

***Wild
Wild
Garlic***

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GNOCCHI WITH WILD GARLIC, LEMON AND PEAS

Serves 4

Gnocchi – Around 1-1.2 kg

To make your own, use 1 kg of potatoes, around 250 g of plain flour, 1 egg, salt, nutmeg, and any good traditional Italian recipe. Skip the egg if you wish.

Wild garlic sauce

Wild garlic, 80 g

Peas, 400 g | fresh or frozen

Shallot, 1

Lemon, a squeeze and the zest

Pecorino romano, 40 g | Parmesan can do too

Olive oil

Salt, pepper

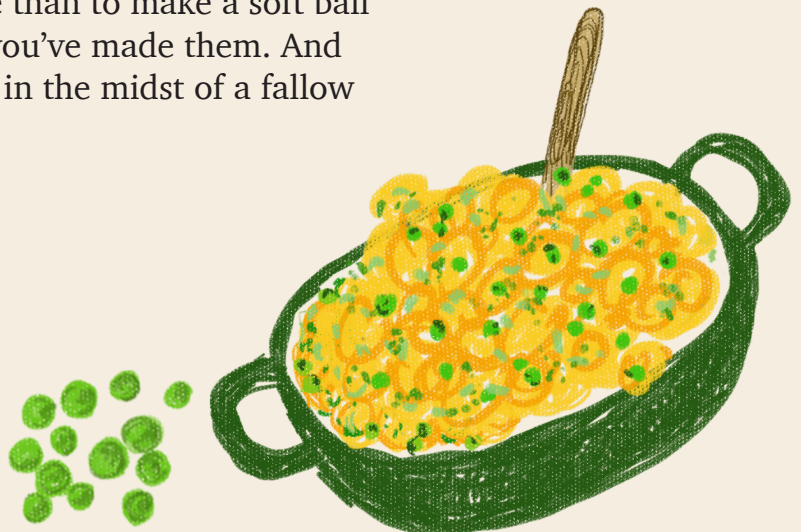


Gnocchi

Gnocchi can really be called so, only when made and eaten in a matter of hours. There are no secrets, as they are just made of potatoes and flour, plus an egg for richness if you wish – or depending which Italian region you come from.

And yet, like all the arts, the real mastery is in the execution. They are simple, really, but the hands need to learn to listen to the potatoes, to the flour – adding a sprinkle or stopping early enough to keep the mix light and soft. Like a pillow.

Recipes abound, there's no need for another one. Just, please, give gnocchi a go and try to make your own. Get good, floury potatoes, King Edward or Maris Pipers work beautifully. Follow the Italian golden rule of never adding more than 250-300 g of flour per kilo of potatoes. Don't knead your mix more than to make a soft ball that's slightly bouncy. Cook as soon as you've made them. And use the following sauce to lose yourself in the midst of a fallow meadow in a sunny day of April.



Wild garlic sauce

This sauce is made of two parts, one that is going to coat the gnocchi, in a deep tone of undergrowth green, and the other with some peas for a bite.

If you're using frozen peas, run them in a colander under hot water for 10-15 seconds.

Finely chop the shallot and add to a pan or a pot together with 300 g of the peas and a good splash of oil. You can use a big pot for this, as you can leave the peas here until the gnocchi are cooked and use it to mix everything together.

Cook for 8-10 minutes at a low to medium heat until the shallot is translucent, with some darker hue at the edges. Add a pinch of salt and leave it be.

For the sauce, tear the wild garlic leaves in small pieces and add to a mixer together with the remaining 100 g of peas (fresh or run under hot water if frozen as above), 5 tablespoons of oil, a squeeze of lemon, almost all its zest, a little pinch of salt and some pepper.

Be light-fingered with the salt, as you'll be likely to add some cooking water from the gnocchi later on. Also leave some peel on the lemon for a final zesting on each plate; the aroma of freshly grated lemon just transports you away and is completely worth it for that alone.

Blend until everything is reduced to a smooth paste, and if it's still grainy, wait until the gnocchi are cooking to add a splash or two of their water. This will make the sauce smooth and velvety, and you might want to leave the sauce in the blender until that point, on purpose now.

Once the gnocchi are cooked, retain some of their water, a cup would do, drain and add to the pot with the peas, together with the wild garlic sauce. Treat them kindly, as they can easily bruise and get squashed.

Serve with a grating of the pecorino and the remaining lemon zest on each plate. If you're lucky enough to see a couple of white flowers in your bunch of wild garlic, add those too as a last touch of spring.



