Spinach, Ricotta and Semolina Oven Dumplings

24 slab-cut dumplings; 6 servings of 4 · Active 35 min · Total 2 hr 30 min

Skills: Confident beginner

Ingredients

- 3 cups whole milk (720 ml)
- 1 cup fine semolina (170 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt (3 g)
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg (0.25 g)
- 7 oz frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed to about 3 1/2 oz (200 g before squeezing; about 100 g after)
- 1 cup ricotta, drained if wet (250 g)
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan (50 g), divided
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted (30 g), divided

Set out

Heavy 3-quart (3-liter) saucepan, Whisk and sturdy spoon, 9 by 13-inch (23 by 33 cm) tray for chilling, 9 by 13-inch (23 by 33 cm) baking dish, Baking paper, Instant-read thermometer

Allergens

Wheat, Milk, Egg. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Bring the milk, salt, pepper and nutmeg to a gentle simmer in the saucepan. Gradually whisk in the semolina. Reduce to low and stir constantly for 5–7 minutes, until very thick and pulling away from the pan. Remove from the heat and stand for 10 minutes.

2. Chop the squeezed spinach finely. Stir it into the warm semolina with the ricotta, beaten eggs and half the Parmesan until evenly mixed.

3. Line the chilling tray with baking paper. Spread the mixture into an even slab about 3/4 inch (2 cm) thick. Refrigerate promptly until cold and firm, allowing at least 1 hour; keep the warm slab shallow rather than leaving it on the counter.

4. Heat the oven to 400°F/200°C. Brush the baking dish with 1 teaspoon of the melted butter. Lift the cold slab out using its paper and cut into 24 rectangles in a 4 by 6 grid.

5. Arrange the pieces in the dish, overlapping only slightly. Brush with the remaining butter and sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan. Bake for 25–30 minutes until golden at the edges and 165°F/74°C in the center.

6. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving four pieces per person. For storage, divide into shallow containers and refrigerate promptly.

Do the waiting on a day off

The chilling stage is passive time, but it is essential. Bake when the slab is ready, then freeze meal-sized portions instead of trying to compress the setting time before work.

A useful detail

The total allows about an hour of chilling. If the slab is still soft, chill longer rather than adding dry semolina after cooking; it must be firm enough to lift cleanly.

Keep it well

Keep the unbaked slab refrigerated at 40°F/4°C or below and bake within 1 day. Refrigerate baked portions within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, and use within 3 days, counting from the original preparation. Freeze baked portions for up to 2 months; thaw in the refrigerator. Reheat covered to 165°F/74°C, uncovering briefly for the top. Carry chilled with two cold sources and refrigerate at work.