

MAULTASCHEN MIT BÄRLAUCHPESTO / GIANT RAVIOLI WITH RAMP PESTO

INGREDIENTS

For the pasta dough

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs, plus 1 for egg wash
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
cornmeal, for dusting

For the filling

2 cups chopped spinach (fresh or frozen; if using fresh, blanch and cool, then chop)
6 lardons diced bacon
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 stale rolls, crusts removed
1/2 cup milk
1/2 pound ground meat pork
1/2 pound ground veal
2 eggs
a pinch of salt, pepper and nutmeg

For the pesto

20 ramps roughly chopped (aka wild garlic)
2/3 cup olive oil
1/2 cup toasted pine nuts
4 tablespoons ricotta
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tsp kosher salt
black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

To make the dough: In an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook, combine the flour and salt. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, and continue to mix. Drizzle in 1 tablespoons of the olive oil and continue to incorporate all the flour until it forms a ball. Sprinkle some flour on work surface, knead and fold the dough until elastic and smooth, this should take about 10 minutes. Brush the surface with the remaining olive oil and wrap the dough in plastic wrap; let rest for about 30 minutes.

Cut the ball of dough in 1/2, cover and reserve the piece you are not immediately using to prevent it from drying out. Dust the counter and dough with a little flour. Press the dough into a rectangle and roll it through a pasta machine, 2 or 3 times, at widest setting. Pull and stretch the sheet of dough with the palm of your hand as it emerges from the rollers. Reduce the setting and crank the dough through again, 2 or 3 times. Continue tightening until the machine is at the narrowest setting; the dough should be paper-thin, about 1/8-inch thick (you should be able to see your hand through it.). Dust the sheets of dough with flour as needed. Lay long sheets of pasta dough aside and cover with a clean dish towel until ready to fill.

To make the filling: In a medium bowl, combine rolls with milk and let sit for 15-20 minutes. The rolls will absorb the milk and pretty much fall apart by themselves. If they don't, crumble them with your hands. This will create a milky mash that will keep the meat mixture from becoming too dense. Squeeze out any truly excess milk, if there is any. In the meantime, over medium heat, render the bacon for a couple of minutes, add the chopped onion and spinach and braise for a couple more minutes. Let cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl mix the ground meats, the spinach mixture and the soaked bread. Add the eggs and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

To assemble maultaschen: Beat 1 egg with 1 tablespoon of water to make an egg wash. Dust the counter and sheet of dough with flour, lay out the long sheet of pasta, and brush the top surface with the egg wash, which acts as a glue. Drop tablespoons of filling on 1/2 of the pasta sheet, about 2-inches apart. Fold the other 1/2 over the filling like a blanket. With your fingers, gently press out air pockets around each mound of filling. Use a sharp knife or square cookie cutter, cut each pillow into squares and crimp the 4 edges with the tines of a fork to make a tight seal. Dust the maultaschen and a sheet pan with cornmeal to prevent the pasta from sticking and lay them out to dry slightly while assembling the rest.

Cook the maultaschen in plenty of boiling salted water for 4 minutes; they'll float to the top when ready, so be careful not to overcrowd the pot. Lift the maultaschen from water with a large strainer or slotted spoon. Keep warm while you prepare the sauce.

For the pesto: Add the ramps, olive oil, pine nuts, ricotta, kosher salt and pepper to a blender or food processor. Pulse until there are no big chunks remaining, but there should still be some texture to the pesto (i.e. you don't want to completely puree it). Pesto can be stored like this (essentially "raw") in the refrigerator for up to a week. When you are ready to use, gently heat the pesto in a small sauce pan over low heat and serve over pasta.