



Spring Pea Risotto
By Jeremy Niehuss
Serves 8

Peas

1 pound English peas, shucked
Kosher salt
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Risotto

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 yellow onion, small diced
3 cups Arborio rice
1 ½ cups dry white wine
1 ½ quarts chicken stock, in a large saucepan
½ cup crème fraîche
½ cup grated parmesan cheese

Hazelnut-Parsley Vinaigrette

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons finely chopped parsley
1 ½ tablespoons toasted, skinned and crushed hazelnuts
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon hazelnut oil
¼ teaspoon salt

1. Fill a large saucepot with cold water and bring to a boil. Season the water until it tastes like the ocean. Fill a large mixing bowl with ice and add enough cold water to cover the ice. Add the shucked peas to the boiling water and cook for 2 minutes, leaving them bright green and al dente in the center. Strain the peas from the boiling water into a small fine mesh strainer and set the strainer into the ice water to shock (stop the cooking process). Once the peas are cold remove them from the water and reserve for later.
2. Bring the chicken stock to a boil and then down to a simmer. If the chicken stock reduces or you need more cooking liquid, add water.
3. Melt the butter in a large broad bottomed pan with straight sides over medium heat. Add the onions and cook, while stirring, until the onions are soft and translucent, about 6 minutes. If necessary lower the heat to keep the onions from browning, as this is not desirable. At this point you should use a heat proof rubber spatula or wooden spoon to finish the risotto.
4. Add the rice to the pan and continue to cook, while stirring, until it is hot to the touch. Lower the heat if needed to avoid browning the grains. Add the wine and cook while stirring until the wine is absorbed.
5. Add 1 cup of the simmering chicken stock to the rice. Cook while stirring, until the liquid is nearly absorbed. Adjust the heat to maintain a steady simmer through the cooking process. As the liquid is absorbed add more stock, a cup at a time, waiting until the previous addition of stock is absorbed before adding more. Continue cooking, stirring constantly, adding stock until the rice is done. The rice is finished cooking when it is creamy and smooth and the individual grains of rice are tender, but slightly firm to the tooth.



6. While the risotto is cooking place the peas in a small saucepan and add a small amount of water to cover the bottom of the pan, but not the peas. Add the butter and cook over low heat very gently until they are tender and the water is cooked off. Season with additional kosher salt if necessary.
7. To make the hazelnut-mint vinaigrette heat the olive oil in a small sauté pan until it's hot. Remove the pan from the heat and add the parsley. Allow the parsley to toast in the hot oil until it's fragrant. Add the remaining ingredients and stir to combine.
8. Cooking the rice should take about 15 to 20 minutes after you start adding the stock. Once the grains of rice are cooked continue to cook briefly to cook off some of the excess liquid. Add the crème fraîche and Parmesan cheese and gently stir to combine. Adjust the seasoning with kosher salt if necessary. Fold the peas into the risotto and serve with a little of the vinaigrette drizzled over the top.

Equipment: Cutting board and knife, large sauce pot, large mixing bowl, small fine mesh strainer, broad bottomed-straight sided pan, heat resistant rubber spatula or wooden spoon, ladle, small sauce pan and a small sauté pan.