

Butternut Squash Ravioli ***with Sage Brown Butter, Zucchini and Almonds***



INGREDIENTS

For the Egg Pasta Dough:

4 Cups Unbleached all-purpose flour

6 large eggs

½ tsp salt

½ tsp extra virgin olive oil

Warm water as needed

For the Filling:

1 butternut squash (about 2 pounds)

1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

½ cup finely diced mostarda di Cremona

8 amaretti cookies, crushed to fine crumbs (~2/3 cup)

Freshly grated nutmeg

Freshly ground black pepper

2 large egg yolks

For the Sauce:

3 tbsp unsalted butter

4 oz chicken stock

4 sage leaves

1 cup thinly sliced strips of zucchini

¼ cup toasted sliced almonds

¼ cup grated Grana padano

Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

For the Egg Pasta Dough:

Mix the ingredients, withholding ¼ cup of flour, and knead until smooth and elastic, adding flour as necessary. Roll and shape as desired.

For the Filling:

Preheat the oven to 375F. With a sturdy serrated knife, carefully cut the squash into quarters and scrape out the seeds. Arrange the squash pieces cut side up in a baking dish and bake until it feels soft and is easily pierced with a knife, about 1 hour. Allow to cool.

Peel off the skin from the squash. Place the flesh in a food processor and process just until no longer chunky, a few seconds. Transfer the squash to a sieve lined with cheese-cloth and set it over a bowl; allow to drain in a cool place overnight.

Transfer the squash to a large mixing bowl. Beat in the grated cheese, mostarda, and crushed amaretti and season with nutmeg and pepper to taste. Beat in the egg yolks until smooth and well blended. Set the mixture in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Assembling and Cooking the Ravioli:

Bring six quarts of salted water to a rolling boil. Roll out a sheet of pasta dough on a hand crank pasta machine. Start at the number six (widest) setting, and work your way down to the thinnest setting. Spoon or pipe about a tablespoon of filling onto the dough at 3 inch intervals, one row along the center of the top half of the dough sheet, and another along the center of the bottom half. Roll out another sheet the same size and thickness. Paint the area between the dots of filling with egg wash, and lay the second sheet over the top.

Use a round cutter to cut the ravioli from the dough sheets. Make sure all of the edges are sealed, but don't press the dough together too much at the edges or the ravioli will be tough. Put the finished ravioli on a sheet pan dusted with flour or semolina. Once made, the ravioli can be cooked immediately or refrigerated or frozen.

When ready to cook, bring the salted water to a boil in a large pot. Add the ravioli to the boiling water a few at a time, stirring gently as you do. Cook until they rise to the surface and the edges are tender but still firm to the bite, about 6 minutes after the water returns to a boil.

For the Sauce:

While the ravioli is cooking, melt 3 tablespoons of unsalted butter in a large skillet over moderately high heat until it begins to foam. Continue to heat the butter until the milk solids begin to caramelize and turn light brown. Immediately add the sage, zucchini and chicken stock and cook until the zucchini are tender and the sauce is reduced. Season with salt and pepper. Toss the cooked ravioli in the sauce. Make sure all of the ravioli are well coated with sauce. Garnish with the toasted almonds and grated cheese. To serve, spoon the pasta onto warm plates with some of the pan sauce. Garnish with more grated cheese if you like.

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Pasta In a Sauce of Small Shrimp and Scallions, & Marinara Sauce



INGREDIENTS

For the Marinara Sauce:

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 pounds ripe fresh plum tomatoes, peeled and seeded, or one 35 ounce can Italian plum tomatoes (preferably San Marzano), seeded and lightly crushed, with their liquid
- Salt
- Crushed red pepper
- 10 fresh basil leaves, torn into small pieces

For the Pasta In a Sauce of Small Shrimp and Scallions:

- 1 pound of pasta
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup sliced garlic
- 1/4 cup Tuscan-style peperoncini in vinegar, drained, seeded and thinly sliced (about 12 whole pickled peppers)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup scallions cut into thin rounds
- 1 pound (about 2 dozen) small shrimp, washed, peeled and de-veined
- 4 tablespoons soft butter
- Hot water from the pasta cooking pot
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley

DIRECTIONS

For the Marinara Sauce:

Heat the oil in a 2- to 3-quart nonreactive saucepan over medium heat. Whack the garlic with the flat side of a knife, add it to the oil, and cook until lightly browned, about 2 minutes.

Carefully slide tomatoes and their liquid into the oil. Bring to a boil, and season lightly with salt and crushed red pepper. Lower the heat so sauce is at a lively simmer, and cook, breaking up tomatoes with a whisk or spoon, until sauce is chunky and thick, about 20 minutes.

Stir in the basil about 5 minutes before sauce is finished. Taste sauce, and season with salt and red pepper if necessary.

For the Pasta In a Sauce of Small Shrimp and Scallions:

Small shrimp make a lovely addition to skillet sauces, because they cook so quickly, barely two minutes in the skillet. The trick is to make sure that you don't overcook the shrimp. If you can, start your pasta before the sauce so they finish at the same time. But if your pasta isn't ready when the shrimp and sauce are, take the skillet off the heat.

Cooking the Pasta:

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. If you are using dry pasta, start cooking the pasta 5 minutes before; if you are using fresh, start the sauce and then put on the pasta to cook at the same time. Pour the olive oil into the big skillet, scatter the garlic slices in and set over medium-high heat. Cook for 1 minute, until the garlic is sizzling. Scatter the slices of peperoncino in a hot spot; cook for 1 minute; shake the pan now and then. Push the garlic and peppers to the side, turn the heat to high. Drop the shrimp in the center of the skillet and spread them so they're not crowded. Sprinkle on the salt and let them sizzle for 1/2 minute. Flip the shrimp over, giving the skillet a good toss or stirring and turning them; and cook another 1/2 minute or so, until the flesh is just turning opaque.

Scatter the scallions into the skillet; toss and stir in with the shrimp, for 20 to 30 seconds, just until they're sizzling. Stir in the butter and cook until it is melted and starts to simmer, 10 to 20 seconds. Ladle in 2 cups of boiling pasta water. Stir up everything in the skillet and let the sauce boil for only a moment. If the pasta is ready to add turn down the heat to very low. If the pasta is not ready, remove the skillet from the heat immediately; set it back over low heat when you do add the pasta. When the pasta is done al dente, scoop it up and drop into the shrimp pan. Toss briefly, sprinkle on the parsley, and toss again. Remove from the heat and drop the remaining 2 tablespoons butter on top.

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