

CREAMY RISOTTO

WITH MUSHROOMS AND BROCCOLINI



April's lengthening days and blooming tulips hint at upcoming visits to the farmer's market and dining al fresco, yet the persistent showers and crisp evenings make me crave healthy comfort food. Risotto, a dish I find appealing throughout the year, feels particularly fitting now. This straightforward recipe can be prepared in just over 30 minutes and is surprisingly easy to make. By incorporating half the stock initially, you only need to stir occasionally while sautéing the vegetables, then focus more as it approaches readiness. The broccolini introduces a refreshing burst of green and harmonizes well with the lemon zest. Meanwhile, the mushrooms add a rich umami flavor to the risotto, enhancing its overall depth.

- Leslie Mackie

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup olive oil, divided	4 cups broccolini, cut into 1 1/2-inch sections (2 bunches)
1/4 cup shallots, finely diced (approximately 2 each)	1 heaping Tbsp garlic, minced
1 cup Arborio rice	Salt and freshly ground pepper (to taste)
5 cups chicken or vegetable stock (you may not use all of it)	1 cup Parmesan, finely grated, divided
3 cups fresh mushrooms (chanterelle, shiitake, oyster, or button)	1 lemon, for zesting

DIRECTIONS:

In a medium saucepan, heat 2 Tbsp of olive oil over medium heat and then add the shallots. When the shallots are translucent, stir in the Arborio rice. Coat the rice completely in the oil, then pour in half the stock. Simmer for about 35 minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally, gradually adding more stock as the rice absorbs it.

Meanwhile, wipe the mushrooms with paper towels to clean them. Trim the ends and slice the mushrooms into 1/2-inch pieces. In a sauté pan, heat 1/4 cup olive oil over medium high heat, then add the mushrooms, sautéing until they are golden brown. Lower the heat slightly and add the remaining 2 Tbsp of olive oil, broccolini and garlic. Sauté for another 2 minutes and season to

taste with salt and fresh ground pepper.

When the rice is al dente, fold in the vegetables and 1/2 cup of Parmesan into the risotto. Stir gently over low heat for a minute to marry the flavors. The risotto should be tender but firm to the bite. If it's on the stiff side, stir in a bit more stock to loosen it up (it continues to absorb liquid even off the heat).

Divide the risotto between 4 plates and garnish with the remaining Parmesan. Grate lemon zest over each portion using a microplane. Excellent on its own, the risotto is even better served with a warm crusty loaf of Macrina Casera bread and a generous bowl of extra virgin olive oil for dipping. Enjoy!