

How to Make Spätzle

Spätzle are a German soft pasta (also sometimes referred to as dumplings). It literally means "little sparrow" in Swabian German, and are common in Swabia, Bavaria, Switzerland, Austria and Hungary. You often eat them as the pasta with Goulash, Roasts, Rouladen (anything with a gravy) and as Käsespätzle (a type of Mac-and-Cheese). Note that while some people have the magic touch of rapidly scraping the dough/batter off a wooden chopping board into boiling water (my grandparents were masters at this), I use a "Spätzlepresse", which looks like a complex potato-ricer. Other Spätzle-making-gadgets include pushing the dough/batter through a strainer or using a food mill or coarse grater ("Spätzlehobel"), which typically produce smaller Spätzle often referred to as "Knöpfle" (little buttons; more commonly found in Bavaria and Austria). I make Spätzle in large batches and freeze them.

Here are a couple of photos of the hardware you will need: The Spätzlepresse, a large bowl for the dough/batter, a medium bowl for cold water to shock the spätzle, a large pot of water, a spider, a wooden spoon, a scraper and a sheet pan.

Step 1:

The recipe for Spätzle varies, but the standard recipe that I use, per person, is:

100 grams all purpose flour

1 large egg

2 tablespoons water

Pinch of salt

Mix all these ingredients in a large bowl until the mixture is a gloppy substance, as in the image below. If it doesn't look like this, add a bit more water. Beat the mixture thoroughly as you are trying to form large bubbles in the batter. Let the batter rest for 10-15 minutes. Preheat your oven to the lowest possible warming setting (150F).

Step 2:

Fill a large pot with water and add a generous handful of salt. Bring to a boil. Additionally, fill a medium bowl with cold water; this will be used for shocking the spätzle once you remove them from the boiling water, to stop the cooking. Once the water is boiling, fill the hopper of your Spätzlepresse.

Step 3:

Squeeze the dough/batter into the boiling water. The spätzle themselves cook very quickly once they hit the boiling water (2-3 minutes). You know they are done when they float to the surface. Remove using your spider to the cold water bath.

Step 4:

Remove Spätzle from the cold water bath and spread on sheet pan. Repeat until all batter is used up, all Spätzle are cooked, shocked and drained. Place sheet pan in oven for 10-15 minutes to dry out to Spätzle just a little bit (you aren't cooking them more, just wicking some of the water away).

Spätzle can be kept fresh in the refrigerator for 2-3 or frozen.