

Basic Risotto

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Recipe serves four as a first course.

- 1 small yellow onion, diced fairly fine
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 2-3 tbsp of good olive oil
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 5 cups vegetable stock
- 1-2 tbsp butter, or high quality extra virgin olive oil (optional)
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Reggiano parmesan, plus extra for garnishing
- Salt and pepper

The stock needs to be in a separate pot on the stove at a strong simmer (A note on canned stocks, they can be awfully salty and can even impart a metallic taste to your dish. We usually cut it one to one with water). You'll need a ladle to add the stock with and a strong spoon to stir the risotto with. The pot for the risotto needs to be large (5 quart will work well) and as heavy as possible. An enameled Le Crueset pot works very well, as will most heavy stock pots.

Sweat the onions in the olive oil over medium high heat until translucent, about 5-8 minutes. Don't let them brown. Add the rice and continue to stir for a couple of minutes.

At this point, add the wine and stir the rice. As the liquid is absorbed and the rice stops sticking to the side of the pot, add a cup of the stock. Continue stirring, adding liquid as needed. As the rice gets closer to being done, the liquid will not absorb as quickly, so you will need to decrease the amount you put in each time. After 18-20 minutes, taste the rice for doneness. It should be al dente but not crunchy and not mushy. If it's not done, cook it a couple of minutes longer and test it again. If it's mushy, better luck next time.

At the point it reaches al dente, stir in the butter (optional) and parmesan, and adjust the seasoning. You won't need very much pepper, if any. The rice should be smooth and creamy without being soupy or clumpy. Serve it up and top it with the reserved cheese.

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