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Ripieno di Spinaci

In Italy vegetable courses are called *contorni* (cont-or-nee) and are accompaniments or separate dishes to complement or contrast with the main flavour. Contorni are usually dishes in themselves so think of your veg as a freestanding item so you will have more success if you think Italian (in other words, if it's on one plate you should be making a stew). This recipe will work with almost any firm leaved veg which can be wrapped.

900g spinach or Swiss chard leaves
200-225g ricotta
40g parsley
1 Squisito Garlic or Tuscan sausage
1 clove garlic
8 tbs. Parmigiano Reggiano or Grana Padano DOP
1 very small onion or leek
1 egg
60g pancetta
pinch nutmeg
55g butter
Trapani sea salt & ground pepper

Wash the spinach then steam or cook in minimal water. When the liquid has evaporated, remove from fire and cool, then squeeze well and chop finely.

Wash the parsley and chop finely with garlic, onion and pancetta. Lightly brown the resulting *battuto* in a saucepan with the butter, stirring frequently, for about 5 mins. Add spinach, salt, mix well and let cook over a low heat for about 10 mins, stirring frequently. Let cool.

Sieve ricotta into a bowl. Add the spinach mixture together with Parmigiano, egg, a pinch of nutmeg and pepper (and some salt, if necessary). Mix well and let stand in a cool place for several hours before using. If you like, add 60g or so of sausage to the *battuto*. This stuffing is suitable for tortelli, tortelloni, and ravioloni. The best sauce is a strained tomato sauce.

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