

Risotto Cacio e Pepe

For the parmesan broth:

2 lb. Parmigiano Reggiano, coarsely grated

For the risotto:

6 cups parmesan broth

1/3 cup parmesan cream

2 tbsp. unsalted butter

3 medium shallots, minced

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 cups Arborio rice

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Parsley leaves, for garnish

Make the parmesan broth: Combine parmesan and 8 ½ cups water in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-low. When the cheese becomes stringy, remove from heat. Let cool to room temperature, and repeat heating once more. Refrigerate broth 8 hours or overnight. The next day, the broth should have separated into 3 distinct layers: a cream layer, on top; a broth layer, in the middle; and solids, on the bottom. Carefully remove the top cream layer and reserve. Strain the broth, discarding remaining solids (bottom layer).

Make the risotto: Heat broth in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat; set aside and keep warm. Heat butter in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots and garlic to saucepan; cook, stirring, until soft, 3 minutes. Add rice; cook 2 minutes. Add reserved stock 1/2 cup at a time, cooking until each addition is absorbed before adding more. Cook, stirring often, until rice is tender and creamy, about 20-22 minutes. Stir in parmesan cream and cracked pepper; garnish with parsley leaves.

Chef Massimo Bottura, Osteria Francescana, Modena, created this creamy risotto, a take on the classic Roman pasta dish cacio e pepe, that he developed after earthquakes devastated the Emilia-Romagna in 2012. Wanting to utilize the nearly 1,000 wheels of Parmigiano Reggiano that were damaged in the disaster, he devised an ingenious technique. He simmers parmesan in water, then refrigerates it until it separates into three layers: protein solids on the bottom, a thick broth in the middle, and a parmesan cream on top. The broth is stirred into the risotto, in place of stock, while the cream is added toward the end of cooking, giving the risotto a luxurious texture and little need for any additional salt.



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