



Donna's Last Laugh Risotto

Servings: 4

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 1 hour 25 minutes

DIFFICULTY: 1-5 - 4

The recipe inspired by a little good-natured teasing... and perfected to prove that asparagus risotto can absolutely be unforgettable.

FOR THE STOCK:

3 cups vegetable stock (high quality)
1 cup reserved asparagus blanching liquid
1 each Parmesan rind
2 sprigs fresh thyme

FOR THE RISOTTO:

1 large bunch asparagus
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large leek, halved, well washed and thinly sliced
1 each shallot, minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 cups arborio rice
1/2 cup Pinot Grigio, or Sauvignon Blanc
1/2 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, freshly grated
1/2 cup Pecorino Romano cheese, freshly grated
2 tablespoons mascarpone cheese
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cold
1/2 cup fresh basil
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
2 tablespoons chives, chopped
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest, finely grated
1 pinch nutmeg, freshly grated
white pepper, to taste
Kosher salt, to taste

GARNISH:

reserved roasted asparagus tips
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted (half chopped, half whole)
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, shaved
extra lemon zest
chives, chopped
small basil leaves
flaky sea salt
premium extra virgin olive oil



Layered asparagus flavor from the purée, richness from the brown butter and mascarpone, complexity from the two cheeses, and just enough lemon to keep it bright. It's elegant without becoming fussy—and memorable enough that your guests will be talking about it long after dinner.

Suggested Wine: Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Dry Chardonnay (unoaked)

PREP THE ASPARAGUS (15 minutes):

Bring a pot of salted water to boil on the stove to blanch asparagus.

Cut off the fibrous ends off the asparagus and discard. (You can tell where this is by breaking an end off with your fingers, usually about an inch from bottom). Cut the florette tips off (about 1-1/2 inches) and set them aside. Cut the remaining stalks into 1-inch pieces.

Blanch the stalk pieces for about 5 minutes until tender. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking water. Drain.

MAKE THE ASPARAGUS PUREE (10 minutes):

In the small pot of boiling water, blanch the 1-1/2 cups of asparagus cut stalks (not reserved florette tips) until tender, about 5 minutes, depending on size.

Drain, and reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid.

Place both reserved liquid and blanched stalks in a blender. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil and basil leaves and puree until silky smooth. Set aside to add to the risotto at the end. for about

RISOTTO (30 minutes):

In a heavy Dutch oven or wide saucepan, melt 2 tablespoons butter. Cook until it turns golden brown and smells nutty. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Add leeks and shallot and saute until softened and fragrant, about 6 minutes.

Add garlic. Cook another minute.

Add arborio rice and stir to coat, about 2 minutes (Every grain should be coated).

Deglaze with wine and cook until almost completely absorbed.

Add the hot stock one ladle at a time. Stir often. Wait until nearly absorbed before adding more. Continue for about 20–25 minutes.

When about 5 minutes remain, add the fresh asparagus tips (the rice should be creamy while still slightly al dente).

Turn off the heat. Wait 60 seconds.

Now stir in asparagus purée, Parmigiano-Reggiano, Pecorino Romano, mascarpone, 2 tablespoons cold butter, parsley, chives, lemon juice, lemon zest, tiny pinch of fresh nutmeg, white pepper.

Adjust seasoning (the risotto should slowly spread across the plate—not stand in a mound). If necessary, add another splash of hot stock.

Divide among warm bowls, Top each serving with roasted asparagus tips, toasted pine nuts, shaved Parmigiano, chopped chives, basil leaves, fresh lemon zest, drizzle of excellent extra virgin olive oil, a few flakes of Maldon sea salt.

Serve immediately.



Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 589 Calories; 41g Fat (65.2% calories from fat); 24g Protein; 26g Carbohydrate; 2g Dietary Fiber; 93mg Cholesterol; 443mg Sodium; 2g Total Sugars; 0mcg Vitamin D; 787mg Calcium; 2mg Iron; 234mg Potassium; 85mg Phosphorus~

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