

FOOD52

Rapini with Vin Cotto

By em-i-lis

Editors' Comments:

Near my home in D.C. is the best pizzeria on the East Coast (except for Pinocchio's in Cambridge, MA, which is Sicilian-style and amazing); 2 Amy's is Neapolitan joint whose wood-fired oven was built by a Napoli pizza maker. The restaurant was the first in America to be certified D.O.C. "The Verace Pizza Napoletana Association was established to protect and promote authentic Neapolitan pizza and defend its Neapolitan origins and traditions. As a member of the Association, we abide by these strict requirements and serve D.O.C. pizza." I've been taking my boys there since my oldest was 8 months old. They've got a great wine list, fantastic cheese and charcuterie, and incredible daily specials in addition to their pies. One of my favorite appetizers is the rapini with vin cotto. I've been known to actually lick my plate to make sure none of the gooey, syrupy, incredible vin cotto goes to waste. Vinegar is one of my favorite condiments, and the bitter-sweet combo of it and the rapini in this dish is off the charts awesome. This is my version of that dish! Though vin cotto literally means cooked wine, I prefer to reduce Balsamic with a pinch of sugar for mine. You know how amazing super-aged, super-expensive Balsamic is? It's like the best syrup ever? This is resonant of that but without the price tag.

Serves 4 For the vin cotto:

- 1 cup Balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar

For the rapini:

- 1 pound rapini (broccolini), washed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled, left whole
- 2 peperoncino intero (about 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes, fresh ones!), halved
- generous pinch kosher salt

1. Pour the vinegar and sugar into a small saucepan set over medium heat. Let reduce by a half to a third, 25-30 minutes. Set aside.
2. Set a 6-quart pot of water to boil. When boiling, add the washed rapini and blanch for about 2 minutes. Drain, rinse under cold water, and set aside.
3. Set a cast iron skillet over high heat. Add the olive oil, garlic and peperoncino and let cook/season the oil for a minute or two. Add the blanched rapini (watch out, the oil might spit) and let it sear. After a minute or two, toss carefully. After 3-4 minutes more, remove from heat. The rapini should be tender yet retain a definite crunch.
4. Transfer the rapini, garlic and pepper to a serving platter and pour any remaining oil from the skillet over

the veggies. Drizzle generously with the vin cotto. Season with more salt and some pepper if needed and/or you like.

5. Get out some good bread so none of the juices left on your serving platter or plate go to waste!