

Risotto with Asparagus and Favas
Risotto con Asparagi e Fave
Serves 6

Making a risotto is all about the technique, but, for me, the flavoring is all about capturing the tastes and aromas of the seasons. Here we are in spring. My family knows I love to make risotto. Risotto with fish, with meat, with vegetables, and even the classic risotto alla milanese with saffron are all in my wheelhouse. Not to toot my own horn, but my family tells me I make the best risotto and it is my piatto forte.

Kosher salt

2 pounds fresh fava beans in the pod, shelled

6 to 7 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth or water

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

4 scallions, chopped, white and green parts separated

2 medium shallots, chopped

2 cups Arborio or Carnaroli rice 1 cup dry white wine

1 bunch medium-thick asparagus, tough ends removed, lower half peeled, stalks cut into

1-inch segments (keep the tips separate from the rest)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces

1/2 cup freshly grated Grana Padano

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Set a large bowl of water with ice next to the pot. Add the shelled favas to the boiling water. Bring it back to a boil, and cook for 1 minute. Remove the favas to the ice bath. Drain, pat them dry, and peel the tough outer skins from the favas. You should have about 1 heaping cup peeled favas.

Discard the cooking water, and add the broth or water to the pot. Warm over low heat. Heat the olive oil in a large, shallow Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the scallion whites and shallots, and cook, stirring often, until they're wilted, about 2 minutes. Add the rice, and stir to coat in the oil. Cook and stir until the edges of the grains are translucent, about 2 minutes. Pour in the white wine. Adjust the heat so everything is simmering, and cook, stirring often, until the wine is almost absorbed. Add enough stock to cover, and simmer until it's almost absorbed. Add the asparagus (but not the tips) after the first addition of stock has been absorbed. Continue stirring and adding more stock as it gets absorbed.

Once you've added about two-thirds of the stock, add the favas, asparagus tips, and scallion greens. Cook and stir, adding the remaining stock, until the rice is creamy and a bit loose but still al dente, about 18 minutes total from the first addition of stock.

Remove the rice from the heat. Add the butter pieces, and mix vigorously to incorporate them. Stir in the grated cheese, and serve.