

## BEYOND PASTA

### Keys to Airy, Earthy-Tasting Potato Gnocchi

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#### 1. BAKE, DON'T BOIL

Boiled potatoes taste dull. Instead, jumpstart cooking in the microwave and then finish them in the oven.



#### 4. BE PRECISE

Start with an exact amount of cooked potato and flour so you knead only once.



#### 2. PEEL 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT

Peel hot potatoes to release steam. This results in drier spuds that hold together with less flour.



#### 5. ADD AN EGG

Egg helps the dough hold its shape with less flour for lighter results.



#### 3. SPREAD OUT

Press the potatoes through a ricer and then spread them on a baking sheet to allow more steam to escape.

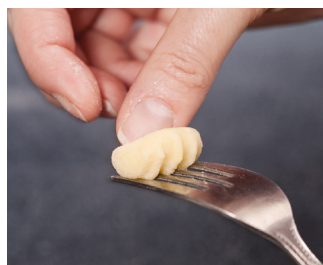


#### 6. KNEAD BRIEFLY

Knead the dough until it just holds together to avoid overdeveloping the gluten.

### Make the Right Impression

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Ridges and indentations help gnocchi hold on to sauce. To create them, hold the fork with its tines facing down. Press each dough piece (cut side down) against the tines with your thumb and roll the dumpling down the tines.

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### Italian Cheeses to Know

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#### Gorgonzola

Produced in the Lombardy and Piedmont regions of Italy, Gorgonzola is a cow's milk cheese available in two varieties: dolce (sweet) and piccante (also called naturale or mountain). The dolce version, which is more common in the United States, is aged for only two to three months versus piccante's six. Our tasters loved dolce's ultracreamy texture, subtle spice, and sweet finish.



#### Parmesan

Made in a northern region of Italy, the real deal, Parmigiano-Reggiano, can be found in many American supermarkets—at a price. It's nutty, buttery, and crystalline; Italians consider it the king of cheeses. The domestic stuff is cheaper (by as much as \$10 per pound), younger, and less nuanced but wonderfully versatile for cooking. We use the rinds to add depth to soups, stews, and stocks.



#### Fresh Mozzarella

Originally, all mozzarella was made from the milk of water buffaloes; today, most is made from cow's milk. Fresh mozzarella is lighter, silkier, and more flavorful than block mozzarella. It's sold in spheres packaged in whey or water or shrink-wrapped. Our tasters loved its creamy and mild, clean and fresh-tasting flavor. Fresh mozzarella is the only choice for salads.



#### Pecorino Romano

Pecorino Romano is a bone-white cheese with an intense peppery flavor and a strong sheepy quality (it is traditionally made entirely from sheep's milk). It shines in such boldly flavored dishes as pasta alla carbonara, but we often mix it with Parmesan to mitigate its sharp saltiness. Like Parmesan, Pecorino Romano is designed for grating, but it has a much saltier and more pungent, almost gamey flavor.



#### Fontina

The Italian original, Fontina Val d'Aosta, is a semisoft cow's milk cheese prized for its rich, nutty flavor and excellent meltability—but it comes at a price. The domestic variety (with its bright red coating) is buttery and melts well but lacks the complex flavor of the Italian original. Use it in panini and baked pastas.



#### Ricotta

Ricotta means “re-cooked” in Italian, and this pillowy, moist, fresh cheese is so named because it was traditionally made with leftover whey from the production of other cow's milk cheeses. (American ricotta, however, is made from milk, not whey.) Ricotta is versatile enough to use both in savory classics, like lasagna and manicotti, and in desserts, such as cheesecake and cannoli.