

Green Rice

By Marian Bull

This is a recipe from my friend Perry, who grew up in Alabama and learned it from her grandmother. Its name is misleading, as dairy plays a bigger role than greens here, but the almost-charred spring onions and the flecks of herbs make this a little more exciting -- and more refined -- than a straight-up conglomeration of eggs, milk, cheese, and rice. As Perry says, it is delicious the next day, cold, for breakfast. Cold bites snuck out of the pan will also serve as a nice, furtive midnight snack. These measurements don't have to be exact -- just add extra milk as needed, and cook until it's done.

Serves 8 to 10

- Half a stick of butter, plus more for greasing the pan
 - 2 to 3 bunches of spring onions -- like green onions or green shallots, or scallions -- sliced into rings, green parts reserved
 - 2 cups cooked white rice (or more, if you have it)
 - 2 to 3 eggs, depending on how big they are and how much rice you have, beaten with a fork
 - 1 to 1 1/2 cup milk
 - 2 cups grated sharp cheese, like cheddar
 - 1 cup chopped parsley, tightly packed (or mustard greens, etc.)
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
1. In a wide pan, heat half a stick of butter over medium heat. Add the white and light green onion slices to the pan and cook until they are golden and just begin to crisp up -- you want a little bit of that burnt onion taste, but you still want some soft bits. Salt lightly, to taste.
 2. Remove from heat, let cool slightly, and add the cooked rice, stirring to combine and coat the rice with butter and oniony bits. Stir in the eggs, plus enough milk to form a thick batter.
 3. Add the cheese and parsley, plus a handful of the green onion parts, minced. Adjust the milk if necessary -- it should be between gloppy and runny. Add salt and pepper, "remembering that the cheese is salty, but salty is good," says Perry.
 4. Pour into a buttered ("ha ha as if it needed it") pie pan. The liquid should fill up to the level of the rice, so add more if it looks like it will burn or dry out while baking. Bake at 350° F until set, about 45 to 60 minutes. Slice it like a pie. Save leftovers for breakfast the next day.