the dough. (You may not need all the flour.) Using your hands or a pastry scraper, gradually incorporate just enough flour to form a soft, pliable dough. Gently knead the dough until soft, about two minutes.

Divide the dough into 8 portions and roll each portion into a rope about 3/4" thick by 12" long. Line up the "ropes" and cut into 3/4" pieces. You may leave them shaped as is for a rustic look or you can press them against the tines of a fork or a small wooden gnocchi paddle. (The indentations help the capture the sauce.) Lay the pieces on a floured baking sheet, with enough space between them so that they are not touching.

(At this point you can freeze them on a baking sheet until solid, then transfer to plastic freezer bags and store in the freezer for up to one month.)

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and, with a slotted spoon nearby, gently drop the dumplings into the boiling water in batches of about two dozen, being careful not to overcrowd the pot. As the gnocchi float to the top remove them with a slotted spoon and continue cooking the next batch.

If not using immediately, the gnocchi can be tossed into a bowl of ice water, drained and tossed with a bit of oil. They can be stored in a plastic container in the refrigerator this way for up to three days. When you're ready to serve, simply reheat the gnocchi in a saucepan with a bit of sage (or plain) butter.

Sage Butter

1 bunch sage leaves (approximately 10 leaves, left whole)
1/2 cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan Reggiano cheese

Melt half the butter in a large sauté pan over high heat. Cook the butter until it begins to foam and turn brown. Add half the sage leaves and reduce the heat to medium. Continue to cook until the leaves are crispy, about 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the leaves and add about a cup of gnocchi to the butter and swirl in the pan until the dumplings are coated and heated through. Repeat with the balance of the dumplings and sage.

Serve in warmed bowls. Sprinkle with parmesan and garnish with the crispy sage leaves.

NOTE: When cooking frozen gnocchi, add them to the boiling water a small handful at a time. After the gnocchi float to the surface, test them to make sure they are fully cooked.

Tomato Pepper Sauce

Ingredients

3 pounds of ripe tomatoes (approximately 10 tomatoes), quartered
 2 red bell peppers, cut in half, seeds removed
 7 cloves garlic, unpeeled
 4 sprigs fresh thyme
 4 sprigs rosemary
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
 1 tsp Kosher salt

Equipment

A food mill or a food processor. The food mill provides a more rustic texture and its built-in sieve captures the vegetable skins, which means you don't need to peel the tomatoes, peppers or garlic before processing.

Preheat oven to 375. In a baking dish or a roasting pan (approx. 10" x 12") combine the tomatoes, peppers, garlic, thyme and rosemary. Drizzle with the oil and balsamic vinegar and sprinkle with the Kosher salt. Toss lightly to coat the vegetables and herbs with the oil.

Roast the tomatoes and peppers for approx. 50 minutes, turning over the vegetables halfway through the cooking. The tomatoes should be soft and the peppers charred.

Discard the herbs. If using a food processor, remove the skins from the tomatoes, peppers and garlic. Process the roasted vegetables and their juices through a food mill or food processor.

Transfer the processed vegetables into a saucepan and warm until heated through.

Adjust the seasoning with additional salt and balsamic vinegar, if needed.

Spoon over warm gnocchi. *Makes approximately 3 1/2 cups of sauce*

Lemon Sauce

1/3 cup unsalted butter
 1/3 cup flour
 2 1/4 cups chicken stock, preferably home made (plus more if required)
 1 cup whole or 2% milk
 1/2 cup 35% cream
 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
 1 1/2 tsp salt if using homemade (salt-free) stock or 1/2 tsp if using packaged
 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper (or more to taste)

The sauce

Melt the butter in a small saucepan (approx. 5 1/2" diameter) over medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for a few minutes, stirring constantly, until the flour and butter mixture is golden coloured. Remove from heat. This mixture, referred to as a roux, can be made in advance and stored in the refrigerator until ready to use.

In a separate, larger saucepan (approx. 8 1/2" diameter), heat the chicken stock with the milk and cream. Whisk the roux into the stock, until the mixture comes to a simmer and starts to thicken; this will take a few minutes. Continue whisking to ensure there are no lumps. The sauce should be thick enough to lightly coat the back of a spoon. Add the lemon juice, cheese, salt and crushed red pepper. If the mixture is too thick, add a bit more stock.

Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning with additional salt and/or lemon juice if required. Serve a generous spoonful of sauce over warm gnocchi and serve with roasted tomatoes and sautéed fennel, if desired.

Roasted Tomatoes

1 pint cherry tomatoes (approx. 2 cups)
 1 Tbsp grapeseed oil
 1 Tbsp freshly chopped rosemary
 1 Tbsp freshly chopped thyme
 1/2 tsp Kosher salt

In a bowl, combine the herbs with the oil and salt. Add the tomatoes and toss until evenly coated. On a baking tray lined with foil or parchment, spread the tomatoes out as a single layer, cut side up. Roast until tender, about 12 - 15 minutes.

Sautéed Fennel

3 fennel bulbs, sliced thinly
 2 Tbsp grapeseed oil
 1/2 tsp Kosher salt

Heat the oil in a medium-sized saucepan until the oil is shimmering. Add the sliced fennel bulbs in batches, being careful not to crowd the pan. Sauté the fennel a few minutes on each side until tender and golden. Drain on a paper towel and season with salt while still warm.

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