

Risotto with Buffalo Mozzarella, Roasted Tomatoes & Basil Oil

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 1 hour 20 minutes | Total Time: 2 hours 45 minutes

Step 1: Roasting the Tomatoes

- 8 oz small tomatoes
- sea salt (to taste)
- extra-virgin olive oil (for drizzling)

Preheat your oven to 250 degrees Fahrenheit (120 degrees Celsius).

Cut the tomatoes in half lengthwise. Line a tray with parchment and arrange the tomatoes cut-side up in a single layer. Sprinkle lightly with a bit of sea salt. Drizzle lightly with extra-virgin olive oil.

Transfer to the oven and slow roast for approximately 2 hours or until the tomatoes have just started to brown, shrivel and concentrate.

Step 2: Preparing the Fresh Basil Oil

- 1 large bunch fresh basil
- 1/2 cup grapeseed oil
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

To prepare, follow the instructions in the text recipe for Fresh Basil Oil.

Step 3: Preparing Your Risotto Mise en Place

- 5 cups water or stock (see note)
- 1/2 tsp sea salt (or to taste)
- 1/2 cup onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 8 oz buffalo mozzarella
- 1 cup risotto rice (see note)
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup white wine or vermouth

Note: For the liquid, use a light chicken or vegetable stock. If your stock is very strong in flavor, you can use a combination of 1/2 water and 1/2 stock so you don't over power the flavor of the rice. Always keep in mind that more or less liquid may be needed to cook this dish. It's always better to have too much than not enough.

To prepare your mise en place, place the liquid into a pot, season with the salt (if needed) and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low and keep hot.

In the meantime, finely dice the onions and garlic. Tear the buffalo mozzarella into large chunks and transfer the cheese to the refrigerator while you cook the dish.

Measure out the rice, olive oil and white wine. Set aside.

Note: For this dish, it is important to use rice that is suitable for risotto.

Step 4: Starting the Risotto

Place the oil into a large, heavy-bottomed pan and heat over medium to medium-low heat.

Add the onions and a pinch of salt and sweat until soft and translucent, about 10 to 15 minutes. Next, add 1/4 cup of the hot cooking liquid to soften the onions further. Let the cooking liquid completely evaporate before moving onto the next step.

Step 5: Toasting the Rice & Deglazing

Once the liquid has completely evaporated, turn the heat up to medium-high and add the rice all at once. Stir to coat the rice in the hot fat. Monitor the heat so the aromatics do not burn. Toast the rice for a few minutes until the perimeter of the grains are translucent.

Once toasted, add the garlic and cook, stirring just until the garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Deglaze with the wine. Stir the rice until the wine evaporates.

Step 6: Cooking the Risotto

Once the wine has evaporated, slowly add the hot liquid cup by cup. Stir often to coax the starches out of the rice. Adjust the heat so the liquid is always gently boiling. Once the liquid has been absorbed, then and only then, add the next cup. Stir frequently.

Continue to add liquid and cook the risotto until it reaches the al dente stage (or until it is done to your liking). Start tasting the rice for doneness around the 15 minute mark.

Step 7: Finishing the Risotto

- 1 to 2 tbsp unsalted butter or extra-virgin olive oil
- Once the risotto has been cooked to your liking, taste it for seasoning. Add a touch of hot liquid to loosen the consistency, if necessary. Stir in the butter (or olive oil). Place the chunks of buffalo mozzarella over top. Cover and let rest for 1 to 2 minutes to allow the cheese to melt.

Plate the risotto on warmed dishes. Top with the roasted tomatoes and drizzle with the fresh basil oil. Serve immediately.