

Risotto alla Milanese

Milanese-Style Saffron Risotto

Serves 4

PREP TIME

5 minutes

COOK TIME

18 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 small onion

3 to 4 tbsp. mild extra virgin olive oil

6 ½ cups (1.5 L) chicken or vegetable stock (see p. 267)

10 ½ oz. (300 g) carnaroli risotto rice

A scant ½ cup (100 ml) dry white wine, such as Roero Arneis DOCG from the Piedmont region

1 tsp. ground saffron

Salt

Freshly ground pepper

1 pinch saffron threads

A generous 1 oz. (30 g) Parmigiano Reggiano DOP cheese

1 ¾ oz. (50 g) butter

1 tsp. fermented black garlic powder

Risotto alla Milanese has enjoyed legendary status since becoming the trademark of Italy's most famous chef, Gualtiero Marchesi. A modern twist was used back in the 1980s: A piece of gold leaf lay atop the risotto. In traditional cuisine, saffron risotto is best known as a side dish for osso buco. The saffron lends it a wonderful fragrance and complex flavors. Carnaroli is the rice of choice here, as it cooks without losing its al dente quality on the inside, and texture plays a starring role with these minimalist ingredients. Risotto requires patience and attention to ensure that the timing is right: When does the rice need more liquid and when has it reached the desired consistency? The black garlic infuses the risotto with a warm, smooth flavor.

Finely dice the onion. In a large pot, heat the olive oil and sauté the onion until translucent. While sautéing the onion, heat the stock in a smaller pot. As soon as the onions are translucent, add the risotto rice and sauté while stirring. When the rice is too hot to touch, pour the white wine over it and let it evaporate while continuing to stir. When the wine has evaporated, add enough heated stock to cover the rice and reduce the temperature somewhat. Continue adding stock while stirring until the stock has been completely absorbed by the rice.

About halfway through the cooking time, about 9 minutes, add the saffron and season the risotto with salt and pepper to taste. Once the rice is cooked but still al dente, remove the pot from the heat and stir in the saffron threads, Parmesan, and butter. Let the finished risotto stand for another 2 minutes in the pot with the lid on. Put each serving on a heated plate. Finely sprinkle each portion with the garlic powder and some pepper and serve immediately.

OUR TIP Like any other recipe that uses wine, the wine should be good enough to accompany the food and be one that the chef enjoys.

