

VEGETARIAN RISOTTO

Key Ingredients

- **Rice:** The best rice for risotto are Arborio, Carnaroli, and Vialone Nano since they are all short-grain rice varieties with a high starch content. We use Carnaroli in our kitchen since it makes creamy risotto and is more forgiving when it comes to overcooking.
- **Broth:** A good [vegetable broth](#) and even [chicken broth](#) work perfectly well in this recipe, but we love our [easy tomato broth](#) for a summery tomato risotto base (that is what we have used in our photos).
- **White Wine:** Whenever you cook with wine, the most important thing to remember is to use something you enjoy. We use a light, dry white wine like Pino Gris, Albariño, Grüner Veltliner, or Sauvignon Blanc for this veggie risotto. Wine adds flavor and some acidity. If you prefer to leave it out, replace it with more broth and sprinkle a little fresh lemon juice over the risotto before serving.
- **Veggies:** We love risotto with veggies. You have some leeway when it comes to the vegetables. We use yellow squash, zucchini, tomatoes, eggplant, and fresh herbs. These are the same veggies we use to make our reader favorite [veggie lasagna](#).
- **Butter:** There's no cream in this risotto (thanks to the rice, it is creamy enough), but a generous pat of butter adds to the creamy, luxurious texture. For vegan risotto, use plant-based butter.
- **Parmigiano-Reggiano:** I'm generous with the cheese and recommend you do the same. For a vegetarian risotto, swap the Parmigiano-Reggiano for a vegetarian-friendly cheese like mozzarella, ricotta, or vegetarian parmesan. For vegan risotto, swap for a bit of nutritional yeast.

How to Make Vegetable Risotto

For risotto, you will need a wide, heavy-bottomed pan since it provides plenty of room for stirring. I also use a wooden spoon for risotto (a tip from Richard, who says wooden spoons help to create a creamier texture). Start by cooking onion, bell pepper, and garlic in olive oil until soft. Then stir in your risotto rice and toast it with the veggies and oil for a few minutes.

Now pour in one cup of white wine and use a wooden spoon to stir everything around the pan a few times. Allow the wine to simmer away, and then pour in some broth. Again, you'll want to stir the rice around the pan to make sure it isn't sticking, and allow it to gently simmer in the broth until the liquid is mostly absorbed. We don't need to stir constantly; just stir enough so nothing sticks to the pan.

Directions

• MAKE RICE MIXTURE

1. In a wide, heavy-bottom pan over medium heat, cook the garlic, onion, and bell pepper in olive oil until the onions turn translucent, about 3 minutes.
2. Add the rice and thyme and cook, stirring for 3 to 5 minutes. When the rice sticks a little, pour 1 cup of white wine into the pot. Stir the rice and wine around the pan with a wooden spoon until mostly dry.
3. This step will take about 15 minutes: Begin by measuring out 3 ½ cups of broth, setting aside the remaining 2 ½ cups for later. Pour one third of the measured broth into the pan and keep the risotto at a low simmer while stirring often to prevent the rice from sticking. Once the pot becomes mostly dry, add another one third of the broth and repeat the process until all of the remaining stock has been added.
4. The rice will be about 75% done and will be somewhat tender while still having a raw bite in the center. This is the end of stage one. Either cool the partially cooked risotto to finish later or move on to finishing the risotto.

• COOL RICE MIXTURE (OPTIONAL FOR ENTERTAINING OR MAKING AHEAD)

You can skip this step if making the risotto from start to finish. When the rice mixture is 75% done, cool the risotto rice by spreading thin on a baking sheet and placing it in the refrigerator. When it is cool, transfer the risotto rice to a container or resealable bags, and store it in the fridge for up to 4 days. If you have a smaller family, like me, you can divide the rice mixture into two batches.

• FINISH RISOTTO

1. About 10 minutes before serving, heat a wide, heavy-bottomed pan over medium heat. Add the cooled rice mixture, chopped yellow squash, and zucchini. *If you skipped cooling the rice, simply add the squash and zucchini to your pan with the hot rice mixture.*
2. Grab the remaining 2 ½ cups of broth. Pour in a third of the broth. Then, with the wooden spoon, stir the rice mixture constantly, ensuring it doesn't stick to the pan. Once the pot is mostly dry, add another one third of the broth and repeat the process until all of the remaining stock has been added.
3. Season the vegetable risotto with 1 ½ teaspoons of fine sea salt, and stir in the tomatoes.
4. Grate enough parmesan cheese over the top to cover the rice, add the butter, and finish with 5 twists of black pepper. Stir until the butter melts and the tomatoes are hot. The risotto should be creamy, the squash tender, and the tomatoes heated through.
5. Serve immediately with fresh green herbs, green onion, and extra parmesan cheese on top.

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