

Teen Cooking Series: Italian Basics

May 2010

Menu:

Gnocchi with Broccoli, Browned Butter & Garlic
Classic Meatballs with Marinara Sauce
Garlic Bread

Gnocchi w/ Broccoli, Browned Butter and Garlic

Serves 6-8

For the gnocchi:

4 cups ricotta cheese
4 eggs
3 cups grated parmesan
2 1/2 cups flour, plus more as needed

For the sauce:

1 stick butter
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
4 cups chopped broccoli (chopped small)

— preparation —

For the gnocchi –

- In a large bowl, stir together the ricotta, eggs, parmesan and flour. Mixture should be firm enough to roll into small balls – add a bit more flour as need.
- Dust your hands with flour and roll into small balls (about the size of a quarter). As you roll, place them on a flour-dusted baking sheet.
- Refrigerate for 15 minutes.

For the sauce and finishing the gnocchi –

- Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil.
- In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat and continue to cook until golden. Add the garlic and remove from the heat and set aside.
- Add the broccoli to the boiling water and let cook for just a couple minutes until bright green. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside.
- Gently add the gnocchi into the boiling water (about 10-15 at a time) and cook until they come to the surface. Cook for 1 more minute and remove with a slotted spoon and place into the browned butter. Continue until all of the gnocchi are cooked.
- Add the broccoli to the pan and gently toss.
- Serve hot.

Classic Meatballs with Marinara Sauce

serves 8

For the meatballs:

2 slices white bread, crusts removed
1/3 cup milk
1 1/4 pound ground beef
1/4 cup finely chopped onions
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
1/4 cup finely chopped parsley
1 egg
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
olive oil

For the sauce:

1 onion, peeled and quartered
1 carrot, peeled and cut into large pieces
5 cloves garlic, peeled
2 28oz cans crushed tomatoes
1 tablespoon ground oregano

chopped basil, for garnish
grated parmesan, for garnish
cooked pasta, for serving

— preparation —

For the meatballs:

- In a large bowl, crumble the bread and pour over the milk. Let sit for 5 minutes. Squeeze the bread dry, discarding the milk and crumble the wet bread back into the bowl.
- Add the beef, onions, garlic, parsley, egg, oregano, salt and pepper. Mix together and form 8 meatballs.
- Heat a large skillet with high sides over high heat. Add olive oil to lightly coat the bottom of the pan. Brown the meatballs until browned on all sides and remove from pan and set aside while you work on the sauce.

For the sauce:

- In a food processor, combine the onion, carrot and garlic. Pulse until finely chopped.
- Place the same pan that you browned the meatballs over medium-high heat. Add the chopped veggies and cook for 5 minutes until very soft. Add the tomatoes and oregano and the meatballs back to the pan.
- Let simmer for 15 minutes or until meatballs are cooked through.
- Serve with your favorite pasta, topped with chopped basil and grated parmesan.

Garlic Bread

Makes 1 baguette

1 stick unsalted butter
1/4 cup chopped garlic
1 baguette
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/2 cup chopped parsley

— preparation —

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- In a small pot, combine the butter and garlic. Cook over low heat until melted and bubbling.
- Cut the baguette open lengthwise and pour the garlic butter on both sides. Sprinkle with parmesan and parsley. Close the bread and wrap in foil.
- Bake for 15 minutes until hot. Let cool slightly before cutting to serve.