



## POTATO AND CHEESE PANSOTI, ROASTED ACORN SQUASH, PANCETTA VINAIGRETTE serves 4

Pansoti is Italian for “pot bellied” and refers to the shape of the pasta. It is also a classic stuffed pasta and usually contains potato and cheese. This recipe is perfect for autumn. When the weather is starting to get a bit cold and the acorn squash are in season, this dish comforts you while satisfying your appetite. The pansoti was an original menu item at Rioja, and each fall I still crave them! “Pansoti” was actually in the running to be the name of our restaurant before we decided on “Rioja.”

### POTATO AND CHEESE FILLING

- 1 Idaho potato
- 4 ounces ricotta
- 2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese
- 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ounces fresh mozzarella, diced
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives
- 1 egg yolk
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

### POTATO AND CHEESE PANSOTI

- Semolina pasta dough (recipe follows)
- Egg yolk wash (1 part water to 1 part egg yolk)
- Semolina flour, to dust tray

### ROASTED ACORN SQUASH

- 2 acorn squash
- 1/4 pound butter, melted
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

### FIG PORT REDUCTION

- 2 cups port wine
- 1/2 cup chopped dried black mission figs



## PANCETTA VINAIGRETTE

1/2 cup pure olive oil  
1 cup ground pancetta (ask your butcher to prepare or cut into 1/4-inch dice)  
1/4 cup diced shallots  
1 tablespoon chopped garlic  
1/2 tablespoon chopped thyme  
3 tablespoons sherry vinegar  
Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

## ASSEMBLY AND PLATING

3 chives, cut into 1-inch lengths, to garnish (store in ice water to preserve freshness)

**POTATO AND CHEESE FILLING:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Wash the potato and bake in the 375-degree oven until fully cooked (about 1 hour).

When it is cool enough to handle but still hot, peel the skin. In a mixing bowl, mash the potato with a hand masher or ricer.

Add the remaining ingredients to the bowl and mix well while the potato is still warm. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Reserve in the refrigerator until ready to use.

**POTATO AND CHEESE PANSOTI:** When you are ready to prepare the pasta, unwrap your dough and slice off a piece of the dough ball, rewrapping the unused dough until you are ready to sheet it. Feed the dough through your pasta machine, starting at the widest setting. (A pasta-rolling device such as the tabletop Gemini or the roller attachment for a stand mixer is ideal for sheeting the pasta.) Continue to feed it through the machine, gradually reducing the thickness setting until the dough is 1/16 inch thick.

Your sheet should be approximately 5 inches wide and 12 inches long. This is a standard size that works well for all the recipes. Lay the sheeted dough onto a lightly semolina-floured work surface. Continue sheeting the dough. You will need 6 sheets for 4 servings finished pasta. As you work, keep each sheet covered with a dry towel to prevent the dough from drying.

Have a 2 1/2- to 3-inch ring cutter handy. On a lightly semolina-floured work surface, place a sheet of fresh pasta. Starting 1 inch in from one end of the pasta, place 2 tablespoons of the potato and cheese filling onto the center of the sheet; repeat, leaving at least 1 1/2 inches of space between each mound of filling for a total of 3 dollops. Brush egg wash around the filling



and fold from the bottom half of the pasta over the mounds (allowing the fold to butt up against the filling); as you fold, be sure to push out the air and tighten the dough down around the filling. Place the ring cutter over each dough-covered mound so that it resembles a mezzaluna (half-moon) and press out the pansoti. (To make the right shape, the cutter is only hitting half the dough.) Pinch the edges of the pansoti to be sure they are sealed well.

Stand each pansoti on its filling side and flatten it slightly to resemble a pot sticker. Repeat until all pansoti are shaped. (You will need 16 pansoti for 4 servings.)

Reserve the finished pansoti on a sheet tray lightly dusted with semolina flour (to prevent sticking). Cover and refrigerate the pansoti until you are ready to cook them.

**ROASTED ACORN SQUASH:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Peel the squash along their ridges. (You will not be able to peel the whole squash, but that is OK. It will look like you have peeled stripes into the squash.) Cut each squash across its equator with a serrated knife and remove the seeds. Cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices to make large rings. Place them in a large mixing bowl.

Drizzle the melted butter over the squash rings. Add the brown sugar, salt and pepper to the bowl and toss until the squash rings are well coated.

Lay the squash directly onto parchment-lined sheet trays and roast in the 350-degree oven until they are tender but not mushy (12-14 minutes, depending on size). (The squash should still have some firmness because they will rest at room temperature and be warmed again later. Look for the slices to change from being opaque to a little more translucent as they cook.)

**FIG PORT REDUCTION:** In a small saucepan, bring the wine and figs to a boil over high heat and begin reducing the liquid. As the reduction proceeds, the bubbles that form around the sides of the pot will become larger and larger. These bubbles can serve as a visual clue as to the “room temperature” viscosity of the finished reduction. When the largest of these bubbles is the size of a nickel, remove the pan from the heat, strain the sauce and allow it to cool to room temperature.

**PANCETTA VINAIGRETTE:** In a wide sauté pan over high heat, add 2 tablespoons olive oil and the pancetta and render until it is crispy.

Once the pancetta is crispy, add the shallots and garlic; turn off the heat. Stir in the thyme, sherry vinegar and remaining olive oil. Season lightly to taste with salt and pepper, being careful not to add too much salt; the pancetta will season this sauce most of the way.



**ASSEMBLY AND PLATING:** To successfully prepare this dish, all of the ingredients must be prepared ahead of time, as the final cooking and plating will only take minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a 1-2 gallon pot large enough to accommodate all of the potato and cheese pansoti, bring salted water to a boil. (If your pot is not large enough, plan on cooking the pansoti in batches to avoid overcrowding them.)

Rewarm the roasted acorn squash in the 350-degree oven.

Drop the pansoti into the boiling water. Test them for doneness by pinching the edges to see if the pasta is tender (3-4 minutes). (The best way to test doneness is to cook an extra pansoti and taste it. The pasta should be firm but cooked through.)

As the pasta cooks, place 3 warm squash rings around each plate.

Remove the pansoti from the pot, skimming them from the water. Place 4-5 pansoti on each plate, on top of the squash.

Spoon the warm pancetta vinaigrette over the pansoti. Drizzle the fig port reduction on the pansoti and around the plate. Garnish each pansoti with a cross of 2 chive batons.

**CHEF'S NOTES:** You can make the fig port reduction in advance. You can make the pansoti filling and pasta dough a day ahead.

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## SEMOLINA PASTA DOUGH

yields 2 1/2 pounds

1 pound (about 2 3/4 cups) semolina flour

12 ounces (about 2 1/4 cups) all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup water

4 egg yolks

2 tablespoons pure olive oil



In a mixing bowl, combine all of the dry ingredients together by hand. Create a well in the center of the bowl.

In a separate bowl, whisk the water, yolks and oil together. Place the wet mixture in the well of the dry ingredients and mix together by hand until a crumbly dough forms.

Turn the dough out onto a work surface, press it together into 1 somewhat crumbly dough ball and then knead it by hand until a smooth dough ball forms. \* (This will take some elbow grease; about 15 minutes of kneading.) Tightly wrap the dough in plastic wrap and allow it to relax in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour or overnight.

Chef's note:

\*It is important to knead the dough very well to properly develop the gluten. If the dough will not stay together, you may add more water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until you have a smooth dough ball. Different types of flour will react differently, so be sure to feel your dough to be sure you have the right consistency.

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