

Ingredients:

2 low-salt vegetable broth cubes, prepared
1 glass dry white wine (Chardonnay)
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 tablespoons butter, divided
1/2 brown onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
250g butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
250g arborio rice
6 oz peeled roasted chestnuts, or jarred chestnuts, chopped fairly small
OR Walnuts, but see note at bottom
100g fresh spinach, stalks removed & torn into chunks
12 fresh chive stalks, snipped
cayenne & white pepper, to taste
freshly grated Parmesan cheese

TIP: Some supermarkets sell bags of pre-chopped butternut squash mixed with sweet potato and red onion as a soup starter. These work brilliantly in this recipe and it saves a lot of faffing about.

Depending on how big the cubes are, you may need to bake briefly in the oven to soften the squash, but don't cook it all the way through.

Instructions:

Melt 2T butter and olive oil together

Add onion & celery and sautee until almost translucent, then add baked squash and sautee another 2 minutes

Add rice and stir until it is translucent at edges, but still opaque in centre - about 3 minutes

Add 1/2 glass white wine and stir through constantly until cooked in

Add 1/2 cup of stock and stir through constantly until cooked in

Add 1/2 glass white wine, as before.

Add pepper as required, and a pinch of cayenne; the stock will keep adding saltiness as you go, so don't add salt until you taste at the end.

Stir constantly, keep adding one ladleful at a time of the remaining stock, stirring and almost massaging the creamy starch out of the rice, allowing each ladleful to be absorbed before adding the next. This will take around 15-25 minutes.

Toward the end, just after adding the next to last ladle of stock, add the chestnuts

Just after adding the last ladle of stock, add the spinach

Finish with 1T butter, then spoon into bowls and top with parmesan and snipped chives

NOTE: I actually prefer this made with walnuts, but you really have to wait until the last second to put these in, possibly even just use them as a garnish after serving. If you cook them into the risotto for any length of time at all, they will turn everything purple.

Actually, if you have small children, this could be a feature.