

*“The ingredients for this filling are simple: ricotta cheese, olive oil, salt, pepper, green garlic, and thyme.”*

## SUBCHAPTERS

Simple Ricotta Filling  
Make Your Pasta Dough by Hand  
Roll Out the Dough  
Fill and Assemble Your Ravioli  
Cook the Ravioli and Sauce  
Taste and Adjust

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Brian Bligh, Chez Panisse Café chef, demonstrates how to make pasta dough from scratch. Then, he creates ricotta ravioli from the dough. There are many different fillings you can substitute to change the flavors of the ravioli, as well as countless pastas you can shape using the basic egg dough.

## RECIPES

### FRESH PASTA

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food*, PAGE 89

4 SERVINGS

2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 whole eggs  
2 large egg yolks  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon olive oil

Measure the flour and sift onto a wooden cutting board or pasta board. Make a well in the flour and crack in 2 eggs and 2 egg yolks. Mix with a fork, as though scrambling the eggs, incorporating the flour bit by bit. Add olive oil and continue to mix. When the flour is too stiff to mix with a fork, finish the dough by hand, kneading lightly. Continue to turn and knead the dough until it feels smooth and elastic. Shape the dough into a disk and wrap in plastic. Let rest at least an hour before rolling.

Roll out by hand on a lightly floured board or using a pasta machine. When using a machine, roll the pasta through the widest setting, fold into thirds, and pass through the machine again. Repeat two more times. Then roll, decreasing the setting on the machine one notch at a time, until the pasta is the desired thickness.

## VARIATIONS

- ♦ To make herb pasta, before adding the eggs mix into the flour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped parsley, marjoram, or thyme, or 2 tablespoons chopped rosemary or sage.
- ♦ To make spinach pasta, gently sauté in a little butter  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound spinach leaves until tender. Cool and squeeze dry, and blend until smooth with 1 egg and 1 egg yolk; use this purée in place of the eggs and egg yolks.

### RICOTTA RAVIOLI

ADAPTED FROM *The Art of Simple Food*, PAGE 271

4 SERVINGS, APPROXIMATELY

12 ounces ricotta cheese

1 stalk green garlic or 2 garlic cloves, chopped

Leaves of 2 thyme sprigs, chopped

Salt

Fresh-ground black pepper

1 recipe Fresh Pasta (recipe above)

Wild mushroom sauce (recipe below)

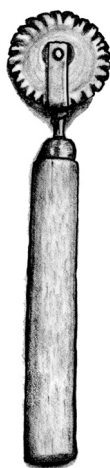
In a small bowl, combine the cheese, green garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper. Taste the mixture for salt and correct as needed.

To make ravioli, roll out the pasta fairly thin and cut into sheets about 14 inches long. Keep the stack of well-floured pasta sheets under a towel to keep them from drying as you work with one sheet at a time. Pipe or spoon 1 tablespoon of the ricotta filling along the lower third of a sheet of pasta. Leave about 1½ inches between each blob of filling. Spray very lightly with a fine mist of water. Fold the upper half of the pasta over the lower half; then, starting at the fold, gently coax all the air out of the ravioli, pressing the two layers of pasta together with your fingertips. When the sheet of ravioli has been formed and pressed, use a zigzag rolling cutter to cut off the bottom edge and to cut between each portion of filling. Separate the ravioli and lay them out on a sheet pan sprinkled with flour; make sure they aren't touching each other or they will stick together. Cover with a towel or parchment paper and refrigerate until ready to cook. Keep refrigerated right up to the time of cooking to prevent the filling from seeping through the pasta, which can cause the ravioli to stick to the pan.

Cook the ravioli in salted simmering water for 5 to 6 minutes, until the pasta is done. Drain the ravioli and add to the pan of wild mushroom sauce. Stir gently to mix, and serve on a platter.

#### VARIATIONS

- ♦ Wash and stem 1 bunch of chard or spinach. Cook in butter until soft. Cool, squeeze out all the excess water, chop well, and stir into the ricotta mixture.
- ♦ This recipe is for a simple filling that works equally well as a stuffing for cannelloni or squash blossoms. The stuffed blossoms can be poached or baked.





- ♦ For a different sauce, cook a few whole sage leaves in butter over medium heat until the butter is slightly brown and the leaves are crisp.
- ♦ Sauce the ravioli with tomato sauce.
- ♦ Serve in bowls with a ladle of hot broth poured over.
- ♦ For cannelloni use ½ recipe pasta; roll and cut the sheets into rectangles about 4 by 3 inches. Cook in salted boiling water until done, cool in cold water, and lay the rectangles out on a cloth. Pipe or spoon a couple of tablespoons of filling lengthwise along one third of a rectangle of pasta. Gently roll the pasta to form a large straw. Place the cannelloni, seam side down, in a buttered baking dish. Cover with 1½ cups tomato sauce and bake for 30 minutes at 400°F.

### WILD MUSHROOM SAUCE

1 pound wild mushrooms (chanterelles, porcini, hedgehogs, black trumpets)  
½ onion, chopped  
1 bay leaf  
2 or 3 thyme sprigs  
4 tablespoons butter  
Salt  
Fresh-ground black pepper  
1½ cups chicken stock (optional)  
Lemon juice (optional)  
Gremolata: 3 tablespoons chopped parsley, 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest,  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
Parmesan cheese

Carefully clean the mushrooms, trimming away any discolored and soft spots, and removing any dirt and leaves. Tear or cut the mushrooms into rough quarters.

Prepare a quick mushroom broth: Combine the mushroom trimmings in a small saucepan with the onion, bay leaf, and thyme. Cover with 1½ cups of water and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve and set aside. (Alternatively, use chicken stock for the sauce.)

Sauté the mushrooms with 2 tablespoons butter over low heat until golden and softened through. Season with salt and pepper. If the mushrooms release a lot of liquid, cook until it evaporates and the mushrooms brown.

Add the broth or chicken stock to the mushrooms and simmer briefly. Swirl in 2 tablespoons of cold butter to thicken slightly. Taste for salt and, if needed, add a few drops of lemon juice.

To serve, add the cooked ravioli and warm briefly. Spoon the ravioli and mushrooms onto a warm platter and pour over the remaining sauce. Garnish with gremolata and grated Parmesan. Serve immediately.

### LEARN MORE

♦ For more tips on pasta-making technique, read “Making Fresh Pasta” on pages 86–88 of *The Art of Simple Food*, and “Making Cannelloni and Ravioli” on page 90.