Potato Gnocchi

Make-ahead · Serves 4

Ken's note: TBD

True potato gnocchi: russets baked, not boiled, then riced, with as little flour as the dough will take. The egg is optional; skip it for a slightly lighter dumpling and start with the lower amount of flour. The raw gnocchi freeze well: freeze on a sheet, then bag.

Ingredients

- 2 lb russet potatoes (about 4 medium-large)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten (optional)
- 1 to 1¼ cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting

Method

1. Bake the scrubbed potatoes at 400°F until very tender, about 1 hour. Halve them as soon as you can handle them, scoop the flesh, and rice it. Spread the potato out for a minute so steam can escape, then sprinkle with the salt, drizzle with the egg if using, and add the flour gradually. Knead gently just until the dough holds together — don’t work it into a tough paste.
2. Roll into ¾-inch logs, cut into ¾-inch pieces, and roll over a fork or gnocchi board for ridges if you like. Boil in salted water until they float, 1–2 minutes, then drain well. A brief sauté in butter gives them a golden crust before you sauce them.
3. **Sauces** (enough for this batch; toss the gnocchi in the pan with the sauce):

Notes

- **Brown butter and sage:** melt 6 Tbsp butter over medium heat until it smells nutty and the milk solids are golden. Add a handful of sage leaves and cook until crisp. Toss with the gnocchi and grated Parmesan. Taste and salt at the end.
- **Lemon Butter Sauce:** toss with about ¾ cup of the sauce and a little of the gnocchi cooking water if it needs loosening, plus Parmesan if you want it.
- **Tomato:** warm 3 Tbsp olive oil with 2 sliced garlic cloves until fragrant; add a 28-oz can of whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by hand, and simmer until slightly thickened, 15–20 minutes. Tear in some basil, then toss with the gnocchi. Taste and salt at the end.
- **Basil pesto cream:** in a wide skillet, melt 2 Tbsp unsalted butter, add ¾ cup heavy cream, and bring barely to a simmer. Stir in 3–4 heaping tablespoons of Basil Pesto (see sauces/basil-pesto.md — pine nuts are the usual nut; pistachios work too) and simmer gently, stirring, until slightly thickened, 2–3 minutes. Toss the gnocchi in the sauce and warm through. Taste and salt at the end.