

sweet potato gnocchi

serves 4

Sometimes, you get an idea in your head of something you want to eat, only to find that it doesn't quite exist as you've imagined it. This is one of those dishes for me, where I created a recipe to match a dish in my mind – a fairly classic sweet potato gnocchi, but with more textures and intrigue. *The gnocchi dough can start out very sticky, but it will come together!*

ingredients

For the gnocchi:

- 1 lb sweet potatoes
- 1.5-2 cups AP flour
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- heavy pinch salt
- 1 egg

For the root vegetables:

- 1 cup butternut squash, cubed
- 1 cup turnip, cubed
- 1 cup beetroot, cubed
- 1 cup parsnip, cubed
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- 2 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1-2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- salt & pepper

For the sauce & garnish:

- 8 oz pancetta or bacon
- 6-8 sage leaves
- 3 Tbsp brown butter
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 tsp Aleppo pepper (*optional*)
- 2-3 Tbsp parmigiano reggiano, grated
- salt & pepper, to taste
- 1 Tbsp olive oil, if needed

notes

You have an opportunity here to play some jazz with your root vegetables. Feel free to choose what's in season or growing old in your fridge and flavor accordingly. I like to vary the seasoning on the root vegetables so each one has a slightly different flavor profile (say, smoked paprika only on the parsnips, balsamic vinegar only on the squash, making sure they all get olive oil, salt, and pepper) rather than mixing them all together, but can't bring myself to demand you do the same – it's admittedly a bit of an extra faff.

preparation

1. Roast sweet potatoes at 425 F for 45 minutes (or until tender), then let cool.
2. Toss the cubed root vegetables and seasonings together, then roast at 400 F until tender and starting to brown – roughly 15-20 minutes, depending on how small you've cut them. Once done, set aside. Store the beets separate from the rest, if at all possible, as they'll dye everything pink.
3. Brown butter, set aside to cool.
4. Peel sweet potato and mask in a bowl with egg, salt, nutmeg, and paprika.
5. Form a well with 1.5 cups of flour on a clean work surface and pour potato mixture into middle.
6. Using spoon or spatula, gently fold flour into mixture until all flour is absorbed, then use hands to fold a few times to combine. Add extra flour as needed so the dough just comes together and is not too sticky to handle.
7. Form the dough into a disc and cut it into quarters. Roll each disc quarter into a rope and, using bench scraper, cut the rope into gnocchi (about 0.75 inches width each).
8. Bring water to a boil and salt it.
9. In a pan, start to render the pancetta (can add a little splash of oil to get the party started if needed).
10. One rendered, add root vegetables *except beets* and Aleppo pepper into pan.
11. Add white wine and reduce. Boil gnocchi until they float.
12. Add brown butter to pan. Once it has melted, fry sage.
13. Add cooked gnocchi and beets to pan to slightly fry gnocchi and reheat beets and toss to coat, adding a little pasta water as needed to prevent burning and create a glossy sauce.
14. Serve with salt, pepper, a generous grating of cheese, and, optionally, a drizzle of good olive oil and additional Aleppo pepper.