

Rescued Recipe #293

Malfatti

The pressure will be off you when you try these delicious Italian spinach and ricotta dumplings. Why? Because their name simply does not allow for perfection. Malfatti in Italian means “badly made.” But beauty is only skin deep, and once you skewer one with your fork and dredge it through the meat sauce, you’re in for a tasty Italian comfort food that can be enjoyed as a first course (Primi Piatti) or main meal. Malfatti get rolled up and plopped into boiling water just like Gnocchi. Once they pop to the surface, they’re ready to go on the plate and topped with meat sauce and fresh grated cheese.

I received this recipe from Scottsdale resident Joan Lang, a fourth generation Arizonan who lived in Rome for five years. (I think that makes this dish authentic Cowgirl Ciao!)

“ We love Malfatti on Christmas Eve as the main course with a salad, good bread and lots of fresh parmesan. I also make them whenever I have leftover meat sauce! My children loved them. It was always an easy way to get them to eat spinach, because I sort of told a little fib and let them think it was parsley! Also, they loved to help me roll them just like I did with my mom.”

Once you roll the Malfatti, get your water boiling and test one. If it holds together, you’re good to go. If it falls apart a bit, add a little more breadcrumbs or an extra egg to the mixture.

Thanks to Joan, this week we can prepare a dish that’s badly made and be proud of it!

JOAN LANG'S MALFATTI

Ingredients:

1 package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
1 ½ cups Ricotta cheese
1 cup fine bread crumbs
2 large eggs, beaten
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup green onion, minced
1 teaspoon fresh basil
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
1 clove garlic crushed
½ teaspoon salt
Flour for dredging

Directions:

Mix all ingredients together and chill until firm enough to shape.
Form into 3 inch "fingers". Roll in flour and place in single layer on baking sheet.
Chill thoroughly.

FOR THE MEATSAUCE:

1 lb Italian bulk sausage (hot or sweet)
½ cup large sweet yellow onion, chopped
1 chicken or beef bullion cube dissolved in 1 ½ cup water
1 (16 oz.) can tomato sauce
1/2 cup dry white wine
½ teaspoon oregano
Salt to taste

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Directions:

In a skillet, brown sausage and onion. Pour off fat.

Dissolve bullion cube in 1 1/2 cups water and add to skillet.

Add tomato sauce, white wine and oregano. Simmer for about 20-30 minutes.

Salt to taste.

Assemble Malfatti:

In a deep 12" skillet, boil 2 inches of water and 1 teaspoon salt. Reduce to simmer. Add Malfatti a few at a time. Malfatti will rise to surface when done.

Remove with slotted spoon and place 4-6 in plate. Ladle sauce over top. Garnish with Parmesan cheese.