

Sourdough Tortellini with Mushroom, Ricotta and Asparagus

Sourdough Pasta

1/2 cup durum semolina sourdough starter*
1 cup durum semolina flour (plus extra for kneading and rolling)
1 tbsp water or more if needed
Sea salt for the water when cooking

Tortellini Filling

1 tbsp butter
2 tbsp finely chopped onion
2 medium Cremini mushrooms (about 1/2 - 2/3 cup when chopped)
1/2 cup – 2/3 cup finely chopped asparagus
1 tsp dried sage
1/2 cup ricotta cheese
Sea salt and pepper to taste

Avocado Yogurt Dressing

5-6 tbsp olive oil
1/3 cup yogurt
1/2 avocado, peeled and pitted
1 small clove garlic, crushed
1-2 tbsp lemon or lime juice (to taste)
3 tbsp parsley
1 tsp raw honey
Sea salt and pepper to taste

Mix the starter, flour and water together to form a dough. You may start by mixing with a spoon but eventually, you'll need to transfer it to a clean, flat surface (like the counter) and finish working in the flour by kneading it. Try to knead in as much flour as possible. Once it forms a stiff ball, keep kneading for 5-10 minutes until it's soft and pliable. It becomes more pliable once the gluten is stretched by the kneading process.

Let rest for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, make the filling. Heat a medium-size skillet on the stove on medium-high heat. Add the butter and onions and lightly sauté for about 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue to sauté for about 2 minutes. Add the asparagus and sage. Continue to sauté until the vegetables are cooked. If the mixture starts to stick, add a little water. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste and set aside to cool. Add the ricotta when getting ready to fill the tortellini. Re-taste to see more sea salt and pepper is needed.

The dressing can also be made now. Place all the ingredients in to a small blender and blend until smooth.

Divide the dough into 3 pieces. Sprinkle flour on the clean surface. Roll out one of the pieces of dough to be as thin as possible. You'll be able to see light through. Use a 3-inch or 4-inch circle cutter** and cut as many circles as possible. Put the circles aside. Repeat with the other two pieces of dough.

Spread out all the circles. Put a small amount of filling in the centre. The amount depends on what size circle you rolled. It's approximately 1-2 teaspoons. Dip your finger in water and lightly brush the edge of the circle to moisten the pasta a bit. Fold the dough in half to form a half circle. Pinch the edge to hold the pasta together. Bring the two ends of the half circles together. Pinch together. Fold down the top of the tortellini like a collar. Place each tortellini on a rack and let sit for about 2 hours. Letting them dry a bit makes it easier to prevent over cooking.

To cook the tortellini: Put a large pot on the stove and fill 2/3 or 3/4 full with water. Bring the water to a boil. Add sea salt to the water. Salt amount varies depending on the amount of water but generally, approximately 1 1/2 tbsp salt per 4 quarts or 4 litres of water. Add the tortellini to the boiling water. When the tortellini floats to the top, it's cooked. Removed from the water and rinse to prevent it from being sticky. Transfer to a bowl and add the dressing. Serve.

*Durum semolina sourdough can be made by mixing your existing sourdough starter with durum semolina flour. Start with a 1/2 cup starter and add 1/2 cup durum semolina flour and some water (maybe 1/4 cup) and put in a large Mason jar. Mix together with a wooden spoon or a plastic scraper (do not use a metal utensil). Ferment for 24 hours and then add another 1/4 cup durum semolina and more water (if needed). Mix again. Ferment again for 24 hours. Do this for at least 3 days.

**If you don't have any circle cutters, then use the rim of a glass that is the size you desire.

Tip 1: The tortellini can be made ahead of time. Keep in the fridge if making a day ahead. It still needs to sit for two hours of drying time. It can be also frozen. Place them on a baking tray and freeze individually. Then transfer to a container with a lid and store in the freezer until ready to use.

Tip 2: The dressing and filling can also be made a day ahead and stored in the fridge.