



Pea and broccoli orzotto

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

5 small shallots, finely chopped
50g butter
1 cup pearl barley
1 cup decent white wine or extra dry vermouth
3 cups vegetable stock
2 cups frozen petit pois
1 head of broccoli (size dependent on how much you like it), separated into stem, chopped finely, and florets
2 tbsp creme fraiche
1/3 cup parmesan cheese, grated

Instructions

I know the picture is ugly but you have to try this. The flavours are just sublime. I can't believe I achieved this depth of flavour without any meat products at all.

Orzotto is risotto done with barley instead of rice, a godsend when you're too lazy to search for the arborio or carnaroli or too poor to afford it. The other plus is that you can make it in advance because barley becomes a different type of al dente and doesn't get soggy the way risotto does.

It's crucial that the stock is good. For this recipe I made stock with onion, carrot, leek tops leftover from another meal, black peppercorns and dried Italian herbs.

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1. Melt half the butter in a pan and saute the shallots gently till soft but not brown, about 3 minutes.
 2. Add the barley and stir till evenly coated with butter for about 1 minute.
 3. Pour over the white wine and bring to the boil. Stir regularly while continuing with the next steps.
 4. While the white wine is bubbling off, bring the vegetable stock to a boil and scald the broccoli florets till firm-tender, about 1 minute.
 5. Set broccoli florets aside and leave the stock simmering at the side.
 6. When the white wine has mostly boiled off, add a ladleful of stock and stir until most of it has been absorbed. Keep doing this till the barley is al dente, i.e. firm and a good texture to eat.
 7. In the mean time, melt the rest of the butter and gently saute the peas for about 1 minute. Set aside half the peas.
 8. Add the chopped broccoli stems to the remaining peas and saute gently till soft, about 10 minutes.
 9. Add a ladleful of stock to this and liquidise using a hand blender.
 10. Combine the pea and broccoli puree with the cooked barley, followed by the peas, creme fraiche and parmesan cheese.
 11. Season to taste and serve topped with the reserved broccoli florets. Top with extra creme fraiche or cheese if desired.

Serves 2.