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Ricotta Gnocchi, Cauliflower, Black Olives, Capers, Tomato, Pine Nuts

In answer to customers requests, I think about putting together vegetarian dishes all the time. Fortunately for me, there's no other Cucina in the world that lends itself so easily to vegetable dishes as the Italian kitchen. This vegetarian dish is similar in style to Gnocchi, Sausage, Cauliflower, Manila Clams, Peperoncini, without the sausage and clams, of course. The vegetable-only sauce makes a perfect match for the soft, melt-in-your-mouth ricotta gnocchi.

Serves 4-6

- 1 recipe Ricotta Gnocchi (see below)
- 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons grape seed oil
- 1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 cups cauliflower florets
- 1/2 cup pitted black olives, such as Kalamata
- 1/3 cup capers, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup tomato puree
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the pine nuts on a baking sheet with sides. Toast until golden, about 5 to 7 minutes. Let cool.
2. Add the grape seed oil and garlic to a 10-inch skillet. Turn on the heat to high. When the garlic is golden around the edges, about 1 minute, add the cauliflower, olives, and capers. Toss together to combine. Cook until the cauliflower just begins to brown. Add the white wine and reduce by half.
3. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
4. Add the tomato puree to the sauce.
5. Add the gnocchi to the boiling water and cook until they float to the top. Cook for 2 more minutes.
6. Add the pine nuts and pepper to the sauce. Use a wire-mesh skimmer to remove the gnocchi from the pot and place them directly into the skillet. Carefully stir to combine with the sauce.
7. Serve immediately.

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Ricotta Gnocchi, Cauliflower, Black Olives, Capers, Tomato, Pine Nuts, (continued)

Ricotta Gnocchi

Ricotta gnocchi are a lighter alternative to the starchier potato gnocchi. They are also easier and quicker to make. With their almost fluffy consistency, they melt in your mouth.

Makes about 2 pounds gnocchi

1 cup all-purpose flour
1-1/2 pounds whole milk ricotta cheese
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 egg
Rice flour for dusting

1. Spread the all-purpose flour on a clean, dry work surface. Place the ricotta, salt, pepper, and egg on top of the flour. Use your hands to gather the ingredients together and gently knead the dough into a 10 by 8-inch log. Let rest for 2 minutes.
2. Lightly dust a clean, dry work surface with rice flour. Cut the log into 4 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a 1-inch-thick rope. Cut each rope into 1/2-inch gnocchi. Store the gnocchi on a rice flour-covered baking sheet until ready to use. Dust with rice flour.