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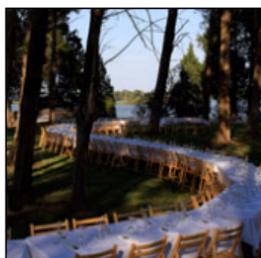


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September 15, 2009

Farm Dining in the Field and at Home

by Bree Shirvell



In 2010, Outstanding in the Field plans to take its al fresco act to Europe for a few delicious dinners.

If you haven't dined at one of [Outstanding in the Field's](#) traveling restaurants, it's about time you did. Long communal tables set in the middle of wide-open fields are the setting for more than 50 magical dinners at farms throughout North America.

Local farmers, culinary artisans, and community members linger over five course meals, almost 100 percent of which is made from ingredients produced locally--often only a few feet from where you eat. It's the chance to meet the people who grow and produce food, to honor the tradition of the local farm, and to learn about ingredients cultivated close to home.

If you can't snag a seat at one of the scheduled dinners (or can't foot the \$180-\$220 bill), [Outstanding in the Field: A Farm to Table Cookbook](#) features many of the dishes served over the nearly ten years the organization has been cookin'. My favorite recipe is the goat's milk ricotta and spinach gnocchi--it calls for less flour than typical gnocchi recipes, so it's light and almost fluffy. Find the recipe after the jump.

Goat's-Milk Ricotta and Spinach Gnocchi

Serves 4

- 3 cups whole-milk ricotta, preferably goat or sheep
- 4 ounces spinach
- 3 large eggs beaten
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for dredging
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh marjoram
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper or to taste
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter

Spoon the ricotta into the center of a large piece of doubled-over cheesecloth, and tie the ends together tightly with butcher's twine. Tie the bundle to the handle of a wooden spoon and lay the spoon across the top of a bowl deep enough that the ricotta bundle does not touch the bottom. Refrigerate overnight.

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil and prepare a bowl of ice water. Meanwhile, clean the spinach and remove the stems. Add the spinach to the pot and boil for 1 minute. Drain the spinach and transfer it immediately to the ice water to stop the cooking. When the spinach is cool enough to handle, drain it well. Transfer it to a clean dish towel and squeeze out as much water as possible. Chop the spinach very finely.

Squeeze the ricotta bundle firmly to force out all the liquid. The ricotta should be very dry; if you form a tablespoonful into a ball it should hold its shape. Put the drained ricotta in a medium bowl and add the eggs, spinach, up to 1/2 cup flour, marjoram, salt and pepper. Stir well. cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Bring a stockpot of salted water to a boil. Turn the boiling water down so that the water is just barely simmering; there should be very little movement. pour a generous amount of flour onto a dish.

When ready to cook, scoop out rounded teaspoonfuls of the ricotta mixture and drop several of them onto the flour dish; do not let them touch each other and make sure you have plenty of room around each one to roll it around. When a few gnocchi have been dropped onto the flour, very carefully roll each one in the flour, then gently pick each one up and roll it in your hands to knock off excess flour. Drop the gnocchi into the simmering water. Repeat until all of the gnocchi have been formed and added to the pot.

Turn the heat up so that the water just barely simmers. Cook for 7 minutes. Remove the gnocchi from the water using a mesh skimmer or slotted spoon and divide them among 4 to 6 warmed plates.

Meanwhile, melt the butter over medium heat, swirling gently. Remove the pan from the heat just at the butter begins to foam and turn brown. Pour the warm brown butter on top of the gnocchi. Serve immediately.

Further reading:

- * [Feather Down Farms Getaways](#) (Daily Traveler)
- * [Déjeuner sur l'Herbe](#) (CNT, February 2008)
- * [Catch of the Day](#): International noshables

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