



Risotto

with tomato essence & spring vegetables

A Risotto is a simple dish but a complicated process. By stirring the risotto at the end you will extract the natural starch; lending it a creamy consistency. You don't need to stand over the dish stirring all the time, in my opinion it is exhausting and it does very little for the finished dish. Over-cooking the risotto only takes 1 minute; you want your rice to be "al Dente" – to the tooth. It should have a little bit of bite left in the grain, so taste at all stages of cooking and remember practice makes perfect.

SERVES (YIELD):	4
DIFFICULTY RATING:	••
PREPARATION TIME:	10 MINS
COOKING TIME:	20 MINS

INGREDIENTS

For the risotto

¼ white onion, finely chopped
 ½ clove garlic, puréed or very finely chopped
 30ml/2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 200g Carnaroli rice
 4 pinches sea salt
 2 pinches white pepper
 300ml hot water
 300ml tomato essence (see recipe no 32)
 150g butternut squash, cut into 1cm dice

To finish the risotto

10 cherry tomatoes, halved
 1 baby fennel, finely sliced
 2 baby courgettes, halved lengthways and sliced into 1cm/½in thick pieces
 ½ tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed
 80g/3oz peas
 2 tbsp mascarpone cheese
 4 tsp freshly grated parmesan cheese, plus extra for sprinkling
 4 tbsp fresh micro leaves

METHOD

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
- 2 Heat a pan over a medium heat, add the olive oil and gently fry the onion for 3-4 minutes, or until tender. Add the garlic and fry for a further minute.
- 3 Add the rice, stirring well to coat in the olive oil. Fry for 1-2 minutes, or until the rice is shiny and translucent. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- 4 Add the butternut squash to the pan and mix well. Add the water and half of the tomato essence, then bring to a gentle simmer, with one bubble just breaking the surface. Cover with a lid and cook for 15 minutes.
- 5 Place the remaining tomato essence into a saucepan and warm through.
- 6 Meanwhile, place the halved cherry tomatoes onto a baking tray, drizzle with a little olive oil and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Roast in the oven for 5-6 minutes, or until the tomatoes are just tender and collapsed slightly.
- 7 After 15 minutes, the rice should have absorbed all of the liquid. Remove the lid and stir well. Add the courgettes, fennel and coriander seeds and cook for a couple of minutes.
- 8 Add the peas, mascarpone and parmesan and stir well, adding a little extra tomato essence if the risotto is too dry.
- 9 To serve, spoon the risotto into a small serving bowl. Top with a few roasted tomatoes, a little sprinkling of parmesan and some micro leaves. Spoon over the warmed tomato essence.