

Gnocchi alla Norma (Roasted Eggplant Version)

Ingredients

- 1 lb (450 g) potato gnocchi
 - 1 large eggplant, diced
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1 (14 oz / 400 g) can crushed tomatoes
 - 1 tbsp tomato paste
 - ½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
 - ½ tsp sugar (optional, to balance acidity)
 - 1 tsp dried oregano or 2 tsp fresh oregano leaves
 - ½ cup (50 g) grated ricotta salata or pecorino cheese
 - Fresh basil leaves, torn or chiffonade, for garnish
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Instructions

- 1. Roast the Eggplant**
Preheat oven to **425°F (220°C)**. Toss diced eggplant with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and roast for **25–30 minutes**, stirring halfway through, until golden and tender.
 - 2. Prepare the Sauce**
In a large skillet, heat a drizzle of olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and cook just until fragrant, about **30 seconds**. Stir in crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, red pepper flakes, sugar, and oregano. Simmer for **10–12 minutes**, stirring occasionally, until thickened.
 - 3. Cook the Gnocchi**
Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add gnocchi and cook until they float to the surface, about **2–3 minutes**. Drain and reserve ½ cup of the cooking water.
 - 4. Combine Everything**
Add roasted eggplant and gnocchi to the tomato sauce. Toss gently to coat, adding a splash of reserved cooking water if needed to loosen the sauce. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.
 - 5. Serve**
Spoon into warm bowls and top with grated ricotta salata (or pecorino) and fresh basil. Serve immediately.
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Chef's Notes

- For extra depth, roast the eggplant with a pinch of smoked paprika.
- Ricotta salata gives the most authentic Sicilian flavor, but parmesan works well too.
- The sauce can be made ahead and reheated while gnocchi cooks.