

MUSHROOM RISOTTO

It's a tough time of year for fresh vegetables. Other than those grown in a hothouse, we're deep into root vegetable season. I have great respect for potatoes and parsnips, but sometimes I just want something different. Enter the mushroom. Thankfully those delightful fungi can be harvested all-year-round.

One of my favorite ways to use mushrooms is in a classic risotto. Rather than buying a boring boxed stock, I like to go all-in on the mushroom flavor. I use those dried mushrooms way in the back of my pantry to make a quick stock. You know you have some in the back of your pantry. Pull them out – it's worth the extra step.

INGREDIENTS

For Mushroom Stock:

1 cup dried mushrooms
1 medium shallot, diced
7 cups water
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt

For Risotto:

3 tablespoons olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup prosciutto, diced
5-6 cups mushroom stock
2 cups mushrooms, thickly sliced
1 medium shallot, diced

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups Arborio rice

1 pinch saffron

1 cup dry white wine

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons finely chopped chives, plus 1 tablespoon for garnish

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus 2 tablespoons for garnish

kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

PREPARATION

For Mushroom Stock:

In a 2-quart pot, heat the olive oil and sauté the shallot for one minute. Add in dried mushrooms and sauté one minute. Add water and salt, bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer for 25 minutes, or until mushrooms have softened.

Strain out mushrooms, chop up half, and set aside. (Save the other half for omelets or leftovers.)

For Risotto:

In a separate 3-quart pot, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium-high heat. Add fresh mushrooms and sauté for about three minutes. Remove mushrooms and their liquid, adding them to the mushrooms that were set aside from the stock. Set aside.

Add the remaining 1-tablespoon olive oil to the saucepan. Stir in shallots and prosciutto and cook for 1 minute. Add in rice, stirring for another two minutes.

Pour in the wine, stirring until the wine is fully absorbed. Add in saffron. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup warm mushroom stock to the rice, and stir until the stock is absorbed. Continue adding stock, $\frac{1}{2}$

cup at a time, stirring constantly, until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender about 18-20 minutes.

Remove from heat. Stir in reserved mushrooms and their liquid, Parmesan cheese, butter, and chives. Season with salt and pepper.

To serve, scoop out risotto into bowls and garnish with remaining chives and cheese.