

Asparagus and Lemon Risotto

Risotto is a north-Italian rice dish, cooked to a creamy consistency. This recipe is a zesty, fresh and healthier version – made without butter or white wine. It's perfect for spring when asparagus is in season. This can be a substantial main course or can be served in smaller portions as a light starter, as is traditional in Italy.



Celery, egg, milk and wheat (gluten)*

Nutritional information per portion (421g):

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1428kJ 340kcal 17%	9.9g 14%	3.4g 17%	1.6g 2%	0.59g 10%

of an adult's reference intake.
Typical values per 100g: energy 339kJ/81kcal.

Equipment

Weighing scales
Sharp knife
Chopping board
Scissors (optional)
Grater
Juicer
Small bowl
Measuring spoons
Large saucepan
Wooden spoon
Kettle
Measuring jug
Pan stand

Ingredients

**Serves 4
(as a main meal)**

1 medium onion
400g asparagus
Bunch (20g) fresh parsley
50g Parmesan
1 small lemon
1 x 15ml spoon olive oil
1 litre boiling water
1 reduced-salt vegetable stock cube
250g risotto rice

*Presence of allergens can vary by brand – always check product labels. If you serve food outside the home you must make allergen information available when asked.



Top Tips

- Risotto needs to be stirred regularly as this releases the starch in the rice, which gives it its creamy texture.
- The rice should still have some bite and not be mushy. If the risotto is left to stand for a few minutes it will continue to absorb liquid.

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Method

1. Peel and chop the onion.
2. Snap the tough ends off the asparagus. Cut off the tips and keep to one side. Finely chop the stalks into 2cm pieces, throwing away any tough parts.
3. Finely chop the parsley, removing any tough stems. An easy way for children to do this is to cut it up inside a cup using scissors.
4. Grate the Parmesan.
5. Grate the zest from the lemon using the fine side of the grater. Cut in two and squeeze the juice into a bowl.
6. Heat the olive oil in the saucepan on a low heat and add the onions and half the parsley. Cook until the onions are soft, for about 5 minutes.
7. Measure 1 litre of boiling water into a jug, crumble in the stock cube and stir until dissolved.
8. Add the rice to the onion mix in the saucepan and stir to coat each grain. Cook on a medium heat for 3–4 minutes.
9. Pour about 150ml of the vegetable stock into the pan and stir through until it has been absorbed. Stir in the chopped asparagus stalks and 150ml more stock, stirring until it's all absorbed. Keep adding the stock, 150ml at a time.
10. When half the stock has been added, stir in the asparagus tips and continue to cook and gradually add the stock, stirring gently, for about 10 minutes more.
11. Keep testing the rice towards the end of the cooking time to see how soft it is. When the rice is creamy and tender (but not mushy), the risotto is ready. You may find that some of the stock is left or you might need extra water – rice varies in the amount of liquid it absorbs.
12. Remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon juice and sprinkle the Parmesan, remaining parsley and lemon zest over the top before serving.

Prepare now, eat later

- Cool any leftover risotto as quickly as possible (within 1 hour), cover and store in the fridge and use within 24 hours. Eat cold or reheat (only once) until piping hot and eat straight away. You may have to add a little more water as the rice will have absorbed all the liquid.

Skills used include:

Weighing, measuring, peeling, chopping, grating, squeezing, frying and boiling/simmering.

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