



Sugar Apple

Posts From The Caribbean

Mushroom Asparagus Risotto

You can substitute veggie stock for the chicken stock for an earthy vegetarian entree. Sometimes I omit the asparagus and garnish the risotto with fresh mushrooms that have been sautéed in a little butter or olive oil. The amount of stock you need may vary depending on the rice and how wet you like your risotto. If you run out of stock before the rice is cooked, continue with some hot water.

1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
6 cups light chicken stock, Italian brodo or vegetable stock
1 cup hot water
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 small shallots, peeled and minced
2 cups rice for risotto (Carnaroli, Vialone Nano or Arborio)
1 bunch thin asparagus
1/2 cup dry white wine
a handful of grated parmigiano reggiano cheese (about a cup) plus more for garnish

Soak the dried mushrooms in the hot water for half an hour. Strain and reserve the mushrooms and the water separately. Bring the stock to a simmer and keep warm over low heat. Cut the woody stem ends from the asparagus and cut the spears into 1-1/2" lengths. Reserve the cut stalks and steam the asparagus tips until they're just cooked through.

Put the olive oil in a heavy skillet or large pot and heat over medium heat until it's warm. Add the shallot and cook for a few minutes until it starts to soften. Don't let them brown. Add the rice to the pan and stir so all the rice gets coated with oil. Stir in the asparagus stalks and a teaspoon of salt and 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, 1 or 2 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 handful of cheese. Stir to incorporate the cheese and check for seasoning. Serve immediately, garnishing each portion of risotto with some of the asparagus tips and a little grated parmigiano reggiano. *This amount of risotto will generously serve 6-8 as a starter or 4-6 as a main course.*

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

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