

Spinach and Ricotta Tortelloni with Butter Sage Sauce

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Spinach and ricotta tortelloni pasta is one of the most iconic recipes from Bologna and it plays a big part in traditional Italian cooking. Recently, I was feeling nostalgic and wanted to create a traditional meal from scratch that took me back to my time spent in Bologna, so I decided to make this popular dish following the original recipe. I made the pasta dough, rolled it with a [pasta machine](#) and hand-made each [tortelloni](#) filled with my creamy spinach and ricotta mixture.

There are many [types](#) of stuffed pastas: ravioli, tortellini, cannelloni, but I love the round, belly-button shape of tortelloni. I paired it with a simple butter and sage sauce and voila...the perfect pasta dish was served.

What do you need in the kitchen to make this recipe?

Here is a list of the items you will need to make this yummy dish for yourself.

food processor

stand mixer (optional)

pasta maker (optional)

pot for boiling

large skillet or saucepan for butter and sage sauce

cutting board or other large, flat working surface

pasta drainer

sharp knife

round shape cutter

several bowls

The recipe, although long, is not complicated to follow. It will take you about an hour from start to finish.

Ingredients

All-purpose flour (14 ounces) – get a good quality all-purpose flour so that your homemade tortelloni come out perfectly!

Eggs (4 large) – you should use eggs at room temperature for this recipe, so you can either store them in a cool place outside the refrigerator or remove them from the fridge 30 minutes before using them. We love farm-fresh eggs!

Kosher salt (2 teaspoons – 1/2 teaspoon) – our favorite is fine sea salt for the dough and sauce and coarse sea salt for the pasta water.

Ricotta cheese (1 cup) – try to use the freshest ricotta cheese you can, bonus points if it is made on a nearby farm or you can get it fresh from Italy.

Spinach (2 packages) – frozen is the easiest thing to use, but if you want to use fresh you will need to use several bags as it cooks down quite a bit.

Parmigiano Reggiano (1/2 cup) – freshly grated or Parmesan cheese will be used for both the filling as well as to sprinkle on top.

Black pepper (1/4 teaspoon) – freshly ground is our preference, but already ground pepper works great too.

Nutmeg (1/4 teaspoon) – freshly grated or powdered is great and adds that truly authentic Italian flavor.

Unsalted butter (1 stick) – we prefer unsalted as that is the type that most Italians use, but if you use salted butter just add less salt to taste.

Sage (4 leaves) – fresh sage leaves of any variety will work well. Sage is a very easy and hearty plant to grow both inside and outside depending on where you live.

How to make tortelloni and butter sauce step by step

To make the filling, start by putting the frozen spinach in a large [skillet](#) over medium heat, add a little water and cover and cook for 5 minutes or until defrosted and warm all the way through ([photo 1](#)).

Transfer into a large sieve in the sink and drain and then leave to cool. When cooled, squeeze all the excess water from the spinach ([photo 2](#)).

Put the spinach, ricotta, Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, nutmeg, salt and pepper in a food processor ([photo 3](#)) and pulse until the mixture has a creamy consistency and set aside ([photo 4](#)).

To make the tortelloni dough by hand: on a cutting board or other flat surface, create a mound with the flour and then create a large crater in the center of the mound. Add the salt and the eggs into the crater and slowly incorporate the flour into the eggs with a fork until it is fully mixed ([photo 5](#)). Now knead by hand for 5-7 minutes, folding and flattening and turning. Create a ball and wrap it in plastic wrap and leave it to rest for 30 minutes ([photo 6](#)).

To make dough with a stand mixer: Add flour, eggs, and salt in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer with the dough hook attachment. Knead on speed 2 for five minutes. Remove the dough and knead by hand for 2 minutes. Shape into an round disc, cover with plastic wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Cut off a 1-inch piece of dough, flatten into a rectangular shape and add a small amount of flour to both sides.

To make pasta by hand with a rolling pin: Place the piece of dough on a flat surface and roll out with a rolling pin ([photo 7](#)). Fold in half and roll out again. Now fold in half and roll out until you have a thin long sheet ([photo 8](#)). You can dust with flour at any point if the dough starts sticking to the rolling pin. Once it is thin enough, set aside to rest on your working table.

To make pasta with a pasta machine: Use a pasta machine or attach the pasta attachment to your stand mixer and set it to #1. Turn on the stand mixer to speed 2 and run the first piece through the roller. While on #1, fold the dough in half and run it through again ([photo 9](#)). Do this twice. Adding a little bit of flour on each side again, change setting to #2 and pass the pasta dough through the sheet roller twice. Now pass the pasta through twice on #3 and then once on #4 #5 #6. Add flour to each side of your long pasta sheet and set it on your working table.

Let the rolled out pasta rest for 3 minutes.

Cut into squares of approximately 3-inch square cookie cutter or with a thin knife.

Put one heaping teaspoon of filling on each square, brush water all around the edges.

Fold the square in half to form a rectangle and press down to remove any air and seal the edges where they come together ([photo 10-11](#)).

Bend the rectangle so that the outer corners come together, forming a classic tortelloni shape, a pinch them to seal and set aside on your work surface ([photo 12-13](#)).

In a large pot bring water to boil, add coarse salt and then cook the tortelloni for 3-4 minutes ([photo 14](#)).

For the butter sage sauce, saute the butter and sage in a skillet over medium heat for 4 minutes.

Add cooked and drained tortelloni directly into the saucepan and gently stir to coat with the butter sauce (**photo 15**).

Serve immediately and garnish with some [Parmigiano Reggiano cheese](#), black pepper and some torn sage leaves.

Try other homemade pasta from scratch:

[Homemade Spinach Pasta Dough Recipe](#)

[Homemade Garganelli Pasta with Cream, Ham and Peas Recipe](#)

[Homemade Cavatelli](#)

[Lobster Ravioli Recipe](#)

[Pumpkin Ravioli Recipe](#)

Expert tips

You can make a dough circle or square. Some tortelloni makers swear by starting with a circle shape, as we have indicated in this recipe. But others prefer a square shape that then turns into a triangle when folded in half (instead of a half moon) but then the ends of the triangle are pinched together the exactly same way to form a very similar finished tortelloni.

Be sure to seal properly. If your tortelloni aren't completely sealed by pinching the sides of the dough together, the cooked tortelloni will lose their filling when you boil them and the end result will be a soupy, wet mess! So be sure to wet the dough slightly and pinch properly when closing.

Variations for different pasta fillings

Our favorite filling variation is amaretti biscuits and pumpkin, a variation that is from Northern Italy:

To make pumpkin and amaretti filling: remove the skin and seeds of the pumpkin (2 pounds) and broil in the oven for 30 minutes or until soft and then let cool. Blend the cooked pumpkin with a hand blender and then add 4 ounces of crushed amaretti cookies, 1/2 cup of Parmesan cheese, a pinch of salt, a pinch of nutmeg and 2 eggs. Stir until completely blended and then using this filling to create tortelloni and drizzle them with olive oil to serve for your next delicious meal.

FAQs

Can I freeze uncooked tortelloni?

Yes! You can easily freeze uncooked tortelloni. Place them on a flat cookie sheet or other similar flat dish that will fit in your freezer. Freeze for several hours on the sheet and then transfer to a freezer-safe Ziplock bag once fully frozen. They can then be stored for up to 3 months and used directly frozen (without defrosting) by boiling in water.

How long with cooked tortelloni last in the fridge? Can I reheat them?

Cooked tortelloni can be stored for 24/48 hours in the fridge in an airtight container. They can be reheated with a splash of water and a little extra butter or drizzle of olive oil and then cooked for a few minutes in the microwave or in a saute pan on the stove top over medium heat until warmed through.

What is the difference between tortellini and tortelloni?

The difference between the big and small version of this pasta is simply the size and the typical fillings. While tortelloni are traditionally stuffed with ricotta and spinach, the smaller version of this pasta, tortellini, are traditionally stuffed with a meat filling and served in chicken broth. There is also the tomato sauce with meat, called Bolognese, that is a favorite from Bologna to top the smaller or bigger version.

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Tortelloni Recipe with Spinach and Ricotta Filling

Tortelloni pasta is a delicacy from the Emilia Romagna region. This homemade pasta tastes incredible dressed in a simple and quick butter and sage sauce for dinner served with a side of asparagus or broccoli.

Course Pasta

Cuisine Italian

Keyword fresh pasta, italian pasta, pasta fresca, tortelloni

Prep Time 1 hour hour

Cook Time 5 minutes minutes

Total Time 1 hour hour 5 minutes minutes

Servings 8 people

Calories 292kcal

Author [Guido Pedrelli](#)

Equipment

Food processor (optional)

stand mixer (optional)

Pasta maker (optional)

pot for boiling

large skillet or saucepan for butter and sage sauce

Cutting Board or other large, flat working surface

pasta drainer

Sharp Knife

round shape cutter

several bowls

Ingredients

FOR THE TORTELLONI DOUGH

14 ounces all-purpose flour 4 eggs large and at room temperature 2 teaspoons Kosher salt

FOR THE FILLING

1 cup ricotta fresh 2 packages frozen spinach 1/2 cup [Parmigiano-Reggiano](#) freshly grated 1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt 1/4 teaspoon [black pepper](#) freshly ground 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg freshly grated

FOR THE SAUCE

1 stick unsalted butter 4 leaves sage fresh

[US Customary](#) – [Metric](#)

Instructions

FOR THE FILLING

Put the frozen spinach in a large skillet over medium-high heat, add a little water and cover and cook for 5 minutes or until defrosted and warm through. Transfer into a large sieve and drain and then leave to cool, squeezing to drain any additional liquid.

In a food processor, add the spinach, ricotta, Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Pulse until the mixture has a creamy consistency. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

FOR THE TORTELLONI DOUGH

To make the dough by hand: on a cutting board or other flat surface, create a mound with the flour and then create a large crater in the center of the mound. Add the salt and the eggs into the crater. With a fork, slowly incorporate the flour into the eggs until it is fully mixed. Now knead the dough by hand for 5-7 minutes, folding and flattening and turning. Create a ball with the dough, wrap it in plastic wrap and leave it to rest for 30 minutes.

To make dough with a stand mixer: Add flour, eggs, and salt in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer with the dough hook attachment. Turn to speed 2 to knead for 5 minutes. Remove the dough and knead by hand for 2 minutes. Shape into an round disc, cover with plastic wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes.

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Let the rolled out pasta rest for 3 minutes.

Cut into 3-inch square cookie cutter or with a thin knife.

Put one heaping teaspoon of filling on each circle, brush water all around the edges.

Fold the square in half to form a rectangle and press down to remove any air and seal the edges where they come together.

Bend the rectangle so that the outer corners come together, forming a classic tortelloni shape, a pinch them to seal.

In a large pot of boiling, salted water, add the pasta and cook for 3-4 minutes.

FOR THE BUTTER SAGE SAUCE

In a medium saucepan, saute the butter and sage over medium heat for 4 minutes.

Add cooked and drained tortelloni directly into the saucepan and gently stir to coat.

Serve immediately and garnish with some Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, black pepper and some torn sage leaves.

Nutrition

Serving: 150g | Calories: 292kcal | Carbohydrates: 39g | Protein: 14g | Fat: 8g | Saturated Fat: 4g | Polyunsaturated Fat: 1g | Monounsaturated Fat: 2g | Trans Fat: 0.01g | Cholesterol: 102mg | Sodium: 885mg | Potassium: 124mg | Fiber: 1g | Sugar: 0.4g | Vitamin A: 338IU | Vitamin C: 0.01mg | Calcium: 159mg | Iron: 3mg

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