

CHICKEN PESTO RAVIOLI

Serves 2.

By Dennis W. Viau; an original recipe.

This ravioli comes with a surprise. At first bite you taste the Alfredo sauce. However, as you chew you get a second burst of flavor—the chicken flavored with pesto. That one-two punch of flavors makes this dish surprisingly delicious. For the ingredients below, plan on each egg feeding 2 people. Multiply the recipe for more dinner guests or for larger serving sizes.



Ingredients:

For the Pasta Dough:

1 large egg
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ cup (43g) durum wheat semolina pasta flour
¼ cup (35g) all-purpose flour
More flour as needed
1 egg for an egg wash

For the Ravioli Filling (see my Pesto recipe on my web site):

2 ounces (57g) cooked chicken meat
2 tablespoons “dry” pesto (not much oil)

For the Sauce:

1½ ounces (43g) clarified butter
1½ ounces (43g) all-purpose flour
2 cups (473ml) milk or half and half
3 ounces (85g) grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
Salt to taste

Directions:

Combine one egg with the salt, blending well. Start adding the two kinds of flour, a couple tablespoons at a time, until the mixture becomes a dough that can be kneaded. More or less flour might be needed, depending on the size of your eggs; therefore, add flour a little at a time until the dough is dry enough to knead.

Knead the pasta dough until smooth. Wrap in plastic and store in the refrigerator for at least an hour—longer is better. The dough can be stored up to 24 hours.

While the dough is resting, prepare the filling by mincing the chicken breast meat fine. Add the pesto and blend well. Cover and store in the refrigerator until needed.

Prepare the sauce by combining the flour and butter in a saucepan over medium heat, making a *roux*. Cook the mixture about a minute, then add the milk or half and half. Combine well and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook the sauce, stirring constantly until thickened, up to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and gently stir in the cheese and parsley. Do not over-mix or the cheese could become stringy. It only needs to be combined. Taste and adjust for salt. Set aside.

Roll the pasta dough into thin sheets. Arrange small mounds of filling along one side of the sheet with room in between. Lightly beat the remaining egg with a fork, adding about a teaspoon of water, to make an egg wash. Using a pastry brush, lightly coat the opposite side of the pasta sheet with egg wash and then carefully fold the pasta sheet over the filling, pressing to seal the two layers together well. Try to squeeze out air as

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you fold over the pasta dough.

I find the easiest way to do this is to brush egg wash onto only about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the dough to be folded over, coating the dough near the mounds of filling and leaving the final third uncoated. After folding over the dough and squeezing out air, I brush egg wash between the layers, coating the pasta that was left uncoated, and then pressing together to create the final seal. An alternative is to brush egg wash around the mounds of filling, leaving the edge uncoated. Fold over the pasta dough, squeezing out air, and then brush egg wash between the layers. Press the two layers together to seal.

Heat plenty of water to boiling in a large pot. Add the ravioli, return the water to the boil, and then cook for only about a minute. Either drain in a colander or use a “spider” strainer to remove the cooked ravioli from the water. While the ravioli are cooking, heat the Alfredo sauce.

Plate the ravioli. Coat with Alfredo sauce and garnish with chopped fresh parsley, if desired. Serve.

STEP-BY-STEP



This is my pasta dough, prepared in advance. I prefer to wrap the dough well and let it rest in the refrigerator overnight. The resting time allows the flour in the dough to absorb moisture, making a more pliable dough that is easy to shape into pasta.

2



“Pesto” literally means *pounded*. I combine my basil, garlic, and pecans (which I prefer to pine nuts) in a ziplock bag and then pound the ingredients with a mallet to release the juices from the basil leaves.

3



After the ingredients are pounded, I then combine them with extra virgin olive oil, Parmesan or Romano cheese, salt, and pepper in a food processor and blend. I add a small amount of oil to begin with. I can always add more oil later. For this recipe I did not want filling dripping with oil, which might prevent the two layers of pasta dough from adhering together when shaping the ravioli. I call this a “dry” pesto.

4



The filling is easy to prepare. Mince the cooked chicken breast into small pieces.

5



Add a small amount of pesto to flavor the chicken and combine. The filling is ready to use in ravioli.

6



After arranging a row of filling mounds along one side of a sheet of pasta dough, I brush egg wash onto the opposite side, but not all the way to the edge. I leave the edge dry so that I can squeeze air out of the ravioli.

7



After folding the dough over and pressing it around the mounds of filling, forcing out air, I brush egg wash between the layers and then press them together to seal.

8



The final step is to trim the edges with a fluted cutter and then cut between the mounds to separate them.

9



Here is one of my finished ravioli.

10



To start the Alfredo sauce, combine the butter and flour in a saucepan to make a *roux*. Cook the mixture about a minute to remove the raw flavor from the flour.

11



Add the half and half or milk, combine, and stir over low heat as the mixture simmers and thickens. This usually only takes a minute or two, but it can take up to 10 minutes, depending on the flour.

Remove from the heat and then add the cheese. Gently stir only to combine. Stirring too much could make the cheese stringy.

12

To finish the sauce, stir in a generous pinch of chopped fresh parsley. Taste and adjust for salt.

13

Cook the ravioli in boiling water for a minute or two. Arrange some in a shallow bowl and spoon heated Alfredo sauce over the top.

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, this ravioli has a surprising flavor combination. At first you taste the Alfredo sauce, but then the flavor of the pesto and chicken bursts through. It's a delicious combination.