

# Handmade Spinach Ricotta Ravioli – Comfort du Jour

Handmade pasta dough takes practice, but the return on investment is enormously worth it! This recipe uses all-natural ingredients for brilliant color, and the ricotta filling can be customized in any number of ways to suit your flavor goals. Have fun!

## INGREDIENTS

2 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour\* (see notes)  
2 large eggs, room temperature (plus water, as noted in the instructions)  
A fat handful of fresh baby spinach leaves, washed  
1 tsp. baking soda (in the blanching water, not the dough)  
1 Tbsp. kosher salt (also for the blanching water)

## FILLING

15 oz. container of whole fat ricotta  
1/3 cup **parm-romano blend** (or grated parmesan)  
1 egg yolk  
Zest of 1/2 lemon  
A few grates of fresh nutmeg  
Salt and pepper to taste

## \*NOTES

As always, be sure you measure the flour properly so that your dough is not dense. Use the fluff, sprinkle, level method if measuring by volume. For less fuss and greater precision, measure it by weight—270 grams.

The very best flour to use for pasta is Italian 00 milled flour or finely milled durum (semolina). But both can be tricky to find. For the sake of practice, I have been using King Arthur all-purpose flour, and I have had excellent results so far.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a pot of water to boil. Add the baking soda and stir briefly to dissolve. Toss in the baby spinach and stir it around for 15 seconds. Use a slotted spoon or tongs to remove the spinach and place it in a mesh strainer to drain excess water.
2. Transfer the spinach to a regular or bullet blender, together with the eggs. Pulse blend a few times, and then run the blender continuously until the mixture is evenly mixed.
3. Pour the pureed mixture through a mesh strainer over a glass measuring cup. Press the puree through to strain out the solids, and then add enough water to the mixture in the glass to measure exactly 3/4 cup.
4. In a large bowl, stir a generous pinch of salt into the flour and create a well in the center of the flour. Pour in the pureed spinach mixture and mix with a spoon until a clumpy mixture comes together. Knead with your hands in the bowl or turn the dough out onto a countertop and knead several times until all flour is incorporated and no dry spots remain.

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5. Wrap the dough tightly in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 30 minutes before rolling. You may also refrigerate the dough for several hours or even a day. I've found this formula for pasta dough to be very forgiving.

## MAKE THE RICOTTA FILLING

Strain the ricotta in a mesh strainer (lined with cheesecloth if you have it) over a medium bowl. Let the ricotta drain for at least 30 minutes. Stir in parm-romano, egg yolk, lemon zest and nutmeg. Salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the mixture into a plastic bread bag for easy piping. Refrigerate mixture while you roll out the pasta dough.

## SHEET THE PASTA AND FILL THE RAVIOLI

1. Divide the dough into sections, keeping most of them wrapped as you work on one. Use a rolling pin or the heel of your hand to press the first section into a flat oval. Run it through the pasta machine on the thickest setting, folding it into thirds like an envelope and then run it through again. If it sticks, dust both sides with flour. When the dough reaches a very supple stage, adjust the setting knob one notch per run, until the dough reaches the desired thinness. For ravioli, I recommend using the thinnest or second-thinnest setting.
2. Let the pasta sheet rest, uncovered, on the floured counter for about 10 minutes before filling with ricotta filling. This gives the pasta time to tighten up a bit for easier shaping.
3. If you are making ravioli without a mold, squeeze 1 ½ teaspoon-sized dollops of ricotta filling onto one long side of the pasta sheet. Space the dollops about 2 inches apart, allowing room to seal up the pillows on all sides. Dip a finger into a small bowl of water and slightly moisten the dough in between ricotta dollops and along the long edge.
4. Fold the dough over the ricotta dollops, taking care to keep the edges aligned. Carefully press out any air pockets, starting from the folded edge, then in between dollops. Seal the open edge last to ensure no air bubbles are trapped.
5. Use a pizza wheel or sharp knife to trim any ragged edges. Cut between the raviolis and transfer them to a semolina- or flour-dusted parchment paper. Allow the ravioli to dry for at least an hour before cooking.

To cook handmade ravioli, bring salted water to a gentle boil. Carefully transfer ravioli, taking care not to overcrowd the pot. Fresh pasta cooks much more quickly than dried or frozen, so keep an eye on it and prepare to rescue it from the pot after about four minutes.

Serve with any favorite sauce.

## TIPS FOR FREEZING

To freeze your handmade ravioli, place the uncovered sheet tray in the freezer for an hour or so. Transfer them to a zip top freezer bag, and they will not stick to each other in the freezer. For longer storage, consider placing the freezer bags inside an air-tight container as well.

Do not thaw the frozen ravioli before cooking; add them directly to simmering water from frozen, and give them a few extra minutes.