

Almost Hands-Free Risotto with Parmesan and Herbs

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

For a simplified risotto recipe, we swapped our saucepan for a thick, heavy-bottomed Dutch oven that trapped and distributed heat uniformly and ensured our risotto cooked evenly. We added most of the broth after the risotto absorbed the wine and simmered it, with only a few stirs during the process. And to make sure the bottom of our risotto didn't cook more quickly than the top, we stirred the pot for just a few minutes and turned off the heat. The rice turned perfectly al dente from the heat retained in the pot, giving us a foolproof risotto recipe.



INGREDIENTS

INSTRUCTIONS

SERVES 6 AS A SIDE DISH

5 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 ½ cups water

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 large onion, chopped fine (about 1 1/2 cups)

table salt

1 medium garlic clove, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 teaspoon)

2 cups Arborio rice

1 cup dry white wine

2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 cup)

1 teaspoon juice from 1 lemon

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

ground black pepper

This recipe does not employ the traditional risotto method; the rice is mainly stirred for 3 minutes toward the end of cooking instead of constantly throughout. This more hands-off method does require precise timing, so we strongly recommend using a timer. The consistency of risotto is largely a matter of personal taste; if you prefer a looser texture, add extra broth in step 4.

1. Bring broth and water to boil in large saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low to maintain gentle simmer.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons butter in large Dutch oven over medium heat. When butter has melted, add onion and 3/4 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring frequently, until onion is softened but not browned, 4 to 7 minutes. Add garlic and stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add rice and cook, stirring frequently, until grains are translucent around edges, about 3 minutes.
3. Add wine and cook, stirring constantly, until fully absorbed, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir 5 cups hot broth mixture into rice; reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until almost all liquid has been absorbed and rice is just al dente, 16 to 19 minutes, stirring twice during cooking.
4. Add 3/4 cup hot broth mixture and stir gently and constantly until risotto becomes creamy, about 3 minutes. Stir in Parmesan. Remove pot from heat, cover, and let stand 5 minutes. Stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter, lemon juice, parsley, and chives; season with salt and pepper to taste. If desired, add up to 1/2 cup remaining broth mixture to loosen texture of risotto. Serve

immediately.

Step-by-Step Secrets to Almost Hands-Free Risotto

In the traditional approach to risotto, near-constant stirring for 25 minutes accomplishes two things: It maximizes the release of starch from the rice, for a creamier sauce, and it ensures that the whole pot cooks evenly. Here's how we achieved the same goals, with just a few minutes of stirring.



1. ADD LOTS OF LIQUID

Once it starts bubbling, a full 5 cups of liquid added at the start of cooking agitates the rice grains much like stirring, accelerating the release of creamy starch.



2. PUT A LID ON IT

A lid, coupled with the heavy-bottomed Dutch oven and low heat, helps to distribute the heat as evenly as stirring, so every grain is as tender as the next.



3. STIR, THEN REST

A brief stir followed by a five-minute rest provides additional insurance that the rice will be perfectly al dente, from the top of the pot to the bottom.