Homemade Vegetarian Risotto

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Serves: 5 servings

Ingredients

* 1 Tbsp canola oil
* 1 large onion, diced
* 1 large leek, halved, cleaned, and thinly sliced
* 1 Tbsp finely minced garlic
* 2 cups imported Arborio rice
* 8 cups vegetable stock
* 12 sun dried tomatoes, thinly sliced
* 1 cup thinly sliced asparagus
* 1.5 cups sliced cremini mushrooms
* ½ cup torn or chopped fresh basil
* ¼ cup Parmesan cheese (optional)
* Salt and pepper

Instructions

1. Heat the vegetable stock in a saucepan over medium heat. Once it's boiling, reduce to a simmer and keep it there.
2. Heat the oil in a large pot or dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the onion, leek, and garlic; stir frequently for about 3 minutes until just softened. Add the rice and a pinch of pepper, and stir frequently to toast the rice without letting it get brown. After about 5 minutes, you should hear the rice quietly squeek or whistle, your signal to begin adding liquid. Add about 1.5-2 cups of the stock and stir constantly for a few minutes until most of the liquid is absorbed. You know it's time to add more when you can run your spoon through the rice and see the bottom of the pan for a few seconds before the rice covers it again. Add 1 cup of the stock, stir for about 30 seconds, then only often enough to prevent the rice from sticking to the pan. Once the liquid is absorbed, add another cup, stir for 30 seconds, and repeat the process until there's only about 1 cup of stock left or the rice is nearly al dente.
3. After the rice has been cooking for about 5 minutes (say, after the initial amount of liquid is absorbed), steam the asparagus, mushrooms, and basil until crisp-tender (about 5 minutes) in a saucepan or microwave (I actually steamed them over the simmering vegetable stock). When the rice seems almost done or there's only a cup of stock left, add all the vegetables to the rice mixture with a cup of the stock (if the stock isn't all used up, it's ok). Stir the rice and vegetables together for just a few minutes until the rice is al dente. Stir in the Parmesan, if using, and enjoy!