

Spatzle (Swabian Noodles)

Clayton Schmitt, e-mail message to Michael Miller

Mother's family were Volga Germans from Frank and Father's were Black Sea Germans from Rohrbach and Worms. In a culinary sense I never knew if I was swimming in the Volga or playing in the surf of the Black Sea. It was all good. Enjoy.

2 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 eggs, beaten

1/2 cup water (more or less)

Combine flour and salt in a mixing bowl, make a well in the center, add eggs and 1/4 cup water, beat until a stiff dough forms, adding a little more water at a time until of the right consistency - thick, firm, coming away easily from the sides of the bowl. Knead until smooth. Let stand in bowl 30 minutes. Dampen pastry board with water, place dough on it, flour the rolling pin slightly and roll out to 1/8-inch thickness or a little thinner. Heat a kettle of salted water to boiling. With a sharp knife, cut off very thin slivers of the dough, transfer to a plate as it is cut, and push directly into rapidly boiling water. Do not crowd kettle. Spatzle will rise to the surface when cooked, in about 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon, drain in colander. Add more slivers of dough to the boiling water, continuing until all is cooked. Recipe makes 4 cups, enough for 4 servings as a side dish, 12 servings if added to soup.

Variations

Spatzle mit Spinat (with Spinach)

When making the Spatzle dough, reduce the amount of water to 1/4 cup, add 1 cup chopped raw spinach to the dough. Continue as in the basic recipe above.

Allgauer Schinkenspatzle (Ham Spatzle in the style of the Allgau)

Work into basic Spatzle dough 1 cup minced ham, prepare as in basic recipe, but roll out as thin as possible. When cooked, toss with butter and shredded Swiss cheese.

Stuttgarter Spatzle

Prepare Spatzle as in basic recipe; when cooked, toss with 2 tablespoons butter and 1 beaten egg until well blended. A little minced parsley may be added, too, if desired.

Spatzle mit Kraut

Combine quantities hot Spatzle and cooked Swabian style sauerkraut or Weinkraut.

Pilz-Spatzle (Mushroom Spatzle)

Toss cooked Spatzle with mushrooms cooked in butter.

Kasespatzle (Cheese Spatzle)

Saute sliced onion in butter until soft and golden. Arrange layers of Spatzle, onion and shredded Swiss cheese in a buttered casserole, dotting each cheese layer with bits of butter. Bake in a moderate-to-hot oven until cheese is melted (about 30 minutes at 375 degrees F.).