



Passatelli with Brown Butter

Passatelli pasta is a specialty of Romagna as well as neighbouring Marche and Umbria. I was introduced to it at one of my favourite Romagnolo restaurants, Osteria La Corte in San Leo, a hill town on a rocky outcrop inland from Rimini, where I always have lunch on my Emilia-Romagna food & wine tours. Passatelli is classic cucina povera, a way to use leftover bread that also tastes great.

Serves 4 as a starter



INGREDIENTS

- 120g very fine, fresh white breadcrumbs (4¼oz/1–1½ cups)
- 80g freshly-grated Parmigiano Reggiano, plus 15g extra for serving (3oz/½oz)
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- 3 eggs
- ¼ cup plain flour (35g/1¼oz)
- 75g butter (2⅔oz/⅓ cup)
- Squeeze lemon juice

METHOD

1. Place breadcrumbs in a food processor and blitz for a minute or so to ensure they're fine.
2. Add cheese, lemon zest, pepper and nutmeg and blitz to combine.
3. Add eggs and blitz to form a paste.
4. Dust a board with half the flour, turn paste onto it and scatter remaining flour over the top.
5. Knead well to completely incorporate the flour into the paste.
6. Shape into a log, roll in any remaining flour on the board, wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, overnight is fine. Remove from fridge 30 minutes before cooking.
7. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil using 10g salt/litre water (⅓oz salt/2 US pints water).
8. Meanwhile, place butter in a frying pan over medium heat and cook until it's nut brown. Remove from heat and set aside.
9. Once butter is brown and water is boiling, squeeze the dough through a potato ricer (fitted with the largest disc) into the boiling water, using a sharp knife dipped in the water to cut off strands about 3cm (1¼") long.
10. They'll float almost immediately, let them boil for 2–3 minutes, until tender.
11. When passatelli are tender, return butter to a medium heat and, as soon as it starts to sizzle, add a squeeze of lemon juice then use a slotted spoon to scoop them out of the water into the frying pan. Toss to coat them well in the butter.
12. Transfer to a shallow bowl, layering with some of the cheese and a sprinkle of pepper as you go.
13. Scatter remaining cheese over the top and serve immediately.