

Torteli Di Zucca

From Nelson's Kitchen
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Adapted from Lidia Bastianich.

Then we go to the Reggio Emilia region of Italy, which is located to the East of Parma and to the West of Modena. From there we will taste *Tortelli di zucca alla Mantovana*, which is a delicate tortelli filed with a roasted pumpkin puree that is flavoured with Mostarda di Cremona, a sweet and spicy fruit in sirup. Cremona is not far to the North of the Reggio Emilia region. Note: In Edmonton you find the Mantovana squash at Superstore, at T&T, or at Lucky 97. I use butter and milk in the pasta to make a tender dough that is more suitable to the delicate squash filling. The Mostarda di Cremona has to be mail order or acquired at an Italian store elsewhere. It is important to prepare both the pasta and the filling several hours before forming the raviolis.

Ingredients:

- 6 eggs
- 3 Tbs melted unsalted butter
- 3 Tbs whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 pounds of Mantovana squash
- 1 cup of freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1/2 cup finely diced mostarda di Cremona
- 8 amaretti cookies, crushed to fine crumbs (about 2/3 cup)
- Freshly grated nutmeg
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large egg yolks
- 5 to 7 Tbs unsalted butter
- Fresh sage leaves
- 2/3 to 1 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1 Tbs of salt

Procedure:

1. Prepare the pasta

- Break the eggs into a large bowl and mix with a fork to break the yolks.
- While mixing the eggs pour the melted butter on a slow stream.
- Add the milk and the salt and mix.
- Slowly start incorporating the flour until you can no longer mix with the fork.

- Add a bit more flour and start incorporating it with your hand.
- Turn dough into a flat surface and keep kneading and incorporating flour until the dough is slightly firm and fairly smooth.
- Spray the bowl with cooking spray, put the dough ball into the bowl, and cover with plastic wrap
- Let rest for at least one hour at room temperature.
- Put dough on flat surface and knead again until it is very smooth.
- Put dough ball back in sprayed bowl and cover with plastic wrap to rest for at least one hour or until you are ready to form the ravioli.

2. Make the Squash Puree

- Preheat oven to 375 F.
- Wash the squash.
- Cut into quarters and then cut each quarter in half crosswise.
- Scrape out the seeds.
- Arrange squash pieces on a baking sheet cut side up.
- Bake until it feels soft and is easily pierced with a knife, between 40 min. and one hour.
- Let the Squash cool.
- Scoop the flesh into the bowl of food processor.
- Process until it is smooth.
- Transfer to a mixing bowl and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

3. Mix the Filling

- Add the diced mostarda, grated cheese and crushed amaretti.
- Season with nutmeg, pepper, and salt to taste.
- Beat in the egg yolks until smooth and well blended.

4. Form the Ravioli

- Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Cut 1/3 of the dough and keep the remainder dough covered with the plastic wrap.
- Roll out 1/3 of the dough with a rolling pin forming a rectangular shape until the dough is fairly thin. Use an abundant amount of flour when rolling.
- Brush the top side of the dough with a pastry brush to remove all the excess flour.
- Drop about half a tablespoon of filling along one side of the dough in regular intervals, leaving enough of a margin to allow the end of the dough to fold over the mounds of filling.
- Using your finger and a small dish with cold water, paint water around each mound of filling.
- Dry your hand, fold the margin of dough over the mounds of filling and press firmly around each feeling.
- Using a pastry cutting wheel, cut the squares of ravioli around each mound of filling.
- Place form ravioli on parchment-lined baking sheets well spaced from each other.
- Repeat the process until all the rolled-out dough is used.
- Repeat with the remainder the dough, rolling out 1/3 each time.
- If not cooking soon, after a while turn ravioli over in the parchment-lined baking sheets so that they do not stick to the paper.

5. Cook the Ravioli and Make the Sauce

- Bring a large pot of water to boil. Add one tablespoon of salt.
- Turn oven to 200 F and put serving plates in the oven.
- Cut sage leaves into fine strips — it is called a chiffonade.
- Drop the ravioli into the boiling water.

- Put butter in a large non-sticking pan and put over medium heat.
- When the butter has melted and is start foaming, drop the chiffonade of sage into the butter and stir. It should crisp up in less then a minute.
- When the sage is crisp and the butter has turned to a pale brown colour, if the ravioli is not ready yet, add a few tablespoons of the cooking water to the butter to slow the cooking and lower the heat.
- The ravioli should be cooked about a minute after they float to the surface. The total cooking time will be between 4 and 5 minutes.
- Using a mesh scoop the ravioli from the boiling water straight into the pan with butter and sage.
- Sautee for a few minutes shaking the pan often.
- Add enough of the cooking water to make a small amount of a thick sauce.
- Serve immediately into warmed up plates.
- Sprinkle the freshly grated Parmigiano-Regiano over each plate.
- Sprinkle a small amount of freshly grated pepper.