



Risotto

There are many different risotto recipes with different ingredients, but they are all based on rice of an appropriate variety cooked in a standard procedure.

The rice is first cooked briefly in a soffritto of onion or garlic and butter or olive oil to coat each grain in a film of fat, this is called *tostatura*; white or red wine is added and has to be absorbed by the grains. When it has evaporated, the heat is raised to medium high and very hot stock is gradually added in small amounts while stirring gently, almost constantly: stirring loosens the starch molecules from the outside of the rice grains into the surrounding liquid, creating a smooth creamy-textured liquid.

At that point it is taken off the heat for the *mantecatura* when diced cold butter and finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese are vigorously stirred in to make the texture as creamy and smooth as possible. It may be removed from the heat a few minutes earlier, and left to cook with its residual heat. Seafood risotto the cheese is served aside.

Properly cooked risotto is rich and creamy but still with some resistance or bite: al dente, and with separate grains. The traditional texture is fairly fluid, or *all'onda* ("wavy, or flowing in waves"). It is served on flat dishes and it should easily spread out but not have excess watery liquid around the perimeter. It must be eaten at once as it continues to cook in its own heat and can become too dry with the grains too soft.

Risotto can be made using many kinds of vegetable, meat, fish, seafood and legumes, and different types of wine and cheese may be used, i.e.:

- Risotto alla Milanese (with saffron)
- Piedmont's risotto al Barolo (Red wine, sausage)
- Risotto al nero di seppia (Black Risotto)