

Pumpkin Gnocchi

Serves 6 people with extra to spare

Courtesy of L'Academie de Cuisine chef Brian Patterson, for demo October 15, 2016

2 cups roasted pumpkin pulp (see technique below; Turban thick-fleshed pumpkin is best)

2 large eggs

3 cups "00" pasta flour, plus 1 cup for dusting

¼ cup clarified butter (see technique below)

¼ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

Fresh sage leaves, cut into chiffonade, for serving

¼ cup toasted pepitas, for garnish

1. Bring a large pot full of water to a high boil. Heavily salt the water once it has reached a boil. Set aside a large bowl full of ice water.
2. In a bowl with a wooden spoon, combine the roasted pumpkin with the eggs. Incorporate the flour one cup at a time, until you have a mixture that is just dry enough to handle.
3. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured board to finish incorporating the flour. The dough has enough flour when it is tender but can be rolled without sticking to your hands or a rolling pin.
4. Gently roll the dough into a 1-inch thick sheet, approximately 18 inches by 18 inches. With a knife or bench scraper, cut the dough into eighteen 1-inch-thick strips. Cut each strip into 1-inch cubes. Roll each cube in flour, then roll each piece onto a gnocchi roller or a large fork to make indentations in the dough.
5. Cook the gnocchi in the salted water until each piece rises to the surface and floats for about a minute. Use a spider to transfer the gnocchi to the ice water to arrest the cooking. Remove the gnocchi from the ice water and dry it on a clean cloth towel.
6. Over a high flame, heat a large skillet until very hot. Put the clarified butter in the hot pan, and add the gnocchi to the hot butter a few at a time. (Add only as many gnocchi as can fit in a single layer in the pan. Fry in batches if needed.) The pan should never lose heat to the gnocchi; the gnocchi should always be taking color and sizzling and staying loose in the pan.
7. Once all the gnocchi are lightly browned and slightly puffed, finish the gnocchi with finely grated parmesan cheese and the chiffonade sage.
8. Taste and adjust seasoning, top with the pepitas, and serve immediately.

To roast the pumpkin:

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Using a large chef knife or cleaver, split the pumpkin in half from top to bottom. Using a large metal spoon, scrape out the seeds and loose interior flesh. Slice each half into thirds.
3. Arrange the pumpkin slices skin-side down on the lined baking sheets. Season the fleshy side of the pumpkin with olive oil, salt, pepper, chili flakes, grated nutmeg, and ground cloves. (You can alternatively use cumin, cinnamon or curry powder.)
4. Roast the pumpkin pieces in the oven until well-caramelized and cooked through, about 40 minutes.
5. Allow the roasted pumpkin to rest for at least 30 minutes. Remove the flesh from the husk, and transfer to a food processor with a metal blade or a stand mixer fitted with a paddle.
6. Beat the flesh to a smooth pulp, then can or freeze the pulp for up to 3 months, or refrigerate for up to 1 week.

Clarified butter

Butter is a natural emulsion of milk solids and fat—to clarify butter is to melt butter over medium heat, forcing the milk solids to separate from the fat. As the melted butter simmers over low heat, the milk solids begin to fry and change color. Once the milk solids are visible as light brown particles, the butter is ready to be decanted.

To decant clarified butter, remove the melted butter with browned milk solids from heat, and allow the butter to rest so that the milk solids sink to the bottom of the pot. It should be easy to simply pour the clarified butter from the top into a container—however, a fine sieve or strainer lined with cheesecloth is effective in rendering clean clarified butter.

Recipe courtesy of L'Academie de Cuisine Chef Brian Patterson



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