

Julie van Rosendaal's Risotto and Arancini

Risotto

Risotto is a wonderfully simple, versatile and comforting spring/summer dish, and easier to make than you might think! It's a great way to use vegetables and fresh herbs while they're in season, and makes use of leftovers—roasted veggies, bits of sausage, cheese ends—and a pot of rice and stock makes a moist, gentle cooking environment for seafood like shrimp and scallops. Add it right at the end, and it will cook through in just a few minutes.

Whether it's a side dish or the main event, use this recipe as a blank canvas; sauté some chopped mushrooms in the oil and butter before adding the rice to the pot, or grate in a raw beet or some tomatoes (fresh or canned, in any form), or stir in handfuls of torn spinach, fresh basil or other greens at the end. Though there are measurements here, you can make any quantity of risotto as long as you stick to a ratio of about 1:4 rice to stock (or salted water) - if you're cooking for one, about 1/4 cup uncooked rice will do as a starting point.

2 Tbsp canola or olive oil (approx)

2 Tbsp butter (approx)

1/2 small onion or 1 shallot, finely chopped

3/4 cup short-grain rice (such as Arborio)

a splash of wine (optional)

4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock (or salted water)

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Any additions you like — fresh asparagus or other veggies, tomatoes, greens, herbs, fresh seafood

In a large saucepan or Dutch oven heat the oil and butter over medium-high heat. When the butter gets foamy, add the onion and cook for a few minutes, sprinkling with salt, until soft but not browned. Any additions which would benefit from more cooking time (such as mushrooms or peppers), should be added with the onion. Add the rice and stir it around for a minute or two, until coated with oil and butter. If you like, add a splash of wine and cook for a minute, until it evaporates.

Add about a half cup of the stock and cook, stirring often, until your spoon starts leaving a trail through the bottom of the pan. Any additions that would benefit from a moderate amount of cooking time (such as tomatoes or asparagus) should be added during this stage. Continue adding the stock about half a cup at a time, stirring frequently, until the rice is just tender, which should take about 20 minutes.. Stir in another tablespoon or two of butter and the Parmesan cheese. If you like, tear in some fresh greens or basil, and if you'd like to add shrimp or scallops, add them and put the lid on the pot for a couple minutes. Adjust seasoning if needed.

Arancini

Arancini are stuffed rice balls - perfect to use up leftover risotto!

Canola or other oil, approximately 2 inches deep in pan

Cold risotto

Goat cheese, mozzarella cheese, cheese curds, or another “melty” cheese

Panko or other breadcrumbs

Egg – beaten

Tomato sauce

In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat the oil to 350-375 deg, (if you don't have a thermometer test with a bread crust or cube or the end of a wooden spoon)

Form the risotto into golf-ball sized balls around a piece of the cheese

Roll balls in beaten egg, and then in breadcrumbs

Drop gently into the oil using a slotted spoon

Rotate and roll the balls to ensure even cooking

Cook until golden brown on the outside

Drain on paper towels

Serve on a bed of tomato sauce

Tips:

Arancini can be made in advance and kept in the fridge

An air fryer will work to cook the arancini