



SAFFRON RISOTTO

A classic risotto is creamy and indulgent, thanks to saffron

Risotto is a simple rice dish elevated beyond the prosaic by its voluptuously creamy texture. Of the many risotto dishes that dot northern Italy, risotto alla milanese is at once one of the simplest and most luxurious, because it's flavored with the most globally prized spice, saffron, which perfumes the dish with its floral aroma.

The dish's origin is a subject of debate: One legend claims that it was invented in the 1500s by a Milanese glassmaker who earned the nickname "Zafferano" because he used saffron often to make gold stain. When he was jokingly challenged to add it to risotto, he did! However, the recipe's first appearance in an Italian cookbook wasn't until the 1800s. Perhaps it originated from Milan's ties to Spain, or a Milanese affinity for the golden color, or possibly the idea that saffron was beneficial to health.

Risotto - Milanese or otherwise - achieves its creamy texture through constant stirring, which causes the rice to release its starch. We toasted the saffron in butter, which magnified its flavor, helped break up the threads, and distributed it throughout the rice. This dish is traditionally

prepared using Carnaroli rice, but you can substitute Arborio rice. You may have broth left over once the rice is finished cooking; different rice products cook differently, and we prefer to err on the side of slightly too much broth rather than too little. If you do use all the broth and the rice has not finished cooking, add hot water as needed.

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Servings: 6

Start to finish: 1 hour
 3 1/2 cups chicken broth
 3 cups water
 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 onion, chopped fine
 Salt and pepper
 2 cups Carnaroli rice
 1/4 teaspoon saffron threads, crumbled
 2 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated (1 cup)

Bring broth and water to simmer in medium saucepan. Cover and keep warm over low heat. Melt butter in Dutch

oven over medium heat. Add onion and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add rice and saffron and cook, stirring frequently, until grain edges begin to turn translucent, about 5 minutes.

Stir in 3 1/2 cups warm broth, bring to simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost fully absorbed, 10 to 12 minutes. Continue to cook rice, stirring frequently and adding warm broth, 1 cup at a time, every few minutes as liquid is absorbed, until rice is creamy and cooked through but still somewhat firm in center, 14 to 18 minutes. Remove pot from heat, cover, and let sit for 5 minutes. Adjust consistency with remaining warm broth as needed (you may have broth left over). Stir in Parmigiano and season with salt and pepper to taste before serving.

Nutrition information per serving:

378 calories; 94 calories from fat; 11 g fat (7 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 30 mg cholesterol; 583 mg sodium; 51 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 1 g sugar; 9 g protein.