

Gattafin

Fried ravioli



Traditionally the filling of this classic fried ravioli was made with herbs that grew wild and were gathered by the women of the Ligurian hills, who kept their favourite spots secret. The mixture of wild herbs is called *preboggion* in the province of Genoa and *erbi* in the province of La Spezia, where I come from.

The story goes that this dish was invented in the nineteenth century by the wives of the workers in the sandstone quarry at Gatta, near Levanto, using herbs picked by their husbands around the quarry. When the quarry owner tried the dish, he described it as ‘*la finezza di Gatta*’ (the finest of the area), which was condensed into its modern name.

It is impossible to find these wild greens in Australia (and hard enough to find them in the markets of Liguria these days). Instead we are trying to come close to the flavour by using silverbeet, parsley, radicchio and marjoram.

FOR THE DOUGH

300 g (10 oz) plain
(all purpose) flour
pinch of sea salt
1 tbsp olive oil
60 ml (2 fl oz) water

FOR THE FILLING

1 kg (2 lb) silverbeet, washed
and white stalks trimmed
½ radicchio, washed and outer
leaves discarded

1 bunch flat-leaf parsley
leaves picked, washed
2 eggs
60 g (2 oz) freshly grated
parmesan cheese
45 g (1½ oz) ricotta cheese
pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
sea salt and freshly ground
black pepper
1 tbsp olive oil
1 bunch marjoram leaves
olive oil, for frying



We begin with the wrapping for the parcel, which ideally should be made at least an hour before you want to eat. Place the flour in a mound on a flat work surface. Form a well in the centre, sprinkle in the salt, olive oil and water. Start kneading and work the dough with your hands until you obtain a smooth and firm ball. Let it rest for 1 hour. When ready, use a rolling pin to roll out a very thin sheet of dough.

To make the filling, place the silverbeet, radicchio and parsley, with the water from washing still clinging to the leaves, in a saucepan over a medium heat. Steam until soft, 3–5 minutes, and drain in a colander. Squeeze dry in a tea towel, chop finely and place in a bowl. Break in the eggs and add the parmesan, ricotta and nutmeg. Sprinkle in a little salt and pepper, add a spoonful of olive oil and all the marjoram leaves. Mix well with a wooden spoon.

Now cut the sheet of dough into squares about 12 cm (4½ inches) wide. Put a spoonful of the mixture on each square, slightly toward one side, fold the dough over the filling, press with your fingers all around to tightly close the parcel.

Pour the olive oil into a saucepan to a depth of 2 cm (1 inch) and place on a high heat. Fry the Gattafin parcels until golden brown, about 3 minutes on each side. **SERVES 4**