

Spaetzle

From Nelson's Kitchen
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Adapted from *Lidia's Italian Table* by Lidia Bastianich and from Canteen's chef Mike Nguyen's recipe in *Edmonton Cooks*

This recipe uses almond milk and later cooks the Spaetzle in olive oil to avoid milk products. If you can use milk products, you should use whole milk and later cook the Spaetzle in butter.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of cornmeal
- 1 cup of boiling water
- 2 cups of almond milk (18 oz) (or regular milk)
- 8 eggs
- 4 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon of freshly grated nutmeg
- 5 cups of all-purpose flour (more as needed)
- Olive oil (or a combination of canola oil and butter)

Procedure:

Bloom the cornmeal

- Put cornmeal at the bottom of a large standing mixer bowl (you may also put in a regular large bowl if you will mix by hand with a balloon whisk)
- Pour the fast boiling water over the corn meal and briefly stir to ensure that there are no lumps.
- Let stand, uncovered, for at least 10 minutes.

Prepare the batter

- Slowly add about half a cup of the almond milk to the corn mush mixing with a balloon whisk to ensure that there are no lumps.
- Break the eggs over the mixture and mix with the whisk until incorporated.
- Add the remainder of almond milk, salt, black pepper and nutmeg and stir until homogeneous.
- Put the dough hook in the mixer and turn it to medium speed.
- Slowly add the flour so that it gets well mixed into the batter without forming large lumps.

- The batter should be fairly thick but still pourable. Add more flour if it is too thin. Or more milk if it is becoming too thick. It is difficult to thin the batter if it gets too thick, thus watch how much flour you add.
- Once the batter is at the right consistence, beat it with the mixer in moderately high speed for 3 to 5 minutes scraping the sides of the bowl every minute or so to ensure that the batter is well mixed.
- (If mixing by hand, you can switch to a wooden spoon and beat the batter for several minutes).
- Let the batter rest for at least 30 minutes. It can stand like this at room temperature for several hours. Best to not refrigerate. But if you do, take it out a few hours before cooking so that it can be at room temperature.

Cook the Spaetzle

- Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add 1-2 tablespoon (water should taste slightly salted).
- Oil a large rimmed baking sheet with plenty of olive oil (use canola oil for the regular milk version that you will cook in butter).
- Place a pasta colander over a large bowl.
- Dunk your spaetzle maker into the hot water.
- Fill the container with the batter and cut the spaetzle by moving the container back and forth over the boiling water.
- Using a mesh strainer, gently lift the spaetzle from the bottom of the pan once to ensure that it will not stick to the bottom.
- A couple of minutes after the spaetzle floats, collect the spaetzle from the boiling water and place in the colander over the bowl.
- Let it stand in the colander for a few minutes for most of the water to drain.
- Transfer spaetzle to the oiled baking sheet and stir, add a bit more olive (or canola) oil if needed.
- Repeat the cooking process until all the batter is used up — this is a large recipe, if the water becomes too thick with flour from the spaetzle, you may have to start with a fresh pot of water.
- Let the spaetzle cool completely, turning it over from time to time.
- It is best if the spaetzle sits in the baking sheet for several hours at room temperature so that it dries some.
- You can put it in plastic containers and refrigerate or freeze at this point.

Browning the Spaetzle

- In a non-stick pan, warm up a few tablespoons of olive oil (you can use butter if not concerned with dairy products).
- Put the portion of spaetzle that you want to serve in the hot oil (or butter) let it sear for a couple of minutes and then start stir frying it but stir gently to keep the spaetzle intact.
- Cook, stirring until the spaetzle is completely warmed up and there are a few brown spots in some of them.
- Sprinkle with freshly black pepper.
- Serve with a sauce or simply sprinkled with parmesan cheese.