

GNOCCHI

SERVES: 8

INGREDIENTS:

800 gr tomato sauce

1 kg potatoes

1 kg gr flour

400 gr mozzarella cheese

80 gr parmesan cheese

Salt

Extra virgin olive oil

Basil leaves

Onion

DIRECTIONS:

Sauce: Heat the oil in a pan, and cook the onion for a couple of minutes. Add tomato sauce and basil, and cook for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes.

Gnocchi: Place the potatoes in a large pot with enough cold water to cover. Bring the water to a boil and cook, partially covered, until the potatoes are easily pierced with a fork but the skins are not split (about 30 minutes).

Drain the potatoes and let them stand just until cool enough to handle. Scrape the skin from the potato with a paring knife. Press the peeled potatoes through a potato ricer. Let them cool completely.

Place in a bowl the cold potatoes and the flour. Mix together with both hands to form a smooth but slightly sticky dough. It should take no longer than 3 minutes.

Cut the dough into small pieces. Place one piece of dough in front of you and pat it into a rough oblong. Using both hands, in a smooth back-and-forth motion and exerting light downward pressure, roll the dough into a rope 1/2 inch thick, flouring the dough if necessary as you roll to keep it from sticking.

Slice the ropes into 1/2-inch-thick rounds. Sprinkle the rounds lightly with flour and roll each piece quickly between your palms into a rough ball, flouring the dough and your hands as needed to prevent sticking. Hold the tines of a fork at a 45-degree angle to the table with the concave part facing up. Dip the tip of your thumb in flour. Take one ball of dough and with the tip of your thumb, press the dough lightly against the tines of the fork as you roll it downward toward the tips of the tines. As the dough wraps around the tip of your thumb, it will form into a dumpling with a deep indentation on one side and a ridged surface on the other. Set on a baking sheet lined with a floured kitchen towel and continue forming gnocchi from the remaining dough balls. Repeat the whole process with the remaining pieces of dough.

Cook the gnocchi in salted boiling water, stirring gently, until tender, about 3 minute after they rise to the surface.

Remove the gnocchi from the water, draining them well, and transfer to a wide saucepan with the sauce to be used.

When saucing gnocchi, remember this tip: If the sauce is too dense or the gnocchi seem too dry, use some of the gnocchi cooking water to thin the sauce and moisten the gnocchi.

Cut mozzarella cheese into small pieces and add to gnocchi together with parmesan cheese.

At this point you can serve gnocchi or you can place them in a baking dish and bake them at 180 C for 15 minutes.