

DOMENICA COOKS

CANEDERLI AL RADICCHIO E SPECK

Makes 12 dumplings, to serve 4 as a main course, 6 as a side
(adapted slightly from Alpine Cooking, by Meredith Erickson)

INGREDIENTS

300 g (11 ounces) sturdy bread, crusts removed
200 ml (scant 1 cup) whole milk, warmed
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 shallot, minced
300 g (11 ounces) radicchio di Treviso or radicchio di Chioggia, finely chopped
Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 eggs, beaten
50 g (packed 1/2 cup) freshly grated Grana Padano or Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
200 g (7 ounces) speck, finely diced
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons fine dried bread crumbs
60 ml (4 tablespoons) melted butter

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine the bread and warm milk and stir to moisten. Set aside for 30 minutes.
2. Warm the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the shallot and cook until translucent, about 3 minutes. Don't let it brown. Stir in the radicchio and cook, stirring often, until wilted and just tender, about 10 minutes (the radicchio will lose its bright red hue). Season with about 1/2 teaspoon salt and a grinding of pepper. Set aside.
3. Add the eggs, grated cheese, and speck to the soaked bread mixture. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper, and a good grating of nutmeg. Mix well. Then add the cooled radicchio mixture, flour, and bread crumbs and mix well with your hands until homogeneous. The dough should come together but feel slightly tacky.
4. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it generously. Melt the butter in a small pan and cover to keep it warm.
5. Moisten your hands and divide the dough into twelve equal portions. Working with one portion at a time, shape the dough into a tight ball. Be sure to pack it well. This step will help the dumplings stay intact during cooking.

6. Slide the dumplings into the boiling water and simmer for 12 minutes, until they are fluffed up and floating and heated through. (Don't worry if a few bits of the mixture dislodge from the dumplings.) Use a skimmer to transfer the dumplings to shallow bowls, taking care to let any excess water drip off them. Spoon melted butter over them, followed by a spoonful or two of grated cheese. Serve hot.