

Risotto Primavera – RenataCollective.com

Spring officially arrived on March 20th. That is not to say we can put away the winter boots and warm toques quite yet but it is a promise of warmer days to come, to see flowers blooming and nature start its annual verdant return. Risotto Primavera (Spring in Italian) is a perfect dish with which to welcome Spring!

I learned how to make risotto from my Zio Emil – we called him the Risotto King. His risotto was legendary. I love all kinds of risotto – with saffron, wild mushrooms, with celery as the main veggie (it's incredible. Here is my version of Risotto Primavera. Buon appetito!

Prep time: 10 Minutes / Cook Time: 30-40 Minutes / Number of Servings: 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 Bunch Asparagus – ends snapped and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 Cup Fresh Peas – Alternate: frozen peas
- 1 Cup Packed Baby Spinach – torn into pieces
- 2 Tablespoon Olive Oil
- 1 Tablespoon Butter
- 3 Cloves of Garlic – sliced – let sit for 10 minutes
- 1 Cooking Onion - diced
- 2 Cups Arborio Rice
- 1 Cup Dry White Wine
- 4 cups Veggie Bouillon or Chicken Bouillon
- Herbed Seasoned Sea Salt – to taste
- Grinds of Fresh Black Pepper
- ¾ - 1 Cup Parmesan Cheese – grated – Alternate: Vegan Parmesan

How It's Made:

First, prep your veggies. Rinse the asparagus and snap the ends by holding the stalk in both hands and bending it. It will snap where the stalk becomes tough. Discard the end piece. Do this to each stalk, then cut the asparagus into 2-inch pieces. Fill a medium skillet half full with water, add a teaspoon of salt and bring to a boil. When boiling, add the asparagus pieces and let simmer for 5 minutes until a sharp knife easily pierces the stalk. Remove from heat, drain and immediately rinse with very cold water to stop further cooking of the asparagus. Set aside.

If using frozen peas, measure 1 cup and let thaw. If using fresh peas, let them sit in very hot water while you prepare the risotto.

Wash and dry the baby spinach leaves. Remove any stalks to just have the leaves and tear the large leaves in half. Set aside.

Next, heat the bouillon to boiling and then reduce heat to keep it gently simmering.

Now we'll start the risotto. In a medium-large pot, over medium heat, add the olive oil and butter. Add the onion and cook, stirring for 2-3 minutes until it becomes soft, but not browned. Add the garlic and stir for at the most 1 minute – don't let it brown.

Add the rice and stir until it becomes glassy - about 1 minute.

Add the wine and stir, bring the mixture to a simmer and let this cook down as the rice absorbs the wine. This will take 2-3 minutes.

With a ladle, add 1 cup or so of the hot bouillon. Season with 1 teaspoon of salt and a few grindings of pepper, stir and let the rice mixture simmer until the liquid has almost been all absorbed. Repeat with the remaining stock, adding 1 cup at a time. Stir after each cup is added. As you get to the last cup of bouillon, take a clean spoon and taste the rice for doneness – it should have some bite to it and not be too soft. Season with more salt. Add the last cup of bouillon, stir and simmer for a minute longer to let some of the liquid absorb into the rice but leave some liquid in the mixture.

Drain the peas if you used fresh. They should be softer now having sat in the hot water for the 30 minutes.

Gently add the veggies, stirring to include them in this glorious mixture allowing them to heat through. The spinach will all but disappear, appearing as small flecks of delicious green confetti.

Remove from the heat. Add ½ cup of the grated parmesan (I like lots of parmesan so I add ¾ cup) and a few more grindings of pepper. Taste and adjust the salt to your preference. Serve with more sprinkles of parmesan on top.

Enjoy!

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