

Mel's Asparagus Risotto

Laurie Berg, MG

1 pound fresh asparagus
1 pound assorted mushrooms such as
Crimini, Shitake or Portabello
1/2 medium yellow onion, diced
2 Tbs. butter
4 Tbs. olive oil
5 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup white wine [optional]
1-1/2 cups Arborio rice
Parmesan cheese to taste

This is a recipe that we enjoy when asparagus is in season. It's also very good with just the mushrooms or you can get creative and add other spring vegetables to the mix. The hardest part is the time spent stirring the pot over the stove. When you taste it, I think you'll agree it was worth it.

1. Steam or roast asparagus till tender. Cool with ice water to stop cooking. Drain. Then cut into pieces about 1 to 1-1/2 inches. Set aside.
2. Sauté sliced mushrooms of choice in about 3Tbs. of olive oil. Set aside.
3. Prepare 5 cups of chicken or mushroom broth, or use packaged. Heat to warm and keep at a simmer on a low burner.
4. In a heavy 4-quart casserole or seasoned cast iron pan, sauté half of a medium yellow onion in 2Tbs. unsalted butter and 1 Tbs. olive oil over medium heat for one to two minutes until the onion begins to soften.
5. Add 1 1/2 cups of Arborio rice to the onion; using a wooden spoon, stir for 1 minute, making sure all the grains are well coated with the oil.
6. Add 1/2 cup of wine and stir until it is completely absorbed.
7. Begin to add the simmering broth, 1/2 cup at a time stirring frequently. Wait until each addition is almost completely absorbed before adding the next 1/2 cup, reserving about 1/2 cup to add at the end.
8. Stir frequently to prevent sticking.

9. When you have added most of the broth and the rice is tender but still firm, and almost completely cooked through, approximately 18 minutes, add the mushrooms and asparagus to the rice and stir to combine.
10. Add one more scoop of broth to the combination and continue to cook the rice while heating the mushrooms and asparagus.
11. When most of the moisture is gone and the rice is almost creamy you have risotto.

Serve immediately with Parmesan cheese on the side.