

Ravioli

Written by Bob Skolnick
Photography by Marty Snortum Studio

Those who have made and enjoyed fresh pasta know there is nothing like it. We enlisted the help of Alejandra Chavez, proprietor and Chef at Thyme Matters in El Paso to assist us in the preparation and recipes of our featured ravioli.

To make the pasta dough, shape flour and salt into a mound and form a well in the center. Add the eggs and the olive oil in the center and beat with a fork then slowly start incorporating the flour into the egg mixture. Continue to incorporate all the flour, then work the dough with your hands for around five minutes until you have formed a smooth ball. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let rest for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator.

Flavoring & Coloring the Pasta Dough

Anchote - Purchase Anchote powder in the Mexican section of your local grocery store and add two envelopes to the beaten egg before blending the egg with the flour to make the pasta dough. It is packaged by Goya Foods, and is labeled "Sazon Goya Con Culantro Y Anchote". Anchote is ground Annato seed. It has its own unique flavor and will turn your pasta dough, once infused, to a vibrant orange or red color.

Spinach - Take 6 oz. of fresh spinach, remove the stems, and wash. Place in a food processor and pulse until pureed. Squeeze out excess liquid from the pureed spinach. Add the pureed spinach pulp to the egg and mix thoroughly. Add the spinach egg mixture to your flour and make your pasta dough. Due to the liquid in the spinach, you may need to add a little more flour to tighten the finished dough to the right consistency.

Rolling the Pasta Dough and Making the Ravioli

You have now taken the basic pasta dough recipe and divided it in half, flavoring half with fresh spinach leaf puree and the other half with Anchote. After the flavored dough has rested, remove it from its plastic wrap and place on a floured table or cutting board. Shape your dough to the width of the pasta dough roller. If you are rolling the dough with a rolling pin, roll out a sheet of dough about 6 1/2 inches wide and 1/8th inch thick. This will allow two ravioli circles to be cut out side by side. Using a round dough cutter, cut out a ravioli circle about 2 and a half inches wide. You will need a top and a bottom circle for each ravioli. On a floured board, layout the bottom portions of the raviolis. Brush the edges of the dough with water or an egg wash and place a tablespoon of the filling in the center of the ravioli circle. Be careful not to overfill the raviolis. Place the top layer of the ravioli over the filling and centered on the bottom circle. Make sure all of the edge is moistened with the water or egg wash and crimp the edges (pressing edges together with your fingers) all the way around to make a tight seal. Place the finished raviolis on a floured platter and set aside under refrigeration until ready to cook.



Basic Pasta Dough
Makes 24 each 2 1/2 inch raviolis
Serves 4 people, 6 raviolis each
(3 of each type)

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 each large eggs, plus 2 egg yolks *

Anchote Flavored Ravioli filled with Mexican Chicken & Cheese filling

Mexican Chicken Filling
Makes 12 raviolis (serves 4)

Ingredients

12 oz boneless / skinless chicken breasts, cubed
2 tbsp epazote, minced *
¼ cup bacon, diced fine
¼ cup fresh carrots, diced fine
1 tbsp Spanish onion, diced fine
4 tbsp ricotta cheese
1 tbsp olive oil
½ cup white wine
salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat olive oil in a pan and add the bacon. Cook for 3 minutes then set aside.

2. Drain some of the fat from the pan then add the onions, carrots and finally the chicken cubes. When the chicken is seared, add the white wine and let simmer for 15 minutes then add the epazote and salt and pepper to taste.

3. Remove from heat and transfer ingredients to a food processor. Pulse until mixture is smooth but not pureed. The mixture should be dry; if it is not, drain off some of the liquid. Add the bacon and the ricotta cheese, blend together. Cover and set aside under refrigeration until you are ready to fill the raviolis.

* Epazote, also known as Mexican tea, is a leafy fresh herb and is used often in Mexican and Caribbean cooking. It has its own unique taste. Typically it can be found fresh in Mexican grocery stores. If you cannot find epazote, substitute fresh cilantro.

Spinach flavored Ravioli with Salmon Dill Filling

Salmon Filling
Makes 12 raviolis (serves 4)

16 oz fresh, raw salmon
3 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
1 tbsp white onion, diced fine
½ tbsp fresh garlic, minced
1 tsp fresh lemon juice
½ cup white wine - not too dry
1 each whole egg, beaten
3 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a pan and add the salmon. Sear the salmon on all sides then place in oven for 15 minutes until cooked through.

2. Remove the salmon from the oven and break the salmon into pieces with a fork. Set aside covered in a glass or stainless bowl.

3. In a separate skillet, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and cook onion and garlic. Add salmon back into pan then add white wine. Add lemon juice, and then finally the dill and salt and pepper to taste. Transfer ingredients to a food processor, add egg and pulse until mixture is smooth but not pureed.



Cooking & Serving the Raviolis

Use a shallow and wide sauté pan, preferably with a 2 to 3 inch side. Place a mild chicken stock in the pan, about 2 inches in depth and season with a little garlic powder. Bring the stock to a rapid simmer, and one by one gently float the individual raviolis in the cooking liquid. Return the liquid to a simmer and the raviolis will float near the surface. After several minutes (3 to 4) carefully turn each ravioli over (use a slotted spoon) and cook for an additional few minutes. When cooked al dente (remember fresh pasta cooks quickly), remove the raviolis with a slotted spoon, drain and place on a lightly oiled serving platter. Serve three of each of the flavored ravioli per person. Place a dollop of tomato concasse or marinara sauce underneath and on top of each anchote ravioli. Place a dollop of beurre blanc sauce or seafood cream sauce underneath and on top of each anchote ravioli. Garnish with fresh Parmesan cheese and drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil over the entire dish.

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