

Event #3 Fresh Pasta & Italian Night — The Art of Handmade Pasta

Discover the craft and tradition of Italian cooking in this interactive hands-on experience dedicated to fresh pasta. Participants learn authentic techniques for preparing dough, shaping pasta, and finishing restaurant-quality dishes.

Menu

Hand-Rolled Ricotta Ravioli / Tomato Butter Sauce
Radicchio & Seared Endive Salad / Lemon / Hot Honey
Gnocchi in the Style of Cacio e Pepe / Sage / Mushrooms
Salted Caramel Panna Cotta

9-Yolk Pasta Dough – perfect for ravioli

- 8 ounces by weight all-purpose flour (reserve a tablespoon for rolling)
- 8 large egg yolks
- 1 large egg
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon milk

Mound flour on a board or other surface and create a well in the center, pushing the flour to all sides to make a ring with sides about 1-inch wide. Make sure that the well is wide enough to hold all the eggs without spilling.

Pour the egg yolks, egg, oil and milk into the well. Use your fingers to break the eggs up. Still using your fingers, begin turning the eggs in a circular motion, keeping them within the well and not allowing them to spill over the sides. This circular motion allows the eggs to gradually pull in flour from the sides of the well; it is important that the flour not be incorporated too rapidly, or dough will be lumpy. Keep moving the eggs while slowly incorporating the flour. Using a pastry scraper, occasionally push the flour toward the eggs; the flour should be moved only enough to maintain the gradual incorporation of the flour, and the eggs should continue to be contained within the well. The mixture will thicken and eventually get too tight to keep turning with your fingers.

When the dough begins thickening and starts lifting itself from the board, begin incorporating the remaining flour with the pastry scraper by lifting the flour up and over the dough that's beginning to form and cutting it into the dough. When the remaining flour from the sides of the well has been cut into the dough, the dough will still look shaggy. Bring the dough together with the palms of your hands and form it into a ball. It will look flaky but will hold together.

Knead the dough by pressing it, bit by bit, in a forward motion with the heels of your hands rather than folding it over on itself as you would with a bread dough. Re-form the dough into a ball and repeat the process several times. The dough should feel moist but not sticky. Let the dough rest for a few minutes while you clean the work surface.

Dust the clean work surface with a little flour. Knead the dough by pushing against it in a forward motion with the heels of your hands. Form the dough into a ball again and knead it again. Keep kneading in this forward motion until the dough becomes silky smooth. The dough is ready when you can pull your finger through it and the dough wants to snap back into place. The kneading process can take from 10 to 15 minutes.

Even if you think you are finished kneading, knead it for an extra 10 minutes; you cannot overknead this dough. It is important to work the dough long enough to pass the pull test; otherwise, when it rests, it will collapse.

Double-wrap the dough in plastic wrap to ensure that it does not dry out. Let the dough rest for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour before rolling it through a pasta machine. The dough can be made a day ahead, wrapped and refrigerated; bring to room temperature before proceeding

Ricotta Ravioli Filling - (fills ~24 medium ravioli)

- 500 g ricotta (well-drained, full fat)
- ½ cup finely grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 small garlic clove (microplaned or very fine)
- Zest of ½ lemon
- 1–2 tbsp fresh basil or parsley (very finely chopped)
- Salt & black pepper

If your ricotta is wet, drain it in cheesecloth or a fine sieve for at least 1–2 hours (or overnight in the fridge). This is key—loose ricotta = blown ravioli.

In a bowl, combine ricotta, Parm, egg yolk, garlic, lemon zest, and herbs. Mix gently until smooth but not overworked. Season with salt and pepper. Taste—it should be slightly over-seasoned since pasta will mute it. Transfer to a piping bag or spoon into small quenelles when filling.

Tomato Butter Sauce (serves ~4)

- 2 cups grape tomatoes (halved)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic (thinly sliced)
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 3–4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 tbsp cold butter (cubed)
- Small handful fresh basil (torn)
- Salt & black pepper

Heat olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add garlic and gently sweat—no colour, just fragrant. Add grape tomatoes and a pinch of salt. Let them blister and soften, about 5–7 minutes, stirring occasionally. You want some to break down and some to hold shape. Pour in the white wine and add thyme. Let it reduce by about half—this concentrates flavour and burns off the sharpness. Lower the heat. Start whisking in cold butter, one cube at a time, letting it emulsify into the tomato juices. This gives you that glossy, slightly rich sauce without feeling heavy. Taste and adjust seasoning. Remove thyme stems, then finish with torn basil and a crack of black pepper

Plain Gnocchi

2 large baking (russet) potatoes (about 1 ¾ pounds) scrubbed, 1 large egg, 1 teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg, 2 tbsp. creamy ricotta, ¼ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour (approx, or as needed)

potatoes can be baked in a preheated 400°F oven until tender, about 40 minutes.)and let them stand just until cool enough to handle. (The hotter the potatoes are when they are peeled and riced, the lighter the gnocchi will be.)

Working quickly and protecting the hand that holds the potatoes with a folded kitchen towel or oven mitt, scrape the skin from the potato with a paring knife. Press the peeled potatoes through a potato ricer. Alternatively, the potatoes can be passed through a food mill fitted with the fine disc, but a ricer makes fluffier potatoes and therefore lighter gnocchi. Spread the riced potatoes into a thin, even layer on the work surface, without pressing them or compacting them. Let them cool completely.

In a small bowl, beat the egg, salt, pepper, and nutmeg together. Gather the cold potatoes into a mound and form a well in the center. Pour the egg mixture into the well. Knead the potato and egg mixtures together with both hands, gradually adding the grated cheese and enough of the flour, about 1 1/2 cups, to form a smooth but slightly sticky dough. It should take no longer than 3 minutes to work the flour into the potato mixture; remember, the longer the dough is kneaded, the more flour it will require and the heavier it will become. As you knead the dough, it will stick to your hands and to the work surface: Repeatedly rub this rough dough from your hands and scrape it with a knife or dough scraper from the work surface back into the dough as you knead.

Wash and dry your hands. Dust the dough, your hands, and the work surface lightly with some of the remaining flour. Cut the dough into six equal pieces and set off to one side of the work surface. Place one piece of dough in front of you and pat it into a rough oblong. Using both hands, in a smooth back-and-forth motion and exerting light downward pressure, roll the dough into a rope 1/2 inch thick, flouring the dough if necessary as you roll to keep it from sticking. (When you first begin making gnocchi, until your hands get the feel of the dough, you may find it easier to cut each piece of dough in half to roll it.)

Slice the ropes into 1/2-inch-thick rounds. Sprinkle the rounds lightly with flour and roll each piece quickly between your palms into a rough ball, flouring the dough and your hands as needed to prevent sticking. Hold the tines of a fork at a 45-degree angle to the table with the concave part facing up. Dip the tip of your thumb in flour. Take one ball of dough and with the tip of your thumb, press the dough lightly against the tines of the fork as you roll it downward toward the tips of the tines. As the dough wraps around the tip of your thumb, it will form into a dumpling with a deep indentation on one side and a ridged surface on the other. Set on a baking sheet lined with a floured kitchen towel and continue forming gnocchi from the remaining dough balls. Repeat the whole process with the remaining pieces of dough. At this point the gnocchi must be cooked immediately or frozen

Cacio e Pepe with Gnocchi (serves 2–3)

- 500 g potato gnocchi
- 1 cup finely grated Pecorino Romano (very fine—microplane if possible)
- 1–1½ tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- ½–¾ cup reserved pasta water (starchy)
- Salt (for water) Bring a pot of well-salted water to a boil. Drop gnocchi in—once they float, cook another 30–45 seconds, then transfer directly to a sauté pan. **Save your cooking water.** In a dry pan, toast the cracked black pepper over medium heat until fragrant (30–60 seconds). This wakes it up. Add a ladle of gnocchi water to the pan with the pepper. Let it simmer briefly—this is your base. Add the gnocchi and toss to coat. You want a bit of movement in the pan—not dry. **Key step:** Take the pan off the heat. Let it cool slightly (10–15 seconds), then add Pecorino gradually while tossing. Add splashes of warm pasta water as needed to emulsify into a glossy sauce. Keep tossing until the sauce coats the gnocchi—silky, not clumpy.

Radicchio & Seared Endive Salad / Lemon / Hot Honey (serves 4)

- 1 head radicchio (cut into wedges or large pieces)
- 3 endive (halved lengthwise)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp butter
- ½ lemon (juice + a little zest)
- 2–3 tbsp hot honey (to taste)
- Salt & black pepper

Optional: Shaved Parmigiano or Pecorino, Toasted walnuts or hazelnuts, Fresh herbs (parsley, chive, or basil)

Heat a sauté pan over medium-high. Add olive oil. Place endive cut-side down and sear hard—don't move them. You want deep caramelization, 2–3 minutes. Flip, add butter, and baste briefly until just tender but still holding shape. Remove. In the same pan, add radicchio. Season lightly and let it char and wilt slightly—about 1–2 minutes. You want bitterness intact, just softened. Deglaze with a squeeze of lemon juice. Kill the heat. Arrange endive and radicchio on a platter. Drizzle with hot honey while still warm so it melts into everything. Finish with a touch more lemon juice/zest, olive oil, salt, and cracked pepper. Add cheese shavings and nuts if using.

Salted Caramel Panna Cotta (serves 6)

- 2 cups (500 ml) heavy cream
- ½ cup (125 ml) whole milk
- ½ cup sugar (for caramel)
- 3 tbsp water
- 2 tsp powdered gelatin (or 1 sheet + a bit)
- 3 tbsp cold water (for blooming gelatin)
- ½ tsp vanilla
- ¾–1 tsp flaky salt (to taste)

Method

Bloom gelatin in 3 tbsp cold water. Let it sit 5–10 minutes. In a saucepan, combine sugar and 3 tbsp water. Cook over medium heat until it turns a deep amber caramel—don't stir, just swirl gently. Carefully add cream (it will bubble aggressively), then milk. Stir to dissolve the caramel fully. Add salt and vanilla. Taste—you want a balance of sweet, bitter caramel, and salt. Remove from heat and let cool slightly (important—too hot can weaken gelatin). Whisk in bloomed gelatin until fully dissolved. Strain for a perfectly smooth finish. Pour into ramekins or molds. Chill at least 4 hours (overnight is best).