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by Liz Robb

Mushroom Risotto

Ingredients

25g dried porcini mushrooms 1 small onion
1 fat clove of garlic
250g speciality mushrooms [I used enoki, shitake, maitake or 'hen of the woods', and enyngii or 'king oyster'.]
100g baby chestnut mushrooms
1.35 litres of chicken stock
40g butter
1 tablespoon of olive oil
350g carnaroli rice
Salt and black pepper
50g fresh parmesan cheese, plus extra for garnish
A handful of fresh parsley

Servings
4
Person

Preparation

1. 1. Soak the dried mushrooms in a small bowl in 250 ml of hot water for 20-30 minutes. Lift out the mushrooms, rinse them in cold water to get rid of any grit, squeeze out any remaining water and then slice them. Pour the soaking liquid through a sieve into a jug and reserve to use later. 2. Finely chop the onion and peel the garlic. Wipe the mushrooms clean then cut any larger ones into halves, quarters or fairly thick slices.
2. 3. Pour the hot chicken stock [or vegetable stock if you prefer] into a saucepan and add the reserved soaking liquid. Heat it up until it is only just simmering, and keep it on the hob at that temperature throughout the cooking time.
3. 4. In a separate large, heavy based saucepan, melt 30g of the butter with the olive oil and gently sauté the onion for 3 minutes. Add the crushed garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes. Stir in the prepared mushrooms, dried and fresh, and cook for another 2-3 minutes. [Before adding the rice, you may wish to take out some of the mushrooms to use as garnish for the finished dish
4. keep them warm until needed.]
5. 5. Add the rice and stir well with a wooden spoon, making sure that everything is well combined and the rice is thoroughly coated in the butter and oil. Add a ladleful of hot stock, stir it in gently and allow the rice a couple of minutes to absorb it before adding more. Gradually add the stock, a ladleful at a time, as needed, stirring when adding to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pan, and keeping it on a constant, gentle heat, until the risotto looks creamy and the rice is cooked but still 'al dente', probably about 25 minutes.
6. 6. Turn off the heat. Season with black pepper and salt, if any salt is needed
7. it may not be. Stir in the remaining 10g of butter and 50g of finely grated parmesan cheese.
8. Serve immediately, garnished with a few reserved mushrooms, if using, a little more grated parmesan and a sprinkling of finely chopped parsley.

Cooks Note

A classic mushroom risotto makes a lovely warming autumn dish, creamy, satisfying and full of earthy mushroom flavours. It doesn't need a large number of ingredients and isn't difficult to make; it just takes a little time and patience.

I've included a number of different mushroom varieties to add interest and flavour, but you could use only button or chestnut mushrooms if you just want a simple and enjoyable midweek meal.

Serves 4