

Gnocchi Verde (Spinach and Ricotta Dumplings)

By Sarah Jampel

This recipe comes from Time Life Books' "Recipes: The Cooking of Italy," which was published in their Foods of the World set (1968).

Serves 4 to 6

- 4 tablespoons butter
 - Two 10-ounce packages frozen chopped spinach, defrosted completely, squeezed dry of all moisture, and chopped very fine (about 1 1/2 cups), or 1 1/2 pounds fresh spinach, cooked, squeezed dry, and chopped
 - 3/4 cups ricotta cheese
 - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 - 6 tablespoons flour
 - 3/4 cups freshly grated Parmesan, divided, plus more for serving
 - 1/2 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon salt, divided
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
 - Pinch of ground nutmeg
 - 4 tablespoons melted butter, divided
1. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the spinach and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until almost all of the moisture has boiled away and the spinach starts to stick to the skillet.
 2. Add the ricotta and cook, stirring, for 3 to 4 more minutes.
 3. Transfer the spinach-ricotta mixture to a large mixing bowl and use a rubber spatula to mix in eggs, flour, 1/4 cup grated Parmesan, 1/2 teaspoon salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to 1 hour, until the mixture is quite firm.
 4. Preheat the broiler and bring 6 to 8 quarts of water, seasoned with the remaining 1 tablespoon salt, to a boil over medium heat in a large pot. Flour your hands lightly and shape the chilled gnocchi into balls about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Drop the gnocchi gently into the simmering water and cook for 5 to 8 minutes, until they puff slightly and are somewhat firm. Lift them out of the water with a slotted spoon and transfer to a plate lined with a towel to dry.
 5. Pour 2 tablespoons of the melted butter into a shallow, ovenproof dish and swirl it around to evenly distribute. Arrange the gnocchi in one layer across the bottom, leaving about 1/4 inch between each one. Dribble the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter over top, then sprinkle the gnocchi with the remaining 1/2 cup of cheese. Broil for about 3 minutes, until the cheese melts and is golden brown.
 6. Serve at once, with additional grated cheese if desired.