
RECIPE

BEETROOT AND CABERNET SAUVIGNON RISOTTO



Many years ago I was in UK for a few months break from the restaurant I was working at in California, Oliveto. I did a little agency work and was sent to a brand new restaurant called Olivo where I worked for a few weeks with very lovely Italian man called Mauro. A short time later the restaurant recruited a full-time chef, a young man called Giorgio Locatelli. He is a culinary hero of mine, a genius of the Italian cuisine, and the author of two of the very best books on Italian food. I have pinched his risotto technique for my beetroot and cabernet risotto.

50g butter

1 onion. chopped very, very finely

1 large beetroot grated

400g arborio rice

200ml the den Cabernet Sauvignon

salt and pepper

to finish off the risotto (this is called the Mantecatura)

About 75g cold butter, diced

About 100g finely grated Parmesan cheese (or in South Africa try Dalewood Huguenot cheese)

Grated lemon rind and parsley or thyme

2.5 litres good chicken stock (not salty instant chicken stock, please!)

Bring your pot of stock to the boil close to where you are going to make your risotto, then turn down the heat to a bare simmer. Melt the butter in a heavy-based pan; add the chopped onion. Cook gently until softened, but not coloured (about 5 minutes).

Add the rice and stir around to coat in the butter. Make sure all the grains are warm, then add the Cabernet. Let the wine evaporate completely. Add the beetroot and stir into the rice.

Start to add the stock, a ladleful or two at a time, stirring and scraping the rice in the pan as you do so. When each addition of stock has almost evaporated, add the next ladleful. If the colour of the risotto isn't as intensely pinky-red as you would like, add a little more wine.

Carry on cooking for about 15-17 minutes. adding stock continuously as above. After about 12-14 minutes. slow the addition of stock so that the rice doesn't become too wet and soupy at this stage. If it does, when you add the butter and cheese at the end, it will become too sloppy. The risotto is ready when the grains are soft, but still al dente.

Turn down the heat and allow the risotto to rest for a minute, then for the mantecatura, using a wooden spoon, vigorously beat in the cold diced butter and finally the cheese, making sure you shake the pan energetically at the same time as you beat. Garnish with a little lemon rind and parsley. Season to taste.

Grate some cheese over the risotto and serve immediately.

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