

Carolina Gold Risotto

Time: 20 minutes to prep, 30 minutes to cook

Without question the most aristocratic of all grain dishes, risotto becomes seductive the moment the wine sizzles onto melted shallots, and it never lets go. Anson Mills Carolina Gold creates risotto with the same melodic flair as the very best imported Arborio.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a 2-quart saucepan for the broth, a heavy- bottomed 3-quart saucepan for the rice, a 6- or 8-ounce ladle, and a wooden spoon.

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups rich homemade chicken broth or, if you must, one 32-ounce carton low-sodium chicken broth

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 shallots, minced (about 1/3 cup)

1 cup (7 ounces) Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice

1/2 cup dry white wine

1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme

1 Turkish bay leaf

1/2 to 1 teaspoon fine sea salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup (1.5 ounces) finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

Directions

1. Heat the chicken broth in a small heavy saucepan until it simmers. Pull the saucepan to the outer periphery of the burner, or, if your range is electric, lower the heat setting and keep the broth just below a simmer throughout cooking.

2. Melt the butter in a heavy bottomed 3-quart saucepan over low heat until it foams. Add the shallots and sauté, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the shallots are translucent and have nearly melted into the butter, about 5 minutes. Add the rice, increase the heat to medium, and sauté, stirring, until the grains are coated with butter and have turned opaque, about 2 minutes.

Cooking Remarks

Risotto is a world-class dish that demands world-class ingredients. That means rich homemade chicken broth, wine you wouldn't mind drinking, and real Parmesan—the stuff that is aged and has to be grated by hand. The chicken broth's rate of evaporation and the subsequent swelling of the rice grains also depend on the cook's patience and a saucepan with correct proportions (but not in that order).

Watch the salt level if you're cooking with commercial chicken broth.

3. Add the wine, stir, and reduce to a glaze over medium-low heat. Add 1 cup of hot broth, the thyme, bay leaf, salt, and pepper; stir once to make sure the grains are just covered with liquid. Cook the rice, uncovered, at the barest simmer, until the liquid has nearly evaporated and the rice begins to look dry. Add another ladle of hot broth. Continue to cook the risotto in this fashion, adding broth as needed, until the rice grains have expanded and no longer have a hard starch center, about 20 minutes. Stir in the Parmesan. The risotto should look creamy but not wet. Taste for seasoning and serve immediately.

Serves 4 to 6

Carolina Gold Risotto with Prosciutto and Peas

Prepare the recipe above, adding 1/4 cup (1 ounce) diced prosciutto to the shallots as they sauté. Stir 1/2 cup (about 3 ounces) thawed, frozen peas and a scant teaspoon of finely grated lemon peel into the finished dish.

Serves 4 to 6