

Mushroom Risotto

Serves 4 to 6

Cremini mushrooms are sometimes sold as baby bella mushrooms. If they're not available, button mushrooms make a fine, though somewhat less flavorful, substitute. Tie the thyme and parsley sprigs together with kitchen twine so they will be easy to retrieve from the pan.

2 bay leaves

6 sprigs fresh thyme

4 sprigs fresh parsley, plus 2 tablespoons minced parsley leaves

3 1/2 cups low sodium chicken broth

3 1/2 cups water

1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed in a mesh strainer under running water

2 teaspoons soy sauce

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter

1 1/4 lbs cremini mushrooms, wiped clean and cut into quarters. If small or sixths if medium or large

2 medium onions, minced (about 2 cups)

Table salt

3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)

2 1/8 cups Arborio rice

1 cup dry white wine or dry vermouth

2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated fine (about 1 cup)

Ground black pepper

1. Tie the bay leaves, thyme sprigs, and parsley sprigs together with kitchen twine. Bring the bundled herbs, chicken broth, water, porcini mushrooms, and soy sauce to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium high heat; reduce the heat to medium low and simmer until the dried mushrooms are softened and fully hydrated, about 15 minutes. Remove and discard the herb bundle and strain the broth through a fine mesh strainer set over a medium bowl (you should have about 6 1/2 cups strained liquid); return the liquid to the saucepan and keep warm over low heat. Finely mince the porcini and set aside.

2. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 200 degrees. Heat 2 tablespoons of the butter in a 12 inch nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add the cremini mushrooms, 1 cup of the onions, and 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the moisture released by the mushrooms evaporates and the mushrooms are well browned, about 7 minutes. Stir in the garlic until fragrant, about 1 minute, then transfer the mushroom mixture to an oven-safe bowl and keep warm in the oven. Off the heat, add 1/4 cup water to the now empty skillet and scrape with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits on the pan bottom; pour the liquid from the skillet into the saucepan with the broth.

3. Melt 3 tablespoons more butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the remaining 1 cup onions and 1/4 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened and translucent, about 9 minutes. Add the rice and cook, stirring frequently, until the edges of the grains are transparent, about 4 minutes. Add the wine and cook, stirring frequently, until the rice absorbs the wine. Add the minced porcini and 3 1/2 cups of the broth and cook, stirring every 2 to 3 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed, 9 to 11 minutes. Stir in 1/2 cup more broth every 2 to 3

minutes until the rice is cooked through but the grains are still somewhat firm at the center, 10 to 12 minutes (the rice may not require all of the broth). Stir in the remaining 1 tablespoon butter, then stir in the mushroom mixture (and any accumulated juice), cheese, and reserved chopped parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste; serve immediately in warmed bowls.