

Asparagus & Pancetta Risotto

INGREDIENTS

8 cups vegetable stock
2tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 stick of celery, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
200gms, diced pancetta
2 cups arborio rice
1 cup white wine
1 tablespoon flat leaf parsley, chopped
4 tablespoons cold butter
200gms asparagus
150gms grated pecorino
Salt and pepper

To Make the Risotto

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Now add the diced pancetta. Fry until golden and crispy.
2. Remove half the pancetta and reserve for later. Add onion, carrot and celery and season with salt and pepper
4. Add the rice and stir to coat with pork fat and oil; cook until rice is slightly translucent.
5. The rice should be hot and sizzling, you should stir carefully to ensure it does not stick.
6. Add wine to the hot rice, the liquid should hiss and be quickly absorbed. Stir gently until almost all the liquid has cooked off. Add hot stock mixture, a ladleful at a time, stirring in the liquid each time.
7. Remember at this stage you are trying to coax the starches out the rice by gently and continuously stirring. After about 10-minutes add the reserved asparagus trimmings.
8. Keep adding stock as needed so there is always a 1/2cm liquid layer over the rice.
9. After 15 to 20 minutes, the rice should be close to al dente.
10. At this stage add the reserved pancetta, asparagus and asparagus puree and cold butter and the finely grated cheese.
11. Taste and adjust seasoning
12. Now cover the pan, and allow it to stand for 2-3 minutes.

To Prepare the stock and asparagus:

1. Bring your vegetable stock to the boil then blanch the asparagus spears briefly in it. Remove and set aside.
2. Trim the bottom 1cm from the asparagus and set aside to use half way through the cooking of the risotto
3. Now cut the remaining asparagus in half, the tips will be added at the very end of cooking the risotto.
4. To make the asparagus puree, blend the middle third of the asparagus spears with a few tablespoons of stock in a small processor until completely smooth, reserve.

THE COOKERY

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