



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Butternut Squash Risotto (from Cooks Illustrated)

Serves 4 as a main course and 6 as a first course

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch dice (about 3½ cups), seeds and fibers reserved
¾ teaspoon salt
¾ teaspoon pepper
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 cup water
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 small onions, chopped very fine (about 1½ cups)
2 cups Arborio rice
1½ cups dry white wine
¾ cup (1½ ounces) finely grated Parmesan cheese
¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
2 tablespoons minced fresh sage leaves

1. Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering but not smoking. Add about 3½ cups of the squash in an even layer and cook without stirring until the squash is golden brown, 4-5 minutes; stir in ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the squash is tender and browned, about five minutes longer. Transfer the squash to a small bowl and set aside.
2. Return the skillet to medium heat; add the reserved squash fibers and seeds and any leftover diced squash. Cook, stirring frequently to break up the fibers, until lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large saucepan and add the chicken broth and water; cover the saucepan and bring the mixture to a simmer over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a bare simmer.
3. Melt 3 tablespoons of butter in the now-empty skillet over medium heat; when the foaming subsides, add the onions, garlic, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and remaining ½ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the rice to the skillet and cook, stirring frequently, until the grains are translucent around the edges, about 3 minutes. Add the wine and cook, stirring frequently, until fully absorbed, 4 to 5 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, strain the hot broth through a fine-mesh strainer set over a medium bowl, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Return the strained broth to the saucepan and discard the solids in the strainer; cover the saucepan and set over low heat to keep the broth hot.
5. When the wine is fully absorbed, add 3 cups of the hot broth and half of the reserved squash to the rice. Simmer, stirring every 3 to 4 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed and the bottom of the pan is almost dry, about 12 minutes.
6. Stir in about ½ cup of hot broth and cook, stirring constantly, until absorbed, about 2 minutes; repeat with additional broth 2 or 3 more times, until the rice is al dente. Off the heat, stir in the remaining tablespoon of butter, the Parmesan, sage, and nutmeg. Gently fold in the remaining cooked squash. If desired, add an additional ¼ cup of broth to loosen the texture of the risotto. Serve immediately.