

Easy Fresh Pasta Dinners by Amanda Weber

Fresh Pasta

3 cups all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

3 tablespoons water

1 teaspoon olive oil

1/2 teaspoon salt

On a clean surface make a well with the flour. In a measuring cup mix the eggs, water and oil and salt. Pour the wet mixture slowly into the flour and mix with your 2 fingers until all of the wet is incorporated. Do not force the dough to take all of the flour. If you are going to use a pasta machine to roll out the dough you may at this point form the dough into a disk and cover with plastic wrap. Place in the refrigerator for 1 hour to rest. If you going to roll this by hand you should knead the dough on a floured work surface for 8 to 10 minutes.

Classic Bolognese

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium onion, coarsely chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and coarsely chopped

1 celery stalk, coarsely chopped

1 carrot, coarsely chopped

1 pound ground chuck beef

One 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes

1/4 cup flat-leaf Italian parsley, chopped

8 fresh basil leaves, chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup freshly grated Pecorino Romano

In a large skillet heat the olive oil. When almost smoking, add the onion and garlic and sauté over medium heat until the onions become very soft, about 8 minutes. Add the celery and carrot and sauté for 5 minutes. Raise heat to high and add the ground beef. Sauté, stirring frequently and breaking up any large lumps and cook until meat is no longer pink, about 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes, parsley and basil and cook over medium low heat until the sauce thickens. Season with salt and pepper. This will take approximately 1/2 hour. Finish Bolognese with Pecorino Romano.

Cheese Ravioli with Walnut Sage Butter

1 recipe pasta dough

1 pound fresh ricotta, drained if wet

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest (from about 1/2 a lemon)

1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more for serving

1 large egg, plus 1 large egg lightly beaten with 2 tablespoons water

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

6 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/3 cup fresh sage leaves

1 cup walnuts, roughly chopped

3/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

Lay 1 pasta sheet flat on a lightly floured work surface and determine approximately where the halfway point is lengthwise. Use a pastry brush to lightly wet one half of the dough with the remaining egg lightly beaten with water. Spoon mounds of the filling, about 2 teaspoons each, onto half of the wet side of the dough, leaving about a ½ inch between the mounds. Fold the dry half of the sheet over lengthwise to cover the filling. Press the pasta sheets together to seal the edges around the filling, and press out any excess air. Use a pastry cutter or knife to cut individual ravioli. As you cut out the ravioli, place them on a plate or baking sheet sprinkled with flour to keep them from sticking. Repeat with the remaining pasta and filling.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the ravioli to the boiling water and cook 3-4 minutes. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat, then add the sage and walnuts and cook until the nuts are toasted, about 3 minutes. Increase the heat to high, ladle in about 1 cup pasta cooking water and bring to a boil. Cook until reduced by about half, 1 to 2 minutes.

Drain the ravioli, reserving another ½ cup cooking water. Add the ravioli to the skillet and toss to coat, adding the reserved water as needed. Remove from the heat, toss with the parmesan and season with salt.