

## Basic risotto

This is a good basic procedure for any of the main risotto varieties of rice.

5 C flavorful broth or water

1.5 C risotto rice

2 T butter

2 oz minced onion\*

2 oz minced celery

¼ C white wine

To finish

1.5 T whole butter

½ C grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Heat the stock to boil and reduce to a simmer.

Melt the butter in a thick-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat. It's okay if the butter spits a bit. Add the onions and celery and cook until translucent. Add the rice and stir to coat in the fat and also to toast the kernels. You are looking for the outsides of the kernels to appear to become translucent also. We are looking to avoid actually browning the rice. If it does, it isn't a crisis. Add the white wine and allow the liquid to completely cook away. Give the steam plenty of room to escape.

Add 1 C of the hot broth to the risotto pan and stir slowly with a wooden spoon to ensure all the rice is in the liquid. Continue stirring slowly. Keep the heat at a level where the liquid in the rice pan is just barely bubbling but not a full-on boil. As you are stirring, make sure to get into the edge of the base of the pan so all the rice is mixed in.

When the pan appears to be dry of liquid and a path made in the bottom of the pot remains in the rice as you draw the spoon across the bottom, add half a cup more broth and stir to incorporate. Continue this process of stirring and adding liquid until the rice starts to look plump and a starchy creamy sauce seems to hold the rice. Use a tasting spoon to check the doneness of the rice. A dry starchy crunch inside means it is not done. Keep stirring and adding liquid until the rice is done, but not mushy.

Remove the pan from the stove. Add the butter and cheese and slowly stir those into the rice. Check for seasoning. It may not need salt from the cheese but will almost certainly need pepper.

At the taste-test point, this is a good time to add the fully cooked garnish.

\* I use red onion for nearly all cooking. The color almost entirely goes away and I prefer the flavor. Feel free to use white onions. Shallots are pretty sweet and may make your risotto sweeter than you prefer. Parsnips, fennel, broccoli stems, mushroom stems, and more are all good choices for the soffrito.