



Sugar Apple

Posts From The Caribbean

Caribbean Pumpkin Risotto

If you're not near a market that caters to a West Indian population and can't find a tropical pumpkin, you can substitute butternut squash in recipes that call for calabaza. Go very easy on the nutmeg. You only need a tiny sprinkle or your risotto may cross over into the realm of dessert. We like the pumpkin cooked to the point that it's nice and soft, but not mushy. If you want your pumpkin softer, so it starts to melt into the risotto, cook it a little while longer with the onion so it really softens up.

You can substitute veggie stock for the chicken stock for a warming vegetarian entree. The amount of stock you need may vary depending on the rice and how wet you like your risotto. A lot of people use some butter in the sautéing of the vegetables and also to finish the risotto. I find it's rich enough without it, but feel free to add some butter.

a few tablespoons of olive oil

1 small onion, chopped fairly finely

a slice or two of prosciutto, diced (optional)

4 cups of pumpkin, seeded, peeled and cut into 1 to 1 1/2 inch pieces

a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

2 cups of Carnaroli, Vialone Nano, or Arborio rice

1/2 cup of dry white wine

7 cups of good chicken stock (homemade is best but if you don't have any, I think Swanson has the taste closest to chicken stock)

a good handful of freshly grated Parmesan cheese, maybe about a cup

salt to taste

fresh chopped parsley to garnish

Put the stock into a pot and bring it to a boil. Then turn it down to the lowest setting on your stove so that it stays warm while you're cooking the risotto.

Put the olive oil in a heavy skillet or large pot and heat over medium heat until it's warm. You don't want it too hot because you don't want to brown your onion. Add the onion and sauté for a few minutes until it starts to soften. but don't let it brown. Add the prosciutto and sauté for a minute or two, then add the pumpkin and nutmeg. Let it cook together over medium heat for about 10-15 minutes, until the pumpkin starts to soften

just a little. Add the rice to the pan and stir it all up together so the rice gets coated with the oil. Cook for about 2 minutes.

Turn the heat up to medium high and add the wine. Cook until the wine is almost cooked away then begin adding stock with a ladle, 2 or 3 ladlefuls at a time. You want to let each addition reduce and let the rice absorb the liquid. Add stock as each addition of stock is reduced and absorbed. Keep going with the stock until the rice is soft and creamy but still retains a good bit of texture in the middle. You don't want rice pudding. When the rice is cooked to your liking, add one more ladle of stock and the Parmesan cheese. Stir to incorporate the cheese, season to taste with salt, sprinkle with parsley and serve.

This amount of risotto should easily serve about 6 as a starter or 4 as a main course. Unless you're feeding Bones and Audrey. In which case Bones will have seconds, Audrey will have thirds (and a portion for her lunch the next day) and it will all be gone. And it was only a side dish.

<http://www.abigailblake.com/sugarapple>
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