

# Celebrate Argentina's National Gnocchi Day



© [www.patagoniapordescubrir.com](http://www.patagoniapordescubrir.com)

ZONA ARGENTINA

Partake in this celebration and you'll understand the Argentine expression: "A full belly means a happy heart".

Argentine culture has been greatly influenced by Italy, the result of early immigrations to this New World nation, from Sicily, Friuli and Genoa. Some people even jokingly characterize Argentines as "Italians who happen to speak Spanish". You'll note Italian influences everywhere; politics, religion, education, fashion, language, and definitely, FOOD! Prepare for a rich selection of gastronomic treats, combining both Spanish and Italian roots with a heavy dose of Argentina's own local flavors and styles. While an Argentine Asado is not to be missed, you'll also want to try the pizzas, pastas and Milanesas. (Milanesas are a popular treat consisting of thinly sliced cutlets, dipped in egg and Italian bread crumbs and then sautéed or baked and served as a sandwich or main dish. In Patagonia, you'll find them in many varieties, including beef, chicken, fish, cheese and even, guanaco!) One of the most popular Argentine dishes is gnocchi, which is a homemade pasta typically made from potatoes. You'll encounter plenty of creativity though; gnocchi can also be made from ricotta, spinach, sweet potato, pumpkin, and all kinds of other flavors! Almost every restaurant in Argentina features some form of gnocchi on their menu and you can find pre-prepared versions in most food stores. Gnocchi are so popular in Argentina, there's even a monthly holiday dedicated to their enjoyment. On the 29th day of every month National Gnocchi Day is celebrated. (Yep, that's right, one day a year just wasn't enough. Argentines needed eleven days each year dedicated to GNOCCHI!!! Why eleven and not twelve? Think about it.) In fact, the 29th was strategically selected. Typically the 29th is the "poorest" day of the month for Argentine households; the last day before payday; which, only comes once a month. Gnocchi, being inexpensive but

hearty, was the perfect answer to maintain “bellies full and hearts happy”. There’s more! Traditionally, when eating gnocchi on National Gnocchi Day, one peso is placed underneath the dish as a good luck charm. In return for the luck this gesture brings to the eater, the peso is left for the hostess to pay for the gnocchi ingredients for the following month. Regardless of your superstitious beliefs or the day of the month, we encourage you to enjoy a delicious plate of gnocchi during your travels. Almost all of the restaurants in Argentina, and most in Chile, serve gnocchi. You can also find freshly prepared gnocchi in many supermarkets along the route! And keep in mind, Gnocchi is easy and fun to make; even in the back country.

# PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs that complement this story



# RECIPES

The flavors and culinary knowledge can be a memorable aspect of his travels in Aysén. Every corner has its own recipes and dishes . Discover your favorite recipes here.

## Ñoquis with Salsa Tuco

---

4-6 people.

### Ingredientes

Salsa Tuco:

Olive or vegetable oil

1 onion

1 red or green pepper (or both)

2 carrots

1 can of chopped tomatoes

parsley

laurel leaves

nutmeg

1/2 kilo of stewing beef (optional)

Gnocchis:

3 potatoes

Flour 1/2 kilo

2 eggs

### Preparación

**Sauce:** Heat 4 T. of olive oil in a sauce pan at medium-low heat. Chop the onion and peppers and sauté for about 5 minutes. Add and brown the meat and stir in the laurel leaves. Grate and add the carrots and stir. Add the tomatoes and season with a pinch of nutmeg. Simmer until the meat is tender (about 2 hours, depending of the kind of meat you are using). Turn off the heat and add chopped parsley to taste.

**Gnocchis:** While the sauce is simmering, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Peel potatoes and add to the pot. Cook until tender but still firm, about 15 minutes. Drain, cool and mash with a fork or potato masher. Combine 1 cup mashed potato, flour and egg in a large bowl. Knead until the dough forms a ball. Shape small portions of the dough into long "snakes". On a floured surface, cut the snakes into half-inch slices. Bring another large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Drop in your gnocchi and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until they rise to the top. Drain and serve, topped with Tuco sauce and grated Parmesan cheese. Buen provecho (Enjoy)!

## Gnocchis with Salsa Tuco (quick version for camping)

---

2-4 people.

### Ingredientes

- 1 Cup instant mashed potato flakes
- 1 Cup flour
- 1 Cup boiling water
- Pinch salt
- Extra ¼-½ Cup flour for rolling the dough
- 1 pre-packaged sauce

### Preparación

In a bowl, mix the instant potato flakes, salt and about half of the flour. Pour the boiling water into the bowl and mix vigorously. Then, add in the rest of the flour and combine until you've formed a sticky dough. Place the dough on a clean floured surface and divide into four pieces. Roll each piece in the remaining flour, making a long snake shape. Cut into gnocchi using a knife and then toss them into a bowl with flour to keep them from sticking together. Add a tablespoon of olive or vegetable oil to a pot of water and bring to a boil on your camp stove. Drop the gnocchi into the boiling water, a few at a time, and stir periodically until most float to the top (3 - 5 minutes). Drain and serve with your sauce and grated Parmesan cheese. **Please remember that campfires are strictly prohibited almost everywhere in Patagonia!**