

SPÄTZLE WITH SAGE BUTTER, PARMESAN, AND TOASTED HAZELNUTS

SERVES: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

For the spätzle:

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups flour
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 pinch nutmeg

For assembling spätzle with sage butter, Parmesan, and toasted hazelnuts:

- 1 spätzle (above)
- 3/4 cup skinned hazelnuts
- 1 cup butter or 3/4 cup clarified butter or ghee
- 10 fresh sage leaves, more to taste
- 1 cup grated Parmesan

METHOD

1. Whisk together the eggs and milk until they are completely combined.
2. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, salt, and nutmeg and stir it well, making sure there are no lumps in the dry ingredients.
3. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and gently pour in half of the egg and milk mixture. Gently stir to mix, and slowly add the remaining egg and milk liquid, incorporating all of the flour and spices. Don't over mix! Cover and refrigerate for an hour.
4. While the spätzle batter rests, toast and chop the hazelnuts. Put them aside for later.
5. Melt the butter in a large sauté pan. Add the sage leaves. Continue to cook until the butter comes to a boil. Swirling often, continue to cook the butter until you see brown flecks and the butter smells nutty. Remove the pan from the heat immediately. Using tongs, remove the sage leaves and set them on a paper towel-lined plate to cool.
6. To cook the spätzle, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Do not rest your spätzle press or lid (spätzle-profi) over the boiling water, as it will be hard to use if it heats up. Remove the batter from the fridge.
7. If you do not have a spätzle press, you may use a colander to shape your spätzle. Give your press or colander a light coating of nonstick spray or rub it with a paper towel with a few drops of oil on it -- this step is not essential, but it makes the press slightly easier to use.
8. Once the water reaches a rolling boil, hold or rest your press or colander over the pot and pour the batter through it. The volume of batter you'll use depends on the size of your press: If you are using a colander, pour about one third of the dough into the colander and use the back of a large spoon to press it through the holes; if you are using a press, follow the manufacturer's directions for use.

9. Allow the spätzle to boil for 2 to 3 minutes and then remove it from the water using a slotted spoon, a spider, or a mesh strainer. Quickly run the spätzle under cold water and then leave them to dry while you finish cooking the rest. If the spätzle appears to be sticking as they dry, drizzle a tiny bit of oil, or melted butter over them. Continue this process until all the batter has been cooked.
10. Once the spätzle is cooked, reheat the skillet containing the butter. Once it's hot, add the spätzle to the pan, let them sit for about a minute, and then give them a few gentle tosses. Don't worry if a few pieces get a bit brown or crusty -- those are the best ones!
11. Transfer the spätzle to a serving vessel and toss immediately with one cup of grated Parmesan. Sprinkle the chopped hazelnuts over the spätzle and then crumble the fried sage leaves on top. Serve warm.