

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/crab-risotto-recipe-worthy-of-sophia-loren-bb330842>

This Shortcut Crab Risotto Is a Summer Recipe Worthy of Sophia Loren

Opt for lump crab meat instead of tediously cracking shells. The reward is the same: a briny, bright and gorgeous seafood risotto you'll make on repeat all season long.

By *Odette Williams*

July 19, 2023 at 2:00 pm ET



“IS IT HEAVEN? It’s heaven, isn’t it? You’re in heaven.” This was the text I got from a friend when he saw I was traveling on the Amalfi Coast of Italy recently.

If you’re not one of the millions expected to visit Italy this summer, this recipe will get you there in spirit. I wouldn’t normally think to make a risotto in summer, but Amalfi restaurants Lo Scoglio and La Tonnarella showed me what a spectacular choice it is for an easy-breezy al fresco lunch or dinner. Imagine you’ve arrived by boat, salty, sun-kissed, ravenous from swimming.

When I was there, every meal was simply prepared, and exceptional. The produce was grown locally; the seafood had just been hauled in. Tomatoes hung on the vine from windows and pergolas, soaking up the sun, sweetening, destined to be swirled into just about everything. The lemons: gigantic, and used with gusto. Basil, abundant, sprang from small pots on the table, so you could pick the leaves at whim.

I ate risotto with all kinds of seafood while I was there, but I adore crab so I have made it the star of mine. Here’s permission to skip cracking the shells yourself and splurge on lump crab meat, which allows the meal to come together in a little over a half-hour. So if you’re heading to a summer rental, say, and arriving late on a Friday, this could be your quick kickoff meal, or part of a larger feast on Saturday night if friends are coming over. The handful of ingredients—arborio rice, stock, scallions, garlic, crème fraîche, sugar snap peas, fresh herbs, a chunk of Parmigiano—will fit into a compact travel cooler.

What a spectacular choice for an easy-breezy al fresco lunch or dinner.

As you cook the risotto and the stock slowly absorbs, cup by cup, go ahead and nibble on the sweet crab meat, crisp snap peas and salty Parmigiano. Chef's reward.

Let's do crisp white tablecloths on the outdoor table to keep it fresh. Decorate with big bowls of lemons, the potted basil I mentioned, colorful ceramic plates, stemmed wine glasses and sculptural jugs. Dog-eared paperbacks, sunglasses, folded fans, and wet or wild air-dried hair welcome.

Here's how I plan to turn this risotto into a party: I'll start the night off with impeccably ripe cherry tomatoes on ice, a bowl of Castelvetrano olives, and a Cappelletti Spritz in everyone's hand. After aperitivo, I'll bring the risotto to the table in the pot to keep it warm, and serve it with a simple arugula salad and slices of grilled crusty bread generously coated in olive oil. Having the extra crunch, and something to mop up the plates will be just the ticket.

To drink, I'll have frosty bottles of Italian still and sparkling water on the table. Wine bottles will be chilling in buckets of ice. Here's three easy-to-drink, Amalfi coastal whites I drank on my trip—all available in the U.S.—that suit this meal to a T: the 2022 Quintodecimo Giallo d'Arles Greco di Tufo, the 2021 La Sibilla Cruna de Lago and the 2020 Luigi Maffini Kràtos Fiano Paestum. Decanting the wine into carafes and adding slices of firm peach is an option; having extra ice-cubes to plop in is essential.

For dessert, it's melon slices on ice. By then, that friend—you know the one—will want to dance. Turn up the volume and play some Italian pop hits you wish you knew the lyrics to. Finish the night and your friends off with a shot of Amaro or Limoncello.

Crab and Snap Pea Creamy Risotto

Crisp, sweet snap peas, fresh herbs and lemon support the star of this dish: scrumptious crab. The constant stirring a risotto requires can be a barrier of entry for some cooks, but think of it as 20 minutes for yourself. Relax, pour a glass of crisp white wine and daydream.

TOTAL TIME: 45 minutes

SERVES: 4-6



GRAYDON + HERRIOTT FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, FOOD STYLING BY REBECCA JURKEVICH, PROP STYLING BY AMY WILSON

Ingredients

- 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ cups arborio rice
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ pound lump crab meat, picked over for shells
- ½ pound snap peas, sliced in three on the diagonal
- 1 cup finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, plus more for serving
- 3 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup finely chopped chives
- ¼ cup finely chopped dill
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Directions

1. In a saucepan, bring stock to a simmer. Remove from heat.
2. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-low heat, warm oil and butter. Add shallots and sauté until translucent and soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and rice and continue to sauté until rice is well coated, 1-2 minutes.
3. Add wine and simmer until reduced by half. Add a ladleful of warm stock and cook, stirring, until liquid is fully absorbed. Add another ladleful, and continue doing this until all stock is incorporated, risotto is loose and creamy, and rice is al dente but tender, 20-25 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Fold in crab to warm through. Add snap peas, Parmigiano, crème fraîche, lemon zest and juice, chives, most of the dill, salt and pepper, and stir to

- Freshly ground black pepper

until salt and pepper, and stir to combine. If needed, add a splash more stock or water to loosen risotto.

5. To serve, sprinkle remaining dill and Parmigiano over each serving.

—Adapted from *Odette Williams*

[Click here to view this recipe in our recipes section.](#)

Appeared in the July 22, 2023, print edition as 'Cause A Stir'.