

Liguria

THE COOKBOOK

Recipes from the Italian Riviera
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RIZZOLI
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Barbagiuai

Uncle Giovanni's Fried Pumpkin Ravioli

For the pasta:

2 cups (9 ounces) bread flour
¼ cup room temperature water
¼ cup dry white wine
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil,
plus more for brushing
½ teaspoon salt

For the filling:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 leek, white and light green part only,
finely diced
1 cup (9 ounces) pumpkin purée,
canned or homemade
¼ cup cooked white rice
1 ½ ounces finely grated Parmigiano-
Reggiano (about ½ cup, packed)
⅓ cup whole milk ricotta
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon finely chopped marjoram
¼ teaspoon salt

To finish:

Vegetable or grapeseed oil, for frying

Serves 4 to 6

Somewhere near Camporosso, in the farthest western reaches of Liguria, somebody's uncle at some point made these fried delights famous. *Barbagiuai* literally means "Uncle Giovanni," though it's unclear who he was, besides a genius in the kitchen. A slightly sweet pumpkin and cheese filling is encased in a wine-spiked dough and fried until crisp, golden, and irresistible. Remember to get a head start on this recipe; the shaped ravioli need to dry out at room temperature for a couple of hours before frying. This filling is also delicious inside traditional, unfried ravioli. Try substituting it for the vegetable filling in the *Ravioli di Magro* recipe (page 73).

◆ For the pasta: Combine flour, water, and wine in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook. Knead on medium-low speed until a shaggy dough forms, about 5 minutes. Add olive oil and salt and continue kneading until dough is soft, smooth, and elastic, another 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from mixer, form into a ball, and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes. Remove plastic wrap (do not discard) and cut the dough equally into 6 pieces. Cover the pieces with the plastic wrap to keep them from drying out, and let rest for another 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the filling: Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the leek and sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the pumpkin purée and cook, stirring until all liquid has evaporated and mixture is fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer mixture to a medium-sized bowl and let cool slightly. When the mixture has cooled, add cooked rice, Parmigiano-Reggiano, ricotta, egg, marjoram, and salt. Mix well.

◆ To fill the pasta: If desired, transfer the mixture to a pastry bag with a wide, round tip.

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Roll out 1 rectangular sheet of pasta as thinly as possible following the instructions on page 60. Lay pasta sheet on a floured surface and distribute small mounds of filling at regular intervals along one lengthwise half of the sheet; use about 1 teaspoon of filling for each mound. The mounds should be 2 inches apart from each other in a straight line, at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch from the edge of the pasta sheet. Moisten the other half of the dough with a pastry brush dipped in water. Carefully lift the moistened dough and fold it over the other half of the dough, covering the mounds of filling. Press around the filling with your fingertips to seal the pasta and remove any air pockets. Cut in a straight line between each mound of filling with a knife or ravioli cutter. The finished ravioli should be about $2\frac{1}{2}$ by 3 inches. As a precaution, press again around the edges of the individual ravioli with your fingertips to be sure they're completely sealed. Transfer ravioli to a tray lined with a clean, flour-dusted kitchen towel; be careful not to let them overlap, or they will stick together. Repeat with remaining pasta and filling. Let ravioli rest, uncovered, at room temperature at least 2 hours, and up to 4 hours.

Heat oil in a wide, deep, straight-sided skillet or a wok, until a pinch of breadcrumbs or flour tossed into the hot oil sizzles upon contact. Fry the ravioli in batches, without crowding the pan, until golden, puffed, and crunchy. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate with a spider or slotted spoon and repeat with remaining ravioli. Sprinkle with salt to taste and serve immediately.