

Experience Risotto with Wild Bolete Mushrooms



Mushroom risotto. The flavor is so sublime, why complicate it with too many other ingredients? The essence that is the mushroom carries the flavor with the assistance of shallots, dry white wine and parsley. Watch carefully. Do not overcook. Do not overstir. It's a lesson in patience – a zen experience.

Let the risotto evolve and reduce with gentle stirs and ladlefuls of broth as needed. Do not overwork it – just like life. Don't over think. Just let the magic happen. Earthy, delicate, straightforward. A recipe that taught me when to add broth. When to stir. When to let it rest. This is why I love to cook. The food talks to you and lets you know how it would like to be treated. Maybe I should have a chat with each dish I make and get their opinion on how they'd like to be prepared.

Resist giving into the temptation to cook the rice until it's

mushy. Risotto should be like pasta, “al dente” with a little teeth to the bite. This gives the rice character so it doesn’t sink into the sunset as a nondescript bowl of cream of rice. What I want to share with you is not how to make risotto, but rather how to experience risotto.

Mushroom Risotto



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Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 shallot, chopped finely
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms or rehydrated dried mushrooms or wild Bolete mushrooms
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dry white wine
- 3 plus cups vegetarian stock or chicken stock – warmed on the stove
- $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated parmesan cheese – optional
- chopped parsley to garnish

Instructions

1. Melt the butter and oil together.
2. Stir in the shallots and sauté until soft.
3. Add the mushrooms.
4. Stir in the rice. Let the rice immerse itself into the oil.
5. Add the white wine and cook on medium heat until the

liquid is nearly evaporated.

6. Now, slowly stir in the broth of your choice, about one cup to start. You will notice that it quickly is absorbed into the rice.
7. Give a little stir so the rice doesn't stick to the bottom, then ladle in another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or so of the broth.
8. Continue this method until the rice is cooked. The rice might absorb $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups or 3 cups.
9. Taste frequently and salt to taste. It is best when there is still some liquid in the rice so it is a bit saucy!
10. If desired, stir in parmesan.
11. Garnish with parsley. I also garnished with pieces of grilled zucchini as shown in the photo.
12. Serve with a crisp green salad and crusty bread.

"Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ciao for now!

Mary

Foraging for Mushrooms



Julian and his prize.

For years I've dreamed of hunting for mushrooms. These almost illusive, sought-after fungi were surely only for the expert spotter – until today. I'm spending time with my brother,

sister-in-law and nephew in their mountain home in Colorado. Hiking the quiet, unpopulated alpine trails is their passion as well as practicing the art of foraging.

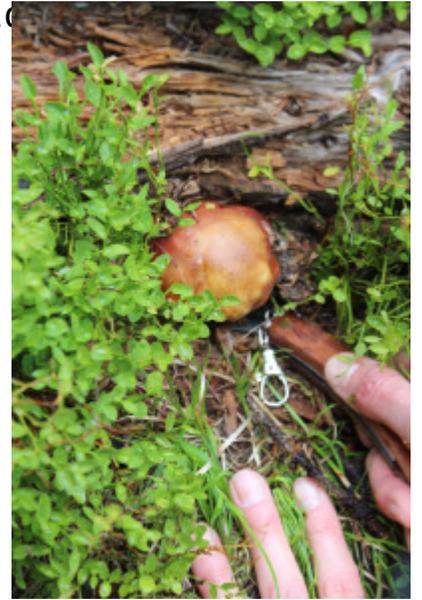


A perfect specimen!

Boletes, or more specifically, King Bolete, the mushrooms we were seeking, are also known as Cepes in France and Porcini in Italy. These are no ordinary mushrooms but a prized culinary delicacy. They grow at high elevations here in the Colorado Rockies and hide themselves in the forest, nestled under spruce trees

My European sister-in-law, Mirna, was the perfect teacher in showing me what to look for and how to tell the edibles from the poisonous. She learned the art from her father as a young girl, foraging the forests of Croatia. About 1/2 hour into our hike, Mirna spotted the first Bolete of the day. A smooth cinnamon-

colored cap lay solo tucked next to a spruce log. Mirna demonstrated how to dig deep around the wide stem, making sure to dislodge the entire mushroom. Soon after, our eyes trained, we were calling "Bolete!" to signal each other that another one of these randomly placed treasures was discovered.



My Belle Soeur
(sister-in-law),

Mirna and me.



Unearthing my first mushroom!



Voila! Dinner tonight!



Our day's forage.

Hiking down the mountain, our bag full of large, tasty mushrooms, I felt a surge of admiration for Mother Nature and thanked her repeatedly. This was the best day of my life!

*If only one could tell true love from false love as one can tell
mushrooms from toadstools
Katherine Mansfield*