



Wild Mushroom & Spinach Risotto

5-6 cups chicken (or vegetable) stock
¼ cup dried porcini mushrooms
1 tbsp. each, butter and olive oil
½ lb. button mushrooms, cleaned and sliced thin
½ lb. assorted wild mushrooms, cleaned trimmed, chopped if large
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 large clove garlic, minced
1 tbsp. each, fresh thyme and fresh sage, finely chopped
1 tbsp. white truffle oil
1 bunch fresh baby spinach, washed, dried and de-stemmed

1 tbsp. butter
½ cup chicken (or vegetable) stock
1 tbsp. fresh rosemary, finely chopped
3 tbsp. each, butter and olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups risotto rice (Italian or domestic Arborio)
½ cup dry white wine
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
½ cup fresh flat leaf parsley, chopped
½ cup grated Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese
Fresh thyme sprigs, for garnish

Wrap the dried mushrooms in a piece of cheese cloth and tie them in a bundle with some thread. Heat the stock in a large soup pot and add the mushroom bundle. When stock begins to boil, turn off the flame and let the mushrooms “steep” for 20 to 30 minutes.

Prepare the mushrooms: Heat the butter and the olive oil in a large sauté pan over high heat. Add the sliced button mushrooms and a large pinch of salt. Sauté the mushrooms until they begin to brown then add the wild mushrooms. Reduce heat to medium and stir and cook until the mushrooms are tender and their liquid has cooked away. Add the garlic and cook another couple minutes. Turn off flame and add the fresh thyme, sage, salt and pepper and the truffle oil. Set mushrooms aside.

Next, prepare the spinach: Heat the butter in a non-stick sauté pan over medium heat. Add the spinach and stir and cook until it has softened and turned bright green. Add the stock and the rosemary, heat, and pour all into a blender pitcher. Process on the “puree” setting until it is completely pureed. Set pureed spinach aside.

Prepare risotto: heat the butter and olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until it is soft and just turning golden. Add the rice and sauté until well coated with oil. Add ½ cup of the warm mushroom stock and stir gently (a heat resistant spoonula is ideal for this) and continually until it is almost absorbed. Repeat until the rice is “al dente”, about 30 minutes. Now add the pureed spinach, salt and pepper, to taste, and half the mushrooms. Stir to mix well. Quickly reheat the remaining mushrooms. Place large spoonfuls of the risotto onto warmed serving bowls. Top with some of the warm mushrooms and sprinkle fresh parsley and grated cheese over each. Garnish with a thyme sprig and serve immediately. Makes 6 to 8 servings.