

Former competitive athlete Evi Sachenbacher-Stehle (40) is passionate about baking and cooking.

She shares her favourite recipe for Allgäu Kässpätzlen: it's her mother-in-law from Obermaiselstein's take on the classic cheesy dish.

Evi Sachenbacher-Stehle is standing at the hob in her sun-drenched kitchen in Fischen, caramelising onions in a pan. The rich scent of melted butter and onions is in the air, the aroma already possessing a certain sweetness: "Just right," she says with a grin and pulls the pan of caramelised onions from the heat with a routine flick of her wrist. The 40-year-old explains the process: "When the onions smell this sweet, they are ready."

She turns her attention to the large pot for cooking the spätzle. The water has come to a boil and Sachenbacher-Stehle adds the salt. She rests the spätzle press on the rim of the pot. "I never actually used to cook. After all, I never had to. I was on the road a lot as a competitive athlete and I was looked after. And when I was at home in Reit im Winkl in Upper Bavaria, my mum cooked for me," she says with a smile.

"I only started cooking when I met my husband Hannes in 2002. But not because I had to or felt obligated. Somehow he just awakened my interest," she says.

Her pro years: striking a creative balance with baking

She takes the bowl with the prepared dough and fills the spätzle press with a good portion of it. "During my active career as a cross-country skier and bi-athlete, I always baked as a means of striking a creative balance. I still enjoy doing it very much to this day," says Sachenbacher-Stehle.

She ended her active career in 2014. Her first daughter Mina was born a year later, with her second daughter Greta following exactly two years after that. "As the mother of two children, I like to take time for the creative process I feel when baking. I just have fun doing it," she says, her eyes lighting up. From time to time, she'll even post recipes as well as baking and cooking pictures on [her Instagram channel](#) (@evisachenbacherstehle).

The stiff dough now starts to drop out of the spätzle press and into the salt water. She moves the press vigorously back and forth and continues: "Cooking shows like 'The Taste' also inspired me to get creative with my cooking. These shows gave me the courage to try new things here, too," she says.

She uses a slotted spoon to scoop the finished spätzle out of the simmering salt water and transfers it to a bowl. "I've become very adept at mixing vegetables into my two daughters' meals, for example. You know that children often don't eat something because they just don't like the colour of the vegetables," she says, laughing heartily.

Layer by layer

After the first layer of spätzle comes the cheese: She sprinkles a good handful of the grated cheese mixture into the dish. "Let's be honest: the cheese is the critical ingredient for the flavour. And here I stick to the family recipe. We always use really mature mountain cheese and a little Weisslacker (beer cheese)," she reveals.

She continues to layer spätzle and cheese until the dish is full. Finally, she adds the caramelised onions and puts the dish in a 100-degree oven. She claps the oven door shut and says with a smile: "Now I'll make an endive salad to go with it. It can't make up for the calorie bomb that's in the oven, but then we don't eat Kässpätzlen every day."

The Stehle family recipe for Allgäu Kässpätzlen

Basic recipe for four people**Spätzle dough**

500g flour
4 eggs
2 teaspoons salt
Water (enough to make a stiff dough)

Cheese mixture

250g mature mountain cheese
1-2 tablespoons Weisslacker

Use a spätzle press to squeeze the dough into boiling water. The spätzle will float to the top when it is done. Remove it from the water with a slotted spoon and lay alternate layers of spätzle and cheese in a dish.

Caramelised onions

6-8 onions
approx. 60g butter

Melt the butter in a pan. Add the onions and stir every now and again. They will turn golden brown and caramelize after about 20 to 30 minutes.

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