

Basic Risotto

Basic Risotto

Like so much in Culinary Medicine, a great risotto is not a difficult creation. It does, however, require great attention to quality ingredients and techniques. It is at its essence, a very simple dish; rice cooked to perfection in a delicious stock. Because it is composed of just a few essential, the quality (or lack of) of each individual item is critical. Using some from scratch [chicken stock](#) is going to set you up for success. Since the chicken stock reduces as it cooks, this is also a great example of why we do not season the chicken stock with salt prior to using it. Along with some lovely fresh vegetables, the other critical element is proper, high quality risotto rice. Risotto rice is specific in that it's generally a short to medium grain rice with a high starch content. The slow cooking and stirring slowly breaks down the starch that then thickens and gives the dish its creamy texture and velvety mouth feel. A final note is to take your time. A great risotto cannot be rushed and requires 20 minutes from start to finish. That's why a proper *mis en place*, or having everything you need already grated, cut, and measured out and at your disposal, is essential. Try to shortcut the process, and you will be serving a bowl full of pebbles. Ignore the clock and overcook it and you be serving a bowl of mush. Pay attention, respect the ingredients, and the process and your reward is a bowlful of heaven!



Salt Marsh Lamb over Apple, Butternut Squash, and Golden Beet Risotto

Serves Six

Ingredients:

- 2 quarts [chicken stock](#), heated (you may not use the entire amount)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium leeks (white part only) or 1 medium onion; finely chopped
- 2 cups good quality risotto rice; Carnaroli., Arborio, or Vialone Nano are the most commonly available
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup good quality, dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mascarpone cheese
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup freshly grated real Italian Parmesan cheese (plus extra for garnish)
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives
- 1 tablespoon chopped Italian (flat) parsley
- Salt and white pepper to season



Directions:

Heat the chicken stock in a small saucepan and leave on very low heat to just keep warmed.

In a large saucepan heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Add the leeks or onions, and cook until translucent, about 3 to 4 minutes. Do not allow the leeks or onions to brown.

Add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Add the rice and stir to coat the grains with the oil. Keep stirring for about one to two minutes. If you look closely at the grains, you should see the edges become translucent and a small white dot remaining in the center.

Add the wine and cook until the liquid has reduced, about another minute or two. From here it is about 18 minutes until the dish is done. Add 1 cup of the warmed stock, stirring constantly. Allow this liquid to be absorbed before adding any more stock. Adding too much stock all at once simply boils the rice. Over the next 15 minutes, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of stock, stirring until evaporated. Continue to add stock in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup increments. After 15 minutes, taste the risotto. It should be slightly al dente. When the desired texture is achieved, quickly add the butter, mascarpone, and Parmesan cheese. Add the herbs and remove from the heat. Season as needed with salt and white pepper and garnish as desired. Serve immediately.

