

Asparagus and Mushroom Risotto

This is the risotto Beth (and her mother) make EVERY time they make risotto. The asparagus and the mushrooms cook with the rice, so it is sort of a primavera, spring vegetable, vegetable stew. Asparagus risotto is one of the most popular variations after the saffron version. Vary this by substituting green beans, fresh peas, or zucchini for the asparagus, or combining it with. This risotto is nice finished off with 2 tablespoons of heavy cream, if you happen to have any hanging around in the fridge.

Machine: Medium (6-cup) rice cooker

Yield: Serves 3 to 4

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1 1/2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons minced shallots

1 1/8 cups arborio rice (superfino Arborio, carnaroli, or Vialone nano)

2 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced

12 ounces asparagus

3 cups chicken stock (or one can commercial chicken broth plus water to equal 3 cups)

2 teaspoons butter

1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving

Salt, only if needed

Snap off the ends of the asparagus stalks and discard. If the remaining stalks are thick, peel with a vegetable peeler. Cut the spears into 2-inch pieces on the diagonal.

Turn on the cooker. Add the oil and butter, and when pan is hot, stir in shallot. Close the cover and cook until the shallot is soft, about 2 minutes. When the onion has softened, add rice and stir to coat grains with oil. Cook, stirring occasionally, for a few minutes, until the grains of rice are transparent (except for a white spot on each), about 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and asparagus pieces, stirring a minute or two. Add the stock; stir to combine. Program for the Porridge cycle (timed 30 to 40 minutes on the Regular cycle).

When the cycle is finished and cooker switches to the Keep Warm setting, open the cover and stir. The risotto should be only a bit liquid, and rice should be "al dente," tender with just a touch of tooth resistance. Open the lid and add the butter. Close for a minute or so to allow

butter to melt. Raise the lid and stir in the Parmesan. Risotto will keep on Keep Warm setting for an hour or so. Serve hot.