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Sugeli with Potatoes and Garlic

Serves 6 to 8

Sugeli are made with a very simple dough and have a shape that resembles orecchiette. Their traditional sauce is a white sauce with brusso, a soft fermented cheese made from the milk of Brigasca sheep. Mendatica, a mountain town in this Maritime Alps region, is the home of cucina bianca, or “white cooking.” Nearly every dish in this region includes dairy and is therefore some shade of white. Sugeli are a signature dish of the Maritime Alps, along with other lightly colored foods, including other dairy products and vegetables such as potatoes, turnips, leeks, and garlic. Despite this region’s proximity to the sea, cucina bianca is very different from typical Mediterranean cooking.

Sugeli:

500 g / 3-1/2 cups + 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting

50 g / 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 tsp Kosher salt

240 g / 1 cup + 1 Tbsp water

Semolina flour for dusting

Potatoes and Garlic:

10-1/2 oz (300 g) new potatoes

1/4 cup (60 ml) extra virgin olive oil

4 Tbsp (55 g) unsalted butter, cut into cubes

4 garlic cloves, cut into very thin slices

2 tsp Kosher salt

1/4 cup + 1 Tbsp (70 g) whole-milk ricotta cheese, homemade or store-bought

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese for grating

Make the sugeli:

In a medium bowl, combine the all-purpose flour, olive oil, salt, and water and knead with your hands until a soft dough is formed, 5 to 8 minutes. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and let rest at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and dust with semolina flour. Cut off about one-eighth of the dough and leave the rest covered with plastic wrap. On a work surface lightly dusted with all-purpose flour, use your hands to roll the dough into a log about 1/2-in (12 mm) in diameter. Cut the log into 1/2-in (12-mm) pieces. Turn each piece cut-side up and, with your thumb, press on the center to make a round dumpling that is thin and flat in the middle and slightly thicker at the edge. Put the sugeli on the prepared baking sheets and shape the remaining dough. Make sure that the sugeli do not touch or they will stick together.

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(To store, refrigerate on the baking sheets, covered with plastic wrap, for up to 2 days, or freeze on the baking sheets and transfer to an airtight container. Use within 1 month. Do not thaw before cooking.)

Prepare the potatoes and garlic:

In a medium pot, cover the potatoes with cold water. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and cook until the potatoes can be easily pierced with a skewer, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes in a colander and set aside to cool. When potatoes are cool enough to handle, cut into 1/4-in (6-mm) slices. Set aside.

Bring a large pot filled with generously salted water to a simmer over medium-high heat. Add the sugeli and simmer until tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Meanwhile, in a 12-in (30.5-cm) sauté pan, warm the olive oil, butter, and garlic over medium-low heat and cook until the garlic is fragrant and no longer raw, 3 to 4 minutes. If the garlic begins to brown, lower the heat. Add the potatoes and the sugeli, using a slotted spoon to transfer them directly from the cooking water. Stir gently and cook until heated through, about 2 minutes. Add the salt and ricotta cheese and stir gently. Transfer to a serving dish and top with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Serve right away.