



Asparagus Risotto

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

- 2 pounds medium asparagus, trimmed - 10 cups water - 4 bouillon cubes or 2 tablespoons of "Better than Bouillon" - 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste - 2 medium onions, finely chopped - 1/2 teaspoon black pepper - 6 tablespoons olive oil - 3 1/2 cups arborio rice - 1 cup dry white wine - 3 garlic cloves - 2 teaspoons finely grated fresh lemon zest - 2 ounces finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (about 1 cup) plus additional for serving - 1 cup hazelnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped

Instructions

Perfect for celebrating spring, this asparagus risotto is very simple and delicious. Try telling that to my little sister. This past Easter she wanted to help me and my brother cook up a meal for our folks, which turned into a dinner party for 8, and I had her stirring that thing for an hour. Tough love kids, tough love. 1. Trim about an inch off the ends of the asparagus. Cut top third of each asparagus stalk into 1/2 inch rounds, reserving tips and slices together. Coarsely chop the remainder for stock making. Bring the water to boil and add 1/2 teaspoon in a pot, then add the roughly chopped asparagus and cook, uncovered, until very tender, 6 to 7 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a food processor and process with the garlic cloves and lemon zest. Set aside for later. 2. Add reserved asparagus tips and slices to boiling water and cook, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer with slotted spoon to a sieve and rinse asparagus under cold water to stop cooking. Drain well and save for later. Add the bouillon to the asparagus water and keep at a simmer next to a big pot that will house the risotto. 3. Sauté the onions in the olive oil until softened in the big risotto pot, 5 to 7 minutes and add a bit of the pepper. Add the arborio rice and stir until the grains are covered with the oil and onions. Add wine and boil, stirring, until liquid is absorbed, about 1 minute. 4. Now the fun part (I am sorry Amanda). Turn the heat down to a medium simmer on the risotto pot and add about a cup of the stock you just made and stir until the rice has absorbed all the water. Repeat until all of the stock has been used up. It could take a

while. You don't really have to stand over the pot stirring like a lunatic, but it will create strong arm muscles and a very creamy risotto. 5. Once all the liquid has been absorbed by the rice, stir in asparagus purée, asparagus-tip mixture, and enough additional water to thin to desired consistency and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until hot, about 1 minute. Stir in cheese, then season with salt and pepper. Plate and sprinkle with hazelnuts and serve parmesan on the side. Eat up!