



Sardinian Potato & Mint Stuffed Pasta "Culurgiones"

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** 10 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

mix: to thoroughly combine two or more ingredients until uniform in texture.

Equipment

- ☐ Large pot
- ☐ Medium mixing bowl
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Cutting board
- ☐ Kid-safe knife
- ☐ Wooden spoon or rubber spatula
- ☐ Colander or strainer

Ingredients

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- ☐ 1 C ricotta cheese ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1 C silken tofu, blended)****
- ☐ 2 T grated Parmesan cheese ****(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan)****
- ☐ 1 C frozen hash browns, thawed

- ☐ 1 tsp salt, divided
- ☐ 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- ☐ 1 big handful fresh basil, roughly 1/4 C packed
- ☐ 1 big pinch fresh mint, roughly 2 to 3 leaves, chopped
- ☐ 24 to 48 wonton wrappers ******(for GLUTEN ALLERGY sub rice paper wrappers OR gluten-free, oven-ready pasta or lasagna sheets)******
- ☐ 4 C water + extra for sealing

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: For 1 C ricotta cheese, substitute 1 C silken tofu, blended. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free grated Parmesan.

Gluten/Wheat: Substitute rice paper wrappers for the wonton wrappers OR gluten-free, oven-ready pasta or lasagna sheets. Note: If you need to use rice papers, you will have a little bit more difficulty shaping the pasta. Be sure to be patient and take your time. The shape will not be perfect, but with a little extra time, you can make it work.

Instructions

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intro

"Culurgiones" (KOO-loor-joh-nehs) are a type of pasta from Sardinia, Italy. They are shaped like little, cozy sleeping bags filled with a yummy mix of potatoes, cheese, and herbs. After they're cooked, they're usually served with a savory tomato sauce or just a sprinkle of cheese and a drizzle of oil! See this **video** for shaping them (although wonton wrappers will behave differently than pasta dough).

measure + mix

In a medium mixing bowl, measure **1 cup ricotta cheese, 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, 1 cup frozen hash browns, 3/4 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper**. Then, rip or chop **1 big handful of fresh basil, roughly 1/4 cup packed, and 1 big pinch of fresh mint, roughly 2 to 3 leaves**, and add them to the bowl. Mix with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula until well combined.

scrumptious science

Ricotta cheese is a smooth and creamy white cheese. Ricotta is one of the simplest types of cheese to make. In fact, you might have the ingredients in your refrigerator right now! All you need to make ricotta

cheese is 4 cups of whole milk, the juice of 1 lemon, and cheesecloth. (A strainer lined with a coffee filter can also work, but it will be a slow process.) The acid in the lemon juice will react with the milk. This reaction will cause the milk to separate into curds (solid) and whey (liquid). Pour the curd and whey over a bowl and strainer lined with cheesecloth. The whey will drain away, and the curds that are left can be formed into many types of cheese. Simply add a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt, then whisk the mixture, and you will have your own homemade ricotta cheese.

scoop + shape

Lay 1 wonton wrapper on your cutting board. Then, place roughly 2 teaspoons of the ricotta-potato filling into the center of the wrapper. Then, trace the edges with a bit of water on the tip of your finger. Finally, you will need to pleat the edges of the dough together to create a zipper design down the center of the pasta. To pleat the pasta, hold the filled dough like a taco, then pinch one end. Moving from end to end, continue pinching and pressing the dough. You may need to add a bit more water as you go if the pasta dough starts to dry out. A bit of the potato filling will fall out. That's okay. Just place that back into the mixing bowl. Make "culurgiones" until you run out of filling.

edible education

The Chinese, Arabs, and Italians have all claimed they were the first to make noodles and pasta, but the oldest written recipe comes from China, around 2,000 years ago. Noodles have been a staple food in many parts of the world for at least that long, but in 2005, the oldest noodles were discovered inside an overturned, sealed bowl buried under three meters of sediment in Qinghai, northwest China. Scientists determined the 4,000-year-old, long, thin yellow noodles were made from broomcorn millet and foxtail millet and show a fairly high level of food processing and culinary sophistication. Wow, talk about being well-preserved! Did you know there are about 350 pasta shapes?!

boil + toss

In a large pot, boil **4 cups of water** with **1 pinch of salt**. Once the water is boiling, add the "culurgiones." Boil for 2 minutes, stirring a few times. Let's practice counting to 5 in Italian while we stir: 1 uno (OO-noh), 2 due (DOO-eh), 3 tre (treh), 4 quattro (KWAHT-troh), 5 cinque (CHEEN-kweh). You are only looking to soften the pasta. Then, drain the water and leave the pasta in the pot over low heat. Pour in **Italian Fresh "Salsa di Pomodoro" Sauce**. Toss the pasta and sauce until well coated. Then, warm in the pot for 2 minutes.

serve + devour

Serve the tossed pasta while still warm! Enjoy! "Buon appetito" (Bwohn ap-peh-TEE-toe) or "Bon Appetit" in Italian!

Featured Ingredient: Potato!

Hi, my name is Spud! That's my nickname, though. I'm actually a Potato!

"I'm sometimes a bit dirty because I grow down in the soil, but I clean up just fine. You may notice I

sometimes have 'eyes' on my skin. That's where I sprout so new potato plants can grow. You can use the end of a vegetable peeler or a knife to remove those sprouts unless you're going to plant me! We are versatile, starchy vegetables that you can leave whole, slice, dice, shred, or mash and bake, boil, fry, grill, or roast!"

History & Etymology

Potatoes are the foremost vegetable crop in the world! They are root vegetables native to the Americas. Scientists believe the first potatoes were cultivated about 8,000 years ago by hunters and gatherers near Lake Titicaca—high in the Andes mountains, on the border between Peru and Bolivia.

Those first farmers obtained the cultivated potato by domesticating wild potato plants that grew prolifically around the lake. Over the following millennia, people in the Andes developed potato varieties for growing at different altitudes and in other climates.

In 1532, the Spaniards invaded Peru searching for gold, but they took a different treasure back to Europe: the potato! Over the next 300 years, the potato became a staple crop in Europe and soon found its way to India, China, and Japan. China now grows the most potatoes worldwide.

The potato has been a staple ingredient in the German diet since the 17th century when King Frederick was known to give seeds to citizens and demonstrate how to plant them for food.

Famines occurred in the mid-1700s, and people in Germany realized the importance of potatoes because they could be grown in harsh environments.

Where are most of the potatoes produced in the United States? In Idaho! Approximately one-third of all potatoes in the US are grown there.

The potato was the first vegetable grown in outer space!

President Thomas Jefferson was the first person to serve french fries in the United States (in 1802 in the White House).

Potatoes are so popular that a plastic toy called "Mr. Potato Head" has been sold by Hasbro since 1952.

Initially, they sold it as separate parts, like eyes, ears, mouth, hats, etc., that could be attached to an actual potato with pushpins. Due to too many ruined potatoes and new safety rules, in 1964, Hasbro added a plastic potato body with holes to insert the plastic body parts and clothing. The toy was the first to be advertised on television.

The English word "potato" comes from the mid-16th century from the Spanish "patata," which may have been a hybrid of "batata" (sweet potato) from the extinct Taíno language and "papa" (potato) from the Quechua language.

Anatomy

Potatoes are tubers and are members of the Nightshade family, which also includes tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and tobacco.

The potato plant has a relatively short lifespan of anywhere from 80 to 150 days, determined by the variety of the potato. Furthermore, according to the International Potato Center in Peru, there are more

than 4,000 varieties, with most found in the Andes Mountains!

Potatoes do not grow from seeds like other vegetables and fruits. Instead, they grow from "seed potatoes," which sprout and form roots underground.

During its first stages of life, sprouts form from the eyes of the primary tuber. First, farmers prepare the earth by tilling it in rows that form ridges. Next, they remove stones from the soil to help the potatoes grow in uniform, oval shapes. Then, the seed potatoes are planted and covered with dirt for protection.

Seed potatoes are planted in the Spring so that the warmth from the sun can stimulate the plants to grow. First, roots form from the seed potatoes, and new shoots reach up through the soil toward the warm sun. Soon, green leaves grow on the shoots, establishing the potato plants. Then roots spread underground in the earth, and the potatoes grow from these roots. Potatoes are relatively easy to grow, even in harsh environments.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Choose potatoes that are smooth, plump, free from blemishes, cuts, and decay, and that don't give when you squeeze them.

Potatoes start getting soft when they go bad, so choose firm potatoes at the grocery store.

Smell potatoes before buying them: they should smell fresh and faintly of dirt since they grow in soil.

Waxy potatoes are best for boiling and steaming, as they contain less starch and won't absorb as much liquid. Examples of waxy potatoes are Yukon gold, fingerling, Carola, LaRette, and Austrian Crescent.

Medium-starch, all-purpose potatoes (red, purple, Onaway, and goldilocks varieties) work well when baked, roasted, fried, and used in soups and gratins.

Russet potatoes are best for frying (such as in hash browns and french fries), as they contain less starch and will get crisper.

Store potatoes in open or hole-punched paper bags (not plastic) to keep air circulating around the potatoes. Plastic bags can trap moisture and cause potatoes to rot quicker. Also, keep the bag in a dark, dry space. Chlorophyll will develop and produce a tell-tale green tinge if you store potatoes in too bright a place. If this happens, a toxic compound called solanine also forms, and it is best to toss any green potato in the garbage.

Nutrition

Potatoes, with their skin, are rich in carbohydrates and a good source of energy. In addition, they have a high content of vitamin C and potassium, and protein that is well matched to human needs.

One cup of cooked potatoes contains 32 percent of the daily value of vitamin B6. This vitamin is a major antioxidant (antioxidants help clear the body of harmful substances). We need B6 for our brains and hearts, helping us learn and focus better, keep our moods up, and keep our brains sharp. Vitamin B6 is also required to make all new cells in the body, which happens every minute of our lives!

