

## SPRING RISOTTO WITH ASPARAGUS AND LEAFY GREENS

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Ahh, risotto - one of those comfort dishes that tends to make people sigh and swoon. Comprised of simple ingredients, risotto is easily adapted to the season, and its rich, creamy texture makes any meal feel like a special occasion. I especially love adorning this classic rice dish with tender Spring veggies like asparagus and spinach, baby kale, or Swiss chard.

To complete the meal, serve it with fish or seafood, chicken, portobello mushrooms, or tofu that is seasoned and pan-seared, sauteed, roasted, or grilled.

### **Make it Vegetarian or Vegan:**

Use vegetable broth in place of chicken broth, and a good quality vegan Parmesan cheese in place of the dairy version.

### **Plating Idea:**

- Place a layer of risotto on individual dinner plates or pasta bowls.
- Add the cooked protein in the center or placed on a diagonal over the risotto.
- Garnish with a sprinkling of chopped, fresh parsley.
- Drizzle a small amount of good quality extra virgin olive oil over the top, and serve with a small lemon wedge for squeezing.

**Makes:** 3 - 4 servings

### **INGREDIENTS:**

#### Sauteed Asparagus and Greens

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided  
1/2 pound fresh asparagus, washed, tough ends trimmed, sliced into 1" pieces  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1/2 pound tender, leafy greens, thoroughly washed, patted dry, sliced into strips  
kosher salt  
ground black or white pepper

#### Risotto:

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil  
3 tablespoons minced shallot or onion  
1 tablespoon minced garlic  
1 cup arborio rice  
1/2 cup dry white wine  
3 1/2 - 4 cups of chicken broth, heated and kept warm  
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese (or Manchego, Gruyere, or Fontina)  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/8 teaspoon ground black or white pepper  
chopped, fresh parsley, optional garnish

**DIRECTIONS:****Sauté the Asparagus and Greens:**

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat in a large skillet or sauté pan. Add the asparagus. Season with a light sprinkling of salt and pepper. Cook until al dente, tender when pierced with a fork or knife but holds its shape.
2. Add the garlic, and sauté for 30 seconds.
3. Add the greens and toss gently with a tong until wilted. Season with a light sprinkling of salt and pepper.
4. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

**Make the Risotto:**

1. Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-low heat. Add the shallots or onion, and sweat them (gently cook without browning) until soft and fragrant. Add the garlic and cook another 30 seconds.
2. Add the arborio rice, stir to coat. Allow the grains to heat and “toast” while stirring for about 1 minute.
3. Carefully add the white wine, stir to distribute evenly, and allow it to almost evaporate fully.
4. Add the hot broth, 1/2 cup at a time, and simmer over medium-low heat, stirring after each addition. Taste the rice after 3 1/2 cups of broth have been absorbed - the rice should be soft and creamy, yet hold its shape. If the rice is not fully cooked, add more broth, 1/2 cup at a time until it reaches the desired texture and consistency.
5. Remove the pan from the heat and add the cheese. Stir until incorporated.
6. Gently stir the asparagus and the wilted greens into the finished risotto. Taste, and add more salt + pepper if needed.
7. Garnish with chopped, fresh parsley if desired, and serve.