

RECIPE

SAGE RICOTTA GNOCCHI WITH PARSNIPS, LEEKS AND TOASTED ALMONDS

Gnocchi:

- 1 pound fresh ricotta cheese
- 1 whole egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1 1/3 ounces semolina flour
- 3 1/2 ounces all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped sage

Wrap ricotta cheese in cheesecloth or a towel and squeeze out as much excess liquid as possible. In a large mixing bowl combine the ricotta and all the other ingredients; work together by hand until all ingredients are incorporated. The dough should be quite tacky; if too wet, simply add a little more flour.

Once the dough comes together, knead it on the counter, using enough flour to keep it from sticking, for 3–4 minutes. Be careful not to overwork the dough or it will make the gnocchi tough.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and season it with salt so it tastes like the sea. Also prepare a large bowl of ice water for shocking.

With your hands, roll the dough on the counter (use flour to prevent sticking) into a long cylinder about a half-inch in diameter. Using a small paring knife, cut the cylinder down into half-inch pieces; they should look like small pillows.

Place the gnocchi into the boiling water and cook them until they float. Once they do, allow them to cook for 2 minutes more. Then remove from the boiling water and place into the ice water to cool. Remove from the ice water and lay out onto a towel to dry.

Finishing Procedure:

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup leeks, small dice
- 1 cup parsnips, small dice, boiled until tender then cooled
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons fresh cracked pepper
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped sage
- 1 cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 2 tablespoons almond oil (if not available, a good extra-virgin olive oil will do)

Heat a large skillet on the stove until quite hot. Add half the butter and allow it to melt and turn brown. Add the parsnips and leeks, allowing them to caramelize a bit. Then add the gnocchi and allow them to brown a bit, moving them around constantly to prevent them from sticking.

Once the gnocchi has browned a bit remove from the heat and add the wine. Return to the heat and allow the wine to reduce by half. Then add the chicken or vegetable stock and bring to a simmer.

Simmer for 3–4 minutes, then add Parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, sage, toasted sliced almonds, and almond oil. Then, over low heat, stir in the remaining half of the butter until melted.

Serve in a bowl, garnished with grated Parmesan cheese and (this is optional) leeks which have been julienned, tossed in flour, and fried in hot oil until crispy. (Serves 4.)



Now in its 27th year, the F&P remains a leading restaurant in the state for fine dining and fresh foods, and Alger has been a consistent, influential voice for quality, seasonal menus. "I think we set the standard in New Brunswick and in New Jersey early on," she comments, referring to the F&P's focus on contemporary American cuisine.

The restaurant is elegant—her husband is responsible for the physical plant—and polished. "We keep it hip, food-wise and decor-wise," she says. Huge shades balloon over the bar, and fresh plants add bright splashes of green to the airy, light-filled downstairs dining room.

Contrary to the usual practice at restaurants named for animals and fruit, frogs and peaches make minimal appearances at the F&P. Frogs' legs occasionally show up on the menu and there is an extensive peach-accented menu during New Jersey's peach season. A sketch of a frog is part of the restaurant's logo.

So where does the name come from? The answer can be found on the restaurant website, where potential customers can view a YouTube video skit by comedians Dudley Moore and Peter Cook that focuses on a restaurant in Scotland known to serve only frogs and peaches. Happily, that idea was never considered for the F&P in New Brunswick. 🐸



exterior photograph: Michael Polito

**THE FROG
AND THE PEACH**
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